

Biblical Learning (& Teaching) Is Rooted in Example

There are many ways of learning or teaching, including:

- Lectures or presentations (like a classroom)
- Reading
- Memorization

Yet ... From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture consistently shows that:

- God (& Jesus) teach through **example**
- Leaders and parents are called to **model** behaviour
- Believers are told to **imitate** what is good
- People absorb conduct by **watching** others

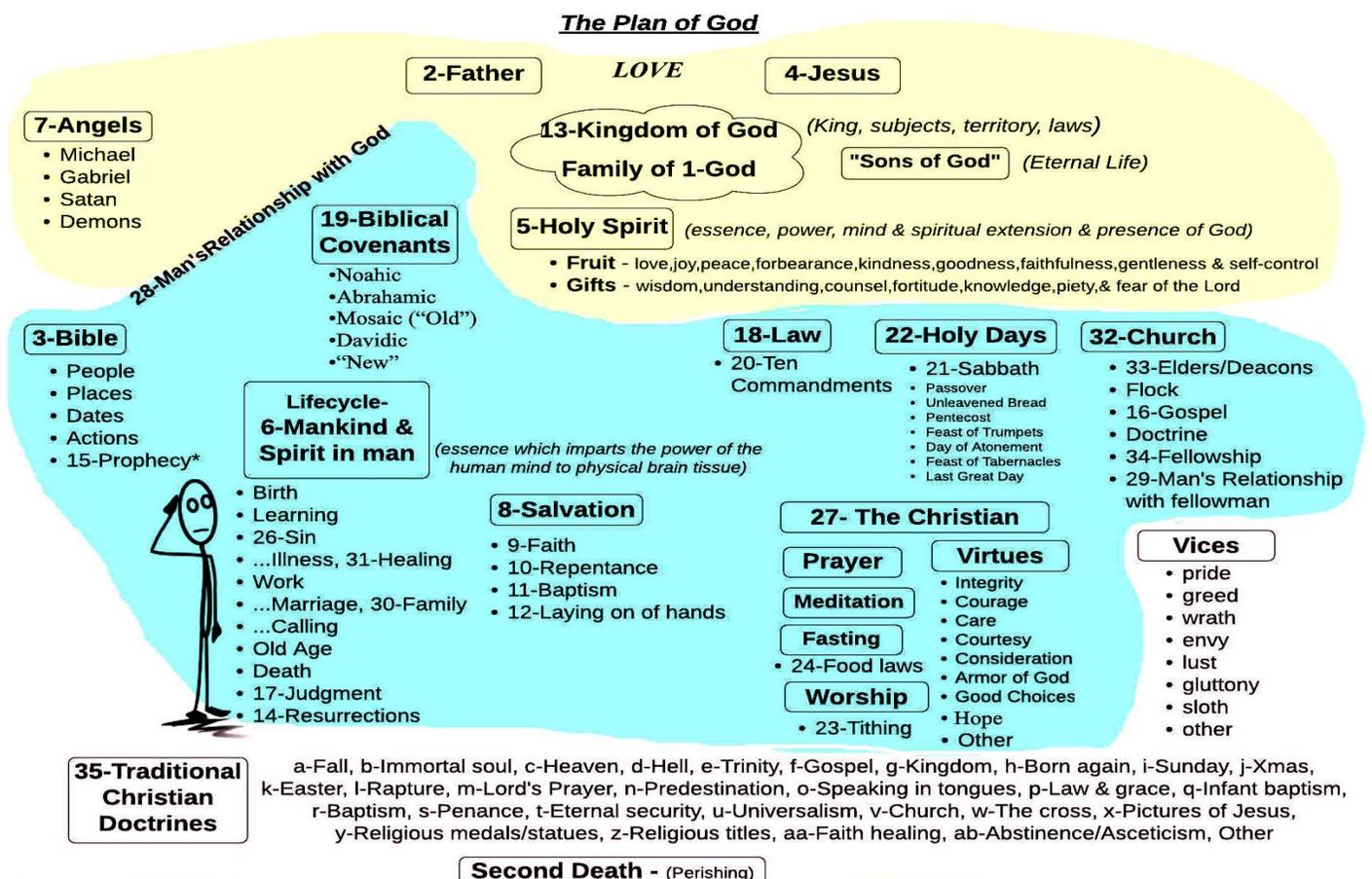
In today's message we will use scripture to explore the power of "**learning from example**" ...

Also called ...

Modeling ... Learning through imitation ... Learning through demonstration ...

Learning by watching ... Seeing & doing ... Behavioural modeling ... Following in someone's footsteps ... Patterning after ... Following an example ... Apprenticeship...

Walking as they walked ... Mentorship ... Discipleship ... Role modeling ... Vicarious learning ...



Time: (Past - History - Creation, 25-Hebrew Calendar ... Present - (World events) ... (Future - 15-Prophecy*) ... Eternity ...)

Jesus Christ as the Supreme Example

John 13:15 For I have given you an **example**, that you should do as I have done to you.

1 Peter 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an **example**, that you should follow His steps.

Apostolic Teaching through Example

1 Corinthians 11:1 **Imitate** me, just as I also **imitate** Christ.

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, join in following my **example**, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a **pattern**.

Elders and Leaders as Examples

1 Peter 5:2–3 Shepherd the flock of God... not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being **examples** to the flock.

Hebrews 13:7 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their **conduct**.”

General Principle of Modeling Good Works

Titus 2:7 In all things **showing yourself** to be a **pattern** of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility.

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an **example** to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Bad Examples as Warnings

1 Corinthians 10:6 Now these things became our **examples**, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

Jude 1:7 As Sodom and Gomorrah... are set forth as an **example**, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (*Observing conduct helps us learn the difference between righteousness & wickedness*)



Jesus' Life as a Visible Teaching Tool

Matthew 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and **learn from Me**, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

John 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but **what He sees the Father do**; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.’”

Mat 5:14-16 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light so shine** before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Faith and Imitation in the Early Church

1 Thessalonians 1:6–7 And you became followers of us and of the Lord... so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.”

2 Corinthians 8:1–5 ... they gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.
*The Macedonians' generosity became an **example** to encourage others to give*

Old Testament Examples for Instruction

Hebrews 11 “Faith Chapter” Features OT heroes held up as **examples** to inspire perseverance

Romans 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our **learning**, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Proverbs 13:20 He who **walks with wise** men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed. (*Association with others teaches by example—wisdom is caught, not just taught*)

Parental & Generational Teaching by Example

Deuteronomy 6:6–7 And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children...”

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, & when he is old he will not depart from it. (*“Training” implies both instruction & example*).

Paul’s Teaching Emphasized Modeling

1 Thessalonians 2:10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly **we behaved ourselves** among you who believe (*an observable model of godliness*)

1 Corinthians 4:16–17 Therefore I urge you, **imitate** me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you... who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

(Paul reinforces that his behaviour is consistent with his teaching, & worth imitating)

Imitation of Good Encouraged

3 John 1:11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

(Disciples are taught to learn by observing good actions, not just hearing good words)

Church Conduct as a Pattern

1 Timothy 3:10 But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. (*Church leaders must have a proven **example** of character*)

Titus 2:2–5 ...the older women likewise, that they be reverent... that they **admonish** the young women to love their husbands... to be discreet, chaste, homemakers...

(Older believers are to teach by living example, especially in character & relationships)



Yikes! Girl Power!

Israel Was to Be an Example to Nations

Deuteronomy 4:6 Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples... who will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’

*(Israel’s obedience was meant to inspire other nations by **example**)*

Examples Used in Prophecy and Warning

Ezekiel 14:8 I will set My face against that man and make him **a sign and a proverb...**”

(Some individuals became living examples of God’s justice for others to learn from)

The Church as a Living Testimony

Philippians 2:14–15 Do all things without complaining & disputing... that you may become blameless... in the midst of a crooked & perverse generation, among whom you **shine as lights** in the world.

*(A godly example shines & teaches **by contrast** with the world)*

Some Examples of People in Scripture ...

Jesus Modeled Prayer & the Disciples Learned by Watching

Luke 11:1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place... one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, **teach us** to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’



Job as an Example of Perseverance

James 5:10–11 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an **example** of suffering and patience... You have heard of the perseverance of Job...”

*(Job & the prophets serve as **instructional models** in enduring hardship faithfully)*

Scriptural Stories Were Written as Examples

1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as **examples**, and they were written for our **admonition...**

(The stories of Israel’s failures & blessings are recorded specifically as learning tools)

King David’s Example Inspired Solomon

1 Kings 3:6 You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father... because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart...

(Solomon acknowledged his father David’s example as a model of godly leadership)

Ezra Practiced What He Taught

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

(Ezra didn’t just teach the law—he lived it first, showing the power of example before instruction)

Bad vs. Good Examples in Scripture - *Learning through Contrast in God's Word*

<u>Bad Example</u>	<u>Good Example</u>	<u>Key Scripture</u>	<u>Lesson</u>
Cain – offered an unacceptable sacrifice and killed his brother	Abel – offered a more excellent sacrifice by faith	Genesis 4:3–5; Hebrews 11:4	Worship must be sincere and in faith; jealousy leads to destruction
King Saul – disobeyed God, feared people	David – a man after God's heart, repented of sin	1 Samuel 15:24–26 vs. Acts 13:22	Obedience is greater than sacrifice; God values repentance and humility
Judas Iscariot – betrayed Jesus for money	Mary of Bethany – anointed Jesus out of love	Matthew 26:14–16 vs. John 12:3–7	True devotion costs something; love honors Christ, greed destroys
The Pharisee – trusted in his own righteousness	The Tax Collector – humbled himself before God	Luke 18:10–14	Pride in religion is blinding; humility leads to mercy
Ananias & Sapphira – lied to God to look generous	Barnabas – gave sincerely from the heart	Acts 5:1–10 vs. Acts 4:36–37	God sees the heart; false appearances are deadly
The Rich Young Ruler – refused to follow Jesus because of wealth	Zacchaeus – gave up riches gladly to follow Christ	Matthew 19:21–22 vs. Luke 19:8–9	Earthly riches can hinder salvation; generosity shows transformation
The Israelites in the wilderness – complained, disbelieved	Joshua & Caleb – believed God's promise and acted in faith	Numbers 14:1–10, 24	Faith brings blessing; fear and rebellion bring loss
Peter (in fear) – denied Jesus three times	Peter (restored) – boldly preached Christ at Pentecost	Luke 22:61–62 vs. Acts 2:14–41	Failure can be restored; God uses the repentant powerfully
Demas – loved this present world and abandoned Paul	Timothy – stayed faithful to Paul and the Gospel	2 Timothy 4:10 vs. Philippians 2:19–22	Worldliness pulls people away; loyalty and service are honorable
The Foolish Virgins – unprepared when the bridegroom came	The Wise Virgins – prepared and ready for the bridegroom	Matthew 25:1–13	Be spiritually ready; preparation shows wisdom and faith
King Herod – took glory for himself and was struck by God	John the Baptist – said, “He must increase, but I must decrease”	Acts 12:21–23 vs. John 3:30	Self-exaltation leads to ruin; humility honors God
Esau – sold his birthright for a meal	Joseph – resisted temptation and trusted God through trials	Genesis 25:33–34 vs. Genesis 39:7–12	Impulse destroys inheritance; integrity is rewarded in time



Where is “example” effectively used in Society today??

- Education
- Parenting & Child Development
- Workplace & Leadership
- Religion & Ethics
- Law & Government (eg Case Law (precedent) & Public policy (model from success))
- Media & Entertainment (Storytelling, Influencer Culture)
- Health & Wellness (Fitness coaching, Using real stories RE: smoking or drunk driving)
- Social Movements (Activism examples, Role Models, Peer Influence - I can do it too!)
- Technology & Innovation (Templates, Case Studies ... Marketing - satisfied users)
- Everyday communication (People say “For example...” to make ideas understandable)



How to Be a Godly Example in Daily Life

<u>Area</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Action</u>
Speech	Col. 4:6 – “Let your speech always be with grace...”	Avoid gossip; use encouraging words
Conduct	Titus 2:7 – “In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works...”	Be reliable, hardworking, respectful
Faith	Hebrews 13:7 – “...follow their faith...”	Show trust in God during trials
Love	John 13:34-35 - “A new commandment ...”	Treat others with kindness, forgiveness, compassion
Purity	Philippians 4:8 - Finally, brethren, whatever things are true ... noble ...just ...pure... lovely ... of good report... any virtue ... anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things	Maintain moral boundaries in relationships, media, & behavior

Why Example-Based Learning Is Central in the Bible

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Concrete over abstract	Examples are more memorable than rules.
Modeling shows how to live	It bridges the gap between belief and behavior.
Reveals character in action	Especially true with Christ and the apostles.
Accessible to all	People of any age, education, or culture can understand examples.
Enduring over time	Stories & lives are passed down more easily than abstract lists.

God is not only a speaker—He is a demonstrator, & He calls His people to learn by watching, imitating, & *becoming like Christ* & His faithful servants.