

# Give Us An Example

Today our children are learning about the 22<sup>nd</sup> tenet of the Foursquare Church, which is all about the importance of giving. In honour of our Dads on Father's Day, the adults will be learning about setting an example of giving and right living for our children and others in our circle of influence to follow. It has been said that our children's eyes observe far more than their ears will ever hear. Edmund Burke said that "example is the school of mankind, and they will learn at no other." What they see is what we get as parents!

Paul told his protégé Timothy to not let anyone look down on his youthfulness, but instead, be an example to them in conversation, in conduct, in charity, in faith, and in purity. This was the kind of example Paul provided for Timothy, his "spiritual son". Being a godly example for others is a sure sign of maturity and the only evidence Timothy would need to prove he was old enough to be a leader. These defining qualities of maturity apply to all fathers, as well as mothers and others who want to make a positive difference in their world.

## 1. Give us an example in conversation

*Death and life are in the power of the tongue* (Proverbs 18:21). Our words are powerful and irretrievable. They can either build up someone or tear them down. Children are like audio recorders – eventually we'll hear them play back the things their parents said while they were growing up. Too bad we can never find the "off" button when we need to - or the "erase" button for that matter!

## 2. Give us an example in conduct

*For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead* (James 2:26). Children are quick to spot hypocrisy. If parents tell their kids to do something that they don't practice themselves they will likely hear about it. Words may be powerful but they lose their potency when accompanied by "do as I say, not as I do"!

## 3. Give us an example in charity

*So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love* (1 Corinthians 13:13). What we say and what we do will affect those who watch our lives, either for their good or bad. The good will come only when there is love behind both, a love that gives unconditionally and always seeks the other's highest good. Words and works without love just don't ring true – they sound like *a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal* (13:1). Without genuine love, our lives will be a gong show!

## 4. Give us an example in faith

*These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children* (Deuteronomy 6:6,7a). It's important to teach our children about life but more important to pass on a faith that will carry them into the life beyond. Eternal issues trump the temporal, and yet so much of what we tend to focus on relates to our brief time on earth. Fathers, as priests in their home, have the most influence in helping their children "faith" their future.

## 5. Give us an example in purity

*I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh when will you come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house; I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless* (Psalm 101:2,3a). In a day when sexual exploitation runs rampant, young people need an example of purity, especially from the men they most admire.

Fathers, mothers, adults, young people - give us an example to follow!