

September 3, 2026

Be The Example

August Series: Christ-Centered Relationships

Week Focus: Stronger Families

Scripture – 1 Timothy 4:12 - *“Set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”*

Devotional Reflection

It is easy to know what we want to see in the people closest to us. We want better attitudes, healthier communication, greater patience, stronger faith, more forgiveness, and consistent choices that honor God. Those desires may be good, but before asking whether everyone around us is demonstrating those qualities, there is another question worth considering: **Can they see those qualities being developed in me?** Stronger families need more than instructions about what is right; they need examples of what following Jesus looks like in everyday life.

Paul told Timothy to “**set an example**” in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Although Paul was instructing Timothy concerning his leadership among believers, the principle reaches into every area where our lives influence others. People learn from more than what we tell them; they also learn from what they repeatedly see in us. Our families hear what we say about patience, but they also experience how we respond when frustrated. They hear what we believe about forgiveness, but they also watch what we do after we have been hurt. They hear us talk about trusting God, but they also observe how we respond when life becomes uncertain. **What we model can give credibility to what we teach.**

Jesus never asked His followers to live something He refused to demonstrate Himself. He taught servanthood and then washed His disciples’ feet. He taught forgiveness and extended it. He taught prayer and regularly withdrew to pray. He taught sacrificial love and ultimately demonstrated it at the cross. His life gave visible expression to His words. As followers of Christ, we are called to develop that same consistency. We will never model Jesus perfectly, but the people closest to us should increasingly be able to see that the Christ we talk about is actually shaping the way we live.

Being the example also includes how we respond when we get something wrong. Our families do not need us to pretend we never fail; they need to see what following Jesus looks like **when we do**. Let them see us apologize without excuses, receive correction without defensiveness, repent when God convicts us, forgive when forgiveness is difficult, and make changes when our behavior has caused hurt. Sometimes one of the strongest examples of spiritual maturity is simply saying, **“I was wrong. Please forgive me. By God’s grace, I want to handle this differently.”** Humility does not weaken our influence; it can make our faith more believable.

Today, think about what your life is teaching the people closest to you. Before asking your family to communicate differently, forgive more freely, pray more consistently, serve more willingly, or take their relationship with God more seriously, ask whether those qualities are becoming visible in you. You cannot control what another person chooses to do with your example, but you can decide what kind of example you will place before them. **Do not only tell your family what following Jesus should look like. By His grace, show them. Be the example.**

Focus for Today

Stronger families need more than instructions about following Christ; they need examples of what following Christ looks like.

Let what you desire to see around you first become increasingly visible in you.

Practice

Think about one quality you would like to see strengthened in your household.

Maybe it is:

- Patience
- Prayer
- Forgiveness
- Respect
- Better communication
- Gratitude
- Serving
- Consistency
- Trust in God
- Humility

Now ask yourself:

“Am I consistently modeling what I am hoping to see?”

Choose one quality and intentionally demonstrate it today.

If you want more encouragement in your home, encourage someone.

If you want greater prayer, initiate prayer.

If you want better communication, communicate with greater grace.

If you want forgiveness, practice forgiveness.

If you want humility, be willing to apologize.

Model what you hope to multiply.

Prayer

Father, thank You for the people You have placed within my life and for the influence my example can have upon them.

Help me not to become so focused on what I want others to change that I overlook what my own life is demonstrating.

Let my speech, conduct, love, faith, and character increasingly reflect Jesus. Give me patience when I am frustrated, grace when relationships are difficult, humility when I am wrong, and faith when circumstances are uncertain.

Where my example has contradicted what I profess, forgive me and help me change. Keep me from pretending to be perfect. Instead, let the people closest to me see a sincere life that continually surrenders, repents, grows, and returns to You.

I cannot control the choices others make, but I can surrender the example I place before them.

Lord, let my life show what my words say I believe.

Help me be the example.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Reflection Question

What is one quality I want to see more consistently in my family, and am I willing to let God develop and demonstrate that quality through me first?