**Do people want to follow you? By Thailer Jimerson**

It seems lately that my thoughts have been occupied with a certain aspect of faith. I’m not sure what general umbrella the aspect fits under, but words that encapsulate the thought could be: imitation, examples, role modeling. I’ve been meditating on this aspect of Christian faith so much because this will serve as the culmination of the Christian ethic in Paul’s letter to the Galatians. He seems to imply that what we’re given is not another law or ethical system, but the Spirit of Christ in us, conforming us to the pattern of his life. In other words, God gave us a person - not a Law.

This makes sense for a lot of reasons. My youngest daughter, Noë, is probably the most expressive of my children. Recently, there has been a surge in her vocabulary; and her knack for imitating noises, expressions and mannerisms amazes me. Humans learn so much by simple imitation. It can be parental models, the human dramas played out on various screens, or even the birds they see in the trees. But what happens when the model is less than stellar? What if the flowing fountain of spiritual teaching is found to be dry concerning spiritual modelling? As someone who prides himself on teaching the Bible, I’ve been more pensive about purposely leading by example and often disappointed at discovering lack.

Chaucer writes in his *Canterbury Tales* this startling line: “If gold rusts, what then will iron do?” I think his point is that the teacher should be a model of his teaching, and if he’s not leading by that example, can we really expect much from his students? No, teachers (and all Christians in general) need to be those types of people that you are around and you find yourself *wanting* to follow them. You’re drawn to them. When you spend time with them and observe their very heart through their words, their lifestyle, their families, you *long* to be like them. Purveyors of spiritual truth should be followable people.

Let’s consider what the Bible says about it.

* What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (**Philippians 4.9**)
* Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. (**1 Corinthians 11.1**)
* And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, (**1 Thessalonians 1.6**)
* For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. (**2 Thessalonians 3.7-9**)
* so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (**Hebrews 6.12**)
* Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. (**Hebrews 13.7**)
* You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, (**2 Timothy 3.10**)
* But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it (**2 Timothy 3.14**)

So, just a few questions as we wrap up. First, do you have someone in your life that inspires you to change, to follow, to model yourself after their aims and lifestyle? We all need that. What are you doing to follow this model? Second, are you being a model to others? Paul was careful to state that he didn’t just share the gospel but his very own life with his people (1Th.2.8), and as Christians we need to share our time with others in order to love, to model and teach the gospel that we adorn in our own lives.