

# EXAMPLES, GOOD AND BAD

## INTRODUCTION

EXAMPLE: (1) One representative of a group as a whole; sample; (2) One that is worthy of imitation; (3) One that serves as a warning; (4) A problem that illustrates a principle. The power and influence of examples (whether good or bad) are enormous. If a picture worth a thousand words; *an example is worth a thousand lectures.*

## EXAMPLE: A MOST INFLUENTIAL TEACHER

Examples are so much a part of our education, we are hardly aware of their impact. They serve as samples, models, warnings, illustrations. We pick up on (imitate) ways of dealing with most everything in life. In every new experience as a Christian, we look for a pattern.  
In worship and prayer. (*How is it being done?*)  
In our daily life. (*How are other members doing it?*)  
In times of temptation. (*How are others handling it?*)  
We teach and instruct one another by example. Act.20:35

## TWO KINDS OF EXAMPLES

**Bad examples:** ...lest you learn his ways, and find a snare for yourself. Pro.22:24-25

**The majority may set a bad example.**

Exo.23:2 *You shall not follow a multitude in doing evil.*

**National trends may set a bad example.**

Lev.20:23 *you shall not follow the customs of the nations.*

**Religious leaders may set bad examples.** Mat.15:14, 23:1-3

We must not follow such examples. 2Pe.2:2

**Good examples:**

Patience of **Job**. Jam.5:10-11

Faith of **Abraham**. Heb.11:17

Courage of **Daniel**. Dan.6:7-11

Decision of **Moses**. Heb.11:24-25

Zeal of **Paul**. Act.22:3, Gal.1:14

Hospitality of **Aquila and Priscilla**. Act.18:2-3; 1Co.16:19

Trustworthiness of **Timothy**. Phi.2:19-20

**Jesus**. 1Pe.2:21 *Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example...* (1Jo.2:6)

## FOLLOWING EXAMPLES

**Jehoshaphat** followed David's example of not seeking the Baals. 2Ch.17:3

**Israelites** were warned not to follow the examples of the nations. Lev.20:23

**Disciples** are admonished to follow the example of Jesus' humility. Joh.13:15

**Christians** are warned to learn from what happened to the Israelites. 1Co.10:11; Heb.4:11

**Paul** admonished, "...you ought to follow our example" 2Th.3:7

## GOOD ILLUSTRATIONS OF BAD EXAMPLES

**Recalling bad examples can help us avoid pitfalls.**

Errors of **Cain, Balaam and Korah** are good illustrations of bad examples. Jde:11

From such examples we learn that "*sin crouches at the door*" 1Pe.5:8

**Ananias and Sapphira**. Act.5:1ff. They sought recognition and praise.

**LESSON:** Be careful to give from the heart, as purpose in the heart, not grudgingly.

Lies and deceit are clearly seen by the Lord.

Giving motivated by wrong reasons is never acceptable.

- Peter.** Gal.2:11-12. He withdrew from the Gentiles, fearing the party of the circumcision.  
**LESSON:** Don't yield to pressure of influential groups or people.  
 Do what is right, no matter who objects.
- Barnabas.** Gal.2:13. He was carried away with Peter's hypocrisy.  
**LESSON:** Realize that those who "seem to be pillars" in the church may err, and be careful not to be carried along.  
 Be aware of the influence of those whom we esteem.
- Euodia and Syntyche.** Phi.4:2. There was discord among these two faithful members.  
**LESSON:** Personality differences can cause discord.  
 Don't let personality differences cause discord in the church.
- Hymenaeus and Alexander.** 1Ti.1:19. They were believers who made "shipwreck" of their faith.  
**LESSON:** Be aware of letting your faith (doctrine and practice) drift.  
 It can happen to just you, or you can "drag each other along."  
 It also can effect others. (Philetus and Alexander. 2Ti.2:16-18)
- Diotrephes.** 3Jo.9. He loved to be first.  
**LESSON:** Effort to control can corrupt a person and hurt a church.  
 Each member must work to be a "servant of all" in order to be great.
- Demas.** 2Ti.4:10. Love of the present world had the stronger pull.  
**LESSON:** Most members don't leave Christ deliberately, but do so when they go after world. The world harks its wares, but we must not buy.
- Believing Pharisees.** Ac.15:5. They brought former religious beliefs over into Christianity.  
**LESSON:** Whatever we believed before (if wrong) must be left behind.
- Unnamed Believers.** He.10:24-25. Some were forsaking assembling.  
**LESSON:** We must be careful not to let other things keep us from assembling.

## THESE PEOPLE WERE NOT TOTALLY BAD

But their mistakes are examples for us, in order we might avoid the:  
*pain* of reprimand,  
*guilt* of being carried along with crowd,  
*hurt* caused by personality clashes,  
*wounds* of chastisement for teaching error,  
*shame* of being to blame for church troubles,  
*agony* of being rejected by Christ.

## EACH GENERATION LOOKS TO CONTEMPORARIES FOR EXAMPLES

**Paul** was an example for others of his day. Phi.3:17, 4:9, 2Th.3:7-9  
**Timothy and Titus**, in turn, were to be examples. 1Ti.4:12, Tit.2:7-8  
**Bishops** (elders) are to be examples. 1Pe.5:3  
**Faithful members** are to be examples for others. Phi.3:17  
**Congregations** can be examples for other churches. 2Co.8:24, 1Th.1:7

## TODAY, CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES MUST BE FOUND

**In preachers, elders, deacons, teachers.**

Habits, life styles are emulated consciously or unconsciously.

**In mature members.** New members are able to pick up on their examples.

Yet, new members can be examples of new enthusiasm, commitment, zeal.

**A sobering thought:** "Someone is watching me, and possibly will follow my example."

**Each member needs to consider:** "What if all members did what I do?"

We must be comfortable with saying, "Be imitators of me." 1Co.11:1