

When you hold any position of leadership — whether in the church or in ministry — as a pastor, teacher, apostle, prophet, deacon, bishop, or elder — remember that those under you will inevitably imitate certain things about you. Therefore, be especially careful to build and guard these areas of your life, because your example shapes those who follow you.

The Apostle Paul saw this truth clearly in the life of his spiritual son Timothy and wrote to him saying:

“But you, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my purpose, my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance; along with the persecutions and sufferings that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra—yet the Lord rescued me from them all.”

(2 Timothy 3:10-11)

Paul lists seven specific qualities that Timothy observed and imitated. Let us reflect on these (and an additional one) as guiding lights for every spiritual leader.

1) HIS TEACHING

As a leader, what you teach will determine what your followers believe and reproduce. If your message centers on prosperity, your people will pursue the same; if your teaching emphasizes salvation, holiness, and repentance, they will walk in that light.

Teaching is not merely about sharing knowledge — it's about shaping spiritual DNA. Therefore, be careful that your doctrine remains grounded in the Word of God, lest you lead your flock astray.

“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

(1 Timothy 4:16)

Every leader will give an account before the Lord for what they have taught.

2) HIS CONDUCT

If your conduct is worldly, do not expect to produce spiritual disciples. Your way of dressing, your speech, your attitude, your humility, and your prayer life all speak louder than your sermons.

Believers naturally imitate their leaders — whether in holiness or in compromise. Therefore, be a living example of Christ's character.

"Set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."
(1 Timothy 4:12)

Leaders are mirrors. Before correcting others, make sure your reflection reveals Christ.

3) HIS PURPOSE

Paul's purpose was clear — to preach Christ to all nations so that

the knowledge of God would fill the earth (*2 Corinthians 1:15-20*). He did not seek fame, wealth, or human recognition. His only aim was to proclaim the gospel regardless of trials or need.

When Timothy saw this single-minded devotion, he imitated it. Likewise, you must examine your motives: *Why are you serving?* Is it for God's glory or personal gain?

"For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."
(*2 Corinthians 4:5*)

Let your purpose reflect Christ's — to serve, not to be served (*Mark 10:45*).

4) HIS FAITH

Faith is foundational to all leadership. If you doubt the power of God — His healing, miracles, or sanctifying grace — your followers will inherit the same unbelief. If you compromise truth, they will too.

A leader's faith must rest solely on the Word of God, not on human wisdom or emotion.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

(Hebrews 11:6)

“The righteous will live by faith.”

(Romans 1:17)

You are called to lead not only by words, but by a life that demonstrates unwavering trust in God.

5) HIS ENDURANCE

Every leader will face seasons of triumph and trial — moments of discouragement, rejection, or loneliness. Paul endured persecutions and hardships, and his disciples observed how he stood firm until victory came.

Your endurance preaches more powerfully than any sermon. When others see you standing in faith through difficulty, they are

strengthened to do the same.

“We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

(Romans 5:3-4)

Sometimes God allows a leader to walk through trials so others can find courage in their example.

6) HIS LOVE

Love is the heartbeat of true leadership. Paul tirelessly demonstrated love toward his disciples and the church. He cared for them, prayed for them, and bore their burdens.

When a leader loves his flock, the people learn to love one another. When he shows bitterness or favoritism, they do the same.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
(John 13:35)

Love is not optional in ministry — it is the mark of divine maturity.

7) HIS PATIENCE

Patience (or longsuffering) is the ability to wait upon God's promises without wavering — even when everything seems to contradict what you believe.

As a leader, others watch how you handle waiting seasons. Your stability inspires theirs.

“You also, be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the coming of the Lord is near.”
(James 5:8)

Job's endurance still teaches believers today. In the same way,

your patience becomes a living classroom for those under your care.

8) HIS TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS

People often draw strength not from your successes but from your scars. When they hear or see how you endured pain, rejection, or hardship for Christ, they find courage to walk their own path faithfully.

Do not be ashamed of your sufferings; share them as testimonies of God's deliverance.

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

(Romans 8:18)

"Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

(2 Timothy 3:12)

The story of Paul's afflictions continues to strengthen believers centuries later — and so will yours.

Therefore, take heed of these eight things — for your sake and for the sake of those who follow you.

As Paul told Timothy, a true leader shapes lives not only through words, but through example.

Let your doctrine, conduct, faith, and endurance reflect the image of Christ.

Be a mirror through which others can clearly see Jesus.

SHALOM.

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”
(1 Corinthians 11:1)

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