

DAY 13 • AUGUST 17

Engaging the Campus: Setting an Example

READ: 1 TIMOTHY 4:7-15

Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

REFLECT

Every person, no matter how young, has the power to influence others. But our influence will only go as far as the way others view us. The question is, when people look at our lives, do they become intrigued by the message of the gospel and how it has changed our lives?

Paul, a man of influence both before and after knowing Jesus, knew just how important a testimony could be. This is why he instructed the young Timothy to set an example for other believers, and as the believers followed it, the church would set an example for non-believers. In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul named five areas of our lives where we can be living witnesses of the gospel—speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.

Speech. Jesus said in Matthew 15:11 that *it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person*. Jesus later explained that whatever comes out of the mouth of a person reflects what is in his or her heart. The question is, do people hear Jesus with every word that comes out of our mouths? Or do they hear just another voice?

Conduct. How do we behave when we encounter others? In 1 Timothy 3, we see a list of qualities we must have in order to lead others in a full-time capacity. According to this list, we *must be above reproach and well thought of by outsiders* in order to not fall into disgrace (1 Timothy 3:2,7). If we aren't careful, our actions will lower our influence on others, making it difficult for us to preach the gospel to them.

Love. Jesus first showed us what it means to love by dying for us on the cross (1 John 3:16). Just as we have been given love, so must we also give love to others. In fact, 1 John 4:7 tells us that whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Loving the way God loves is a powerful thing. It can open hearts that have been closed to the gospel, and help others experience the love of God through us.

Faith. The Bible celebrates in Hebrews 11 those whose lives exhibited exemplary faith in God. They showed faith when they were being mocked and mistreated, when they did not know what would happen to them, and even to the point of death. The way we respond to both the joys and trials of life reflects the measure of our faith. If others see how our faith remains unshaken and anchored from season to season, they will know just how powerful and sure a foundation Christ is.

Purity. Jesus says in Matthew 5:8 that the pure of heart will see God. Sometimes, we see purity as a set of rules that dictates our actions. Rather, it is a heart change that comes when we draw near to God and He draws near to us. When we allow God to reign over our hearts, we set an example of purity and integrity that may encourage others to look beyond our actions to the God we serve.

Like Timothy, we must set an example of what it means to be changed by the gospel in our speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. When we set an example for the believers, our lives become a display of the transforming power of the gospel.

RESPOND

1. How has your example opened doors for you to preach the gospel to others?
2. Which of these five areas do you need to apply in your life? How can you grow in this area?

PRAY

1. Pray that you would set an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Ask God to empower you to live in a way that honors Him and draws others to Him.
2. As you set an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, pray that God will open doors for you to preach the gospel in your campus and community.