

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: I Timothy 4:12 “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, *in spirit*,¹ in faith, in purity”

Quote: In any endeavor, public success takes private preparation.

No matter how old we are, we must never forget that *we are now becoming who we will one day be*. Although Paul was writing to Timothy as a young preacher, his advice is profitable for all Christians, regardless of their age or their occupation. A praise-worthy testimony brings with it the potential for any respectable job to be a ministry when we perform it as *unto the Lord!*

A commendable testimony takes work! Paul admonished Timothy, “*Exercise yourself toward godliness*. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” Like honing athletic skills, growth in grace necessitates consistently and commendably working on “the fundamentals,” and understanding the tactics and the “rules of conduct.” If you fail to hone the fundamentals, you will limit your potential. If you fail to understand the tactics and the rules of the game, you will end up disappointed more times than not. The legendary college basketball coach Bobby Knight,¹ put it well when he said, “More important than the will to win is *the will to prepare to win*.” In any endeavor, public success takes private preparation. It takes a serious approach in “practice” with the stands empty so that you can excel in public with the stands full. Joseph, Moses and David are great examples of this truth.

Paul asked the Corinthian Christians, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate [self-controlled] in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached

to others, I myself should become disqualified.”² Paul pursued the goal of becoming more like Christ.

In our text, Paul mentions five critical areas that are a necessary part of being an example of the believer.³ We should be commendable and consistent examples in our *public and private speech*. “*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*”⁴ Our speech reveals the true condition of our heart!

Our *conduct* likewise reveals who we really are. Failure to “walk the talk” is nothing short of hypocrisy or playacting. We must be commendable and consistent examples *in our conduct*. Solomon wrote, “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”⁵

**Be an example of
the believers!**

We are also to be an example of biblical *love* through sacrificial service for others. James wrote, “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well.”⁶

We are to be faithful and trustworthy in our unswerving *commitment to the Lord* and in our *pursuit of purity*. Paul challenged Timothy to “flee also youthful lusts; but *pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace* with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”⁷ “*Hold fast* the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”⁷

An exemplary testimony takes purpose, planning and prayer; it will not just happen. May we purpose to be a pacesetter and not just an “also ran!” May we seek to *be all that we should be for God’s glory and the good of others!*

¹ I have no respect for his character that evidenced itself in poor behavior and profane speech. ² I Cor.9:24-27 ³ The best manuscripts do not contain “in spirit.” ⁴ Matt.12:35-37 ⁵ Prov.4:23; Mark 7:21-23 ⁶ James 2:8; Matt.22:37-40 ⁷ II Tim.2:22; 1:13