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Have you ever witnessed a child imitate their parent's behavior? Children will often model their behavior after what they have seen a parent do—in dress, in conversation, even in pretending to do grown-up activities such as driving a car or cooking and serving a family meal. This pattern for following the example set by others isn't unique to children. We can also see it in God's Word where the believers are exhorted to follow, or imitate, God, Jesus Christ's example, and the example of other believers in living the Word.

The Apostle Paul encouraged the believers to be followers of God.

Ephesians 5:1:

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.

“Followers” is translated from the Greek word *mimētēs*, from which we get the word “mimic” in English. It means imitators. In a very positive sense, a follower is an imitator—someone who models their behavior after an example. Here the believers are encouraged to imitate their heavenly Father, God.

The next verse in Ephesians shows us that our example for walking in love is Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:2:

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

The Apostle Peter, by revelation, declared that Jesus Christ left us an example to follow.

I Peter 2:21:

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.

Jesus Christ always did the will of the Father. He imitated God and walked according to the revealed Word of God. The Scriptures encourage us as believers to strive for the perfection of Jesus Christ's walk. In the first-century Church, the Apostle Paul followed the example of Jesus Christ, and then he himself served as an example for others to follow.

I Corinthians 11:1:

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Paul also exhorted the born-again believers to observe any believer walking according to the Word as an example.

Philippians 3:16,17:

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample [example].

An example is the pattern or model after which a thing is made. We can imitate Jesus Christ and Paul, and we can observe those who walk according to the Word as the patterns or models on which to build our own lives as believers. The believers in Thessalonica followed Paul, Silas, and Timothy, and thus the Lord. In turn, their lives became examples for others to follow.

I Thessalonians 1:6,7:

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord...

So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

Paul held back nothing that he thought would be helpful to the Church. He traveled from house to house to show and to teach what would be profitable.

Acts 20:20:

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house.

Now let's consider one thing that we can learn about living the Word in the Grace Administration from Paul's example as recorded in the Book of Acts and the Church Epistles. They show that, with a thankful heart, Paul made known the accomplishments of Jesus Christ wherever he went. Very shortly after he was born again on the road to Damascus, Paul began to share with the Judeans about Jesus Christ.

Acts 9:20:

And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

When Barnabas needed Paul's help in Antioch, Paul joined Barnabas in teaching the Word to the Gentiles there. They spent a year together in Antioch and taught many people (Acts 11:26). Later, Paul traveled to Macedonia to help those who wanted to know the good news of Jesus Christ.

Acts 16:9,10,14:

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Even in prison, Paul spoke the Word about Jesus Christ to the jailer.

Acts 16:29-32:

Then he [the jailer] called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

And at the end of Acts, when Paul was under Roman guard, he was still reaching out with a thankful heart. He received visitors into his home and taught about God's grace and goodness and about Jesus Christ (Acts 28:30,31).

Just as children imitate the example of their parents, we can imitate the example of men and women in the Bible. The Apostle Paul, by revelation, exhorted the believers in the first century to follow, or imitate, his example in living the great truths of the Grace Administration. As they did, these followers of Paul's example became examples, or patterns of living, for others.

Paul lived the Word of God vibrantly, and one characteristic he exhibited consistently was his desire to tell others about the accomplished work of Jesus Christ. He started telling others about Jesus Christ right after he was born again, he worked together with Barnabas to make Christ known in Antioch, he traveled to Macedonia when God let him know by a vision that he was needed there. Even in prison and under house arrest, Paul was talking about Jesus Christ.

Today we can follow, imitate, godly examples from the Book of Acts and the Church Epistles of reaching out to others. Wherever we may be, we can be bold to tell of the goodness of our God and the accomplishments of Jesus Christ!

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