

A Good Example

I taught in the public school system as a math teacher for a number of years. Most math text books were filled with *accurate* explanations of mathematical concepts. They were so accurate it gave most students a headache. In general, it was only after seeing an example on the chalkboard that the process was finally understood. Even today, when my own children ask for help, I want to see an example from the teacher or the textbook.

A coach calls his team, asks for the basketball, and says, "Look how my feet are placed. Look how I position my hands on the ball. Watch as I follow through with the shot." He is an example.

A contractor uses a blueprint as a type of example to build a house. In a similar way we all use maps as examples of the layout of city streets or highways through the countryside.

We look at them; study them; inquire about them: maps, blueprints, patterns, pictures, sketches, and people. They are all examples that show us the way. Good examples reveal the path to success and can help us avoid failure.

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus is placed before us as our supreme example of life. By looking at Him and studying Him we can learn how to live.

Other examples are also encouraged. The Apostle Paul referred to the Old Testament as an example for our learning. We can study the characters whose lives are recorded in the Old Testament and draw from their faith, their righteousness, their courage, and also, their mistakes. In addition, we can see the character of God as he deals with people and nations.

Peter wrote to the early Christians and encouraged the elders to stand as examples. The elders were expected to live their lives for Christ out in the open for the rest to see. Other Christians would then be able to follow their pattern of life as a visible example of right living before God. Paul, himself, was an example to the young preacher, Timothy.

There are many excellent examples of faithful men and women in the Bible. But there are also many fine examples of good Christian people our present day. Some of these examples are family members; others are Christian friends living in other places; some are right here, at home.

Who in your life stands as an example of service?
 Who in your life stands as an example of courage?
 Who in your life stands as an example of mercy?
 Who in your life stands as an example of humility?
 Who in your life stands as an example of devotion?

Who in your life stands as an example of marriage?

Recently, Lloyd and Edna Jett celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Their family hosted a reception in honor of them. It was quite a day. Family and friends were in attendance, and even the 95 year old preacher who performed their wedding ceremony. Many heartfelt words of love and admiration were spoken by their children and grandchildren. There were pictures of memories made just a

few months ago and some from another century. We sang hymns together. And, of course, we enjoyed cake and punch and other goodies.

It was truly a wonderful occasion. Yet, it was just a celebration; it lasted only a few hours. It was not the marriage, but it applauded sixty years of marriage.

Think about it: Sixty years.
 Sixty years of marriage is a long and wonderful time.

Listening to the memories of family members, you might think that those sixty years were all easy. But anyone acquainted with life understands that every life, every marriage is comprised of good times and difficult times.

Relationships are difficult. Each person has different needs and there are individual 'wants.' It takes dedication to the Lord, commitment to each other, and self-sacrifice in order to make a marriage last, even more so for sixty years.

Their sixty years of marriage truly is a great accomplishment and worthy of honor.

As I think of Lloyd and Edna, I am also mindful that there are others among us who would have enjoyed their sixtieth anniversary, had it not been for the death of their spouse. They stand as worthy examples to us as well.

But today, I do want to shine a light on Lloyd and Edna. It is not simply to praise them or make them appear greater than they are. They are two human beings, but they are dedicated Christians. And for all of us, they are a living example of what God intended in marriage.

The Apostle Paul encouraged the Philippians to follow him 'as he followed Christ.' The sixty years of love and honor and commitment in the lives of Lloyd and Edna echo the same instruction. You see, Paul has reminded us that the relationship of a husband and wife in marriage is like the relationship of Christ to his bride, the church. So, when we look at the example of Lloyd and Edna . . .

We should be reminded . . .

Of the steadfast love that Christ has for his church.
 Of the commitment that Christ has for his church.
 Of the sacrifice Christ has made for his church.

It is a good thing to hold them up as a present-day visible example for us to follow. We can follow them as they have followed Christ.

Praise God for their good example.

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