

Your Powerful Example

Joe Slater

Someone said that example is a language everyone can understand. Some fifteen times the New Testament emphasizes the effect of example, for good or ill. While our example before fellow-Christians is vital, Paul stresses our behavior before the outside world. *“Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time”* (Colossians 4:5).

Your example carries more weight than you might think. How do you treat the store clerk, the server at the restaurant, or the bank teller? What pattern do you display for your employer, your fellow-employees, or those who work under you? I have seen smiles appear on faces when I mentioned the names of members of this congregation. Your good example helps to break down prejudices.

We have only limited opportunities to influence people. As the saying goes, “There is no second chance to make a good first impression.” Thus Paul says to *“redeem”* the time. We are to buy up the opportunity to affect people for the better. Take advantage of opportunities while they are available. When God opens a door for you to help a neighbor, to give someone a pat on the back, or to speak a good word for the Lord, take courage and walk through that door! It may close just as quickly as it opened; then you will regret having missed the opportunity, and a soul may be lost.

Paul presumes that we will not only set a good example, but speak to people about the faith. Just as Peter says to be ready to answer those who ask why we have the hope of eternal life (1 Peter 3:15), so Paul says, *“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one”* (Colossians 4:6). Just setting a good example is not

enough. A good example may break down barriers, but eventually someone must teach the lost person how to be saved. How we speak makes a huge difference. Paul’s exhortation to use gracious words *“seasoned with salt”* tells us to speak so as to leave a good taste in people’s mouths, just as salt gives flavor to otherwise unpalatable foods. Similarly, Peter charges us to answer *“with meekness and fear”* (gentleness and respect, 1 Peter 3:15). We can be firm and uncompromising without being disrespectful and vicious.

Don’t underestimate your influence. Show the world what a Christian is. When the opportunity comes to speak to people about the Lord, take advantage of it! Your good example will help people to take your words seriously.

#

Making Monkeys Out Of Scientists

New observations have sent anthropologists back to head-scratching as “a band of wild bearded capuchin monkeys in Brazil were seen hammering rocks to extract minerals, causing large flakes to fly off. Previously, archaeologists believed the flakes were made only by humans through a process called ‘stone-knapping’ where a larger rock is hammered with another stone to produce sharp, blade-like slivers which can be used for arrows, spears, or knives. The flakes were thought to represent a turning point in human evolution because they demonstrated a level of planning, cognition, and h and manipulation that could not be achieved by other animals. But the new research suggests that flakes can be made without any such foresight. In fact, they can simply be made by accident” (Source: telegraph.co.uk). Oops. Once again, our human ability to imagine “evidence” and build an entire world-view is on full display . . . especially when it relieves us of moral accountability.

--Jared Jackson (via Fortify Your Faith)

REST

“And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! Then would I fly away, and be at rest” (Psalm 55:6).

How many times have you felt like the psalmist? Your body is so tired it hurts. Your mind is numb with fatigue, and you can't think. More than that, your soul longs for comfort and refreshment. Eight hours of sleep won't make you feel better. Your whole being must get away from the stress and problems you face every day.

Jesus knows how you feel. He worked tirelessly preaching and teaching. The people hounded him everywhere he went, and He healed the sick and those who had evil spirits. They pressed on Him day after day, and by the end of each day, He was exhausted. And as every day passed, He knew He was drawing closer and closer to bearing the sins of the whole world.

Jesus escaped by spending time talking to His Father. His "spare time" was often at night. Jesus found Himself alone only when everyone else was asleep, and He took advantage of those hours to be with God. At times even His disciples did not accompany Him (Matthew 14:23). By talking with God, Jesus gained the fortitude to carry on His work and to face His mission.

The Bible tells us the people of God have a rest (Hebrews 4:9). Until we reach that rest, we must keep on working and seeking rest and refuge in our Lord, just as Jesus did. By leaning upon our God in prayer, we will find the strength we need to finish our tasks. Someday, we will *“rest from our labors; for our works follow with us”* (Revelation 14:13).

--Donna Wittlif (Denver, CO)