

## **Example (Pattern) “...Be thou an example of the believers.” (1 Timothy 4:12)**

***(Pastor John T. Kurien)***

In the first of three Pastoral Epistles, Apostle Paul gives instructions to Timothy, his own son in faith, to be an example to the believers. The Greek word ‘TUPOS’ is used in this verse, which means *pattern*. That word is used again and again concerning the building of the Tabernacle in the book of Exodus. Though Moses was well educated, he did not use his knowledge for the construction of the Tabernacle at all. Rather, Jehovah commanded Moses to make it after the *pattern* that was showed in the mount (Exodus 25:40). The cloud covered the tent and the glory of God filled the Tabernacle as Moses did according to all that the Lord commanded him (Exodus 40:16, 35).

Another pattern or example to be followed is when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples; He showed an *example* so that we should do as He has done (John 13:1, 15). Again, when Peter was explaining about the suffering of our Lord Jesus, he said, “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an *example*, that ye should follow his steps. ...when he was suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Peter 2:21-23). All of the saints listed in the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews were *examples* of having faith in their lives. They died in faith, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Heb. 11: 13).

Apostle Paul is exhorting to Timothy to be an *example* to the believers through six ways: in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. Conversation involves the whole conduct of life in domestic and public behavior. Charity (agape) is well explained in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. The spirit refers to the manner in which we do all things. Becoming a Christian is, of course, a privilege and a blessing. However, that alone is not a guarantee that one will go to heaven. Apostle Paul exhorted the believers in Philippians by saying, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an *example*” (Phil. 3:17). Our deeds are more important than our words. Everything we do from our daily walking, holiness of the flesh and spirit, and even our conversation, should be an example to other believers. We must remember what would happen if others did things exactly the way we do. Our Lord is seeking fruit from us. Let us produce some fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), instead of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). Our good behavior, words, habits, and attitudes are the evidence of our fruit.

Ruth Graham, wife of Billy Graham, once explained how she became interested in studying Scripture. Growing up in China, she saw her parents study the Bible every day. She said, “Each morning when I went downstairs to breakfast, my father- a busy missionary surgeon- would be reading his Bible. At night, her work behind her, my mother would be doing the same. Anything that could so capture the interest and devotion of those I admired and loved the most, I reasoned, must be worth investigating. So at an early age I began reading my Bible.” Beloved brothers and sisters let each one of us be an encourager of our children and fellow-believers, and an example to everyone.

May the grace of God be with you all.