

"... set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." - 1Timothy 4:12



All of these are important, but it is interesting to note what Paul says immediately preceding this... **"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young..."** Paul warns Timothy not to let his age become a factor in leading Christ's church. How often this has happened in Scripture. Moses could have easily said to God, "I'm 80 years old, get someone else to lead your people"...Jeremiah told God "I'm just a teenager, don't you think that's a little young?" (My paraphrase).

When God asks you to step up, don't play the 'age' or 'health' or 'sex' or 'emotions' or 'finances' card; because honestly, He will find a way to point you back to this verse. You're not too young. You're not too old. You're not powerless. All you have to do is be willing to accept the fact you can make a difference, you can step up, and you can do something great to impact the world through Jesus Christ.

If you're called by God to serve His people, it comes with responsibility. He is interested in how we present ourselves to His church. Paul directly shows Timothy and us that there are areas of our lives that are examples to others whether we know it or not. He tells Timothy, "set an example for the believers" in five areas of life: his speech, his life, his love, his faith and his purity.

- 1) Speech - In conversation as well as in public speech, what we say is what is in our heart. Has your speech been a good example today?
- 2) Life – Wherever we are moved to spend our life minutes – job, hobbies, leisure, service to others – we have determined this to be our life's purpose (*Colossians 3:23-24* – **"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward."**)
- 3) Love – Scripture tells us in *John 14:5* **"If you love me you will obey my commands."** The depth of our love for God is shown by the depth of our desire to follow His way. It is the love of God that overflows into our love for others in the world who need patient attention, a smile, a kind act.
- 4) Faith – It is much easier to trust in something seen rather than what is unseen. Solomon, the wisest man in the world said, **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your path straight."** *Proverbs 3:5*
- 5) Purity - describes the quality of moral purity, a pure mind and especially conveys the idea of chastity. Clearly used by Paul to call for Timothy to be morally pure, something that was not characteristic of most pagan worship. Nothing so ravages a one's life as sexual impurity! If you are a leader in any spiritual capacity, or a parent, grandparent, spouse, or serve at JOY in any capacity, pay special attention to your purity. As a leader you are especially vulnerable in this area, since it can overflow into your witness.

So what, you may say, I'm not a leader. But we all are a witness to somebody. We share our faith and our lives with each other. Our goal is to build each other up in fellowship with each other and in our shared faith in Christ. In that regard, we are all leaders, and can appreciate Paul's counsel to set an example for our fellow believers 'in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

God bless you this week.