

Leading by Example

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I. Introduction.

A. We as leaders need to be reminded of scriptural leadership principles. (Romans 15:14-15; 2 Peter 1:12)

B. Text: 1 Corinthians 4:16-17.

C. Paul could say that people should imitate him because his life matched his teaching. (Matthew 23:3)

D. As leaders, whatever we teach also needs to be the direction that our lives are going.

II. Leading by example is the New Testament pattern for leaders. (1 Peter 5:3; Titus 2:7; 1 Timothy 4:12; Acts 20:35; John 13:15; Hebrews 13:7)

A. Leaders are stewards of God's people.

B. We're to set an example and then teach from that example.

C. There is moral power in a quiet example. People learn by seeing what is done and they duplicate what they see in their leaders.

1. People tend to duplicate leaders' skills, not their character.

2. Leaders' lives need to be an open book so that people can see their character.

(1 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:10ff)

3. Our tendency as leaders is to let people see us only when we're strong, not when we're struggling. They need to see our character in both seasons.

III. There are three areas in particular where we must lead by example- godliness, gospel, and grace.

A. Godliness is not the same as holiness. (2 Peter 3:11-12; Romans 1:18)

1. Godliness is God-centeredness- not centered in the mission, the vision or the ministry, but in God Himself. (Psalm 42:1)

2. To be effective leaders, we must set the example of having a heart for God.

B. A leader must live by the gospel in Christ's righteousness. We depend on Christ's righteousness in broken repentance to live by faith. (Galatians 2:20ff; Philippians 4:13)

C. A leader must live by grace- that is, the sustaining power of God. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

1. Grace is only available to the weak. We as leaders must model weakness.

(2 Corinthians 12:10; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Ephesians 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:15)

2. Our weakness highlights God's grace. (Ephesians 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:16)

3. Without grace, humility and confidence usually grow at each other's expense. Grace allows them to grow together. (Isaiah 41:14-15)

4. We must allow those who we lead see our weakness and dependence on God.

Application questions:

1. As a leader, how can you open your life up to let those who follow you see your character?

2. As a follower, how can you deal gracefully with leaders who allow you to see their weaknesses? How do you maintain trust with them in those times?

3. As a leader, how can you test whether your life is God-centered or ministry-centered? If you find that it is ministry-centered, what are some steps that you can take to reorient your life to Christ-centeredness?
