



A Good Example

Part 3 – In Conduct

Scott McElvain

Good morning, Woodland Hills Family Church. How are we doing today? My name is Scotty Mac; I'm a part of the teaching team here at Woodland Hills. I want to welcome everybody here in the Castle, in the Chapel, and maybe a couple of you outside as it sounds like the temperature might be warming up a little bit. We're glad you're here today.

Each and every week, we take an offering, so we're excited about that. We have four different ways you can do that. We have offering boxes located in the foyer. We have a Church Center app that I can personally attest to. My wife and I have currently signed up with one of the groups and the app has been really great. So if you haven't downloaded that, go ahead and do that. It's a really easy deal. The other way is you can visit woodhills.org. Finally, the last one is you can text an amount to 84321. I'm still blown away by this technology; it seems crazy but it's 84321. You can text a dollar amount and give to Woodland Hills. So, thank you for that.

I am going to begin with a full confession. I have made a huge mistake. This mistake started, and it reared its head a couple of weeks ago. You see, on one of those really nice Saturdays that we had, the one that was really nice, beautiful weather. I don't know if it's just me, but does it not feel like the weather just can't figure out where we're heading and in what consistent direction here? But it was a really nice Saturday. I remember that it was one of those days where I was like, *You know what? Nicole and I have to have a good heart to heart, getting on the same page conversation.* Many of you know that if you have children around the ages of seven, six, and three, a 15-minute conversation with no distractions is almost impossible; the stars have to align like crazy. Well, the stars were aligning. We kicked the boys out; it was beautiful outside. We had Sis up playing with her dolls and kitchen in her room. So I thought, *Here we go; we're going to get on the same page.* We had been at odds a little bit and we are going to get on the same page.

We sit down and we are starting to have this conversation. I kid you not, two minutes in, Hudson is at that door off this little porch we have in our master. Boom, Boom, Boom, "Dad! Water!" I just go, "Turn it off!" And just shooed him. He just turns back around and goes, "No, Dad, tons of water!" I throw my shoes on and I go downstairs in the basement, and we've got the basement flooded. Now, here's the ownership. It was completely my fault. When we moved into the house, we realized the spigot on the front of the house was not working, so we enlisted my father-in-law to help us figure that out and we fixed some things and got it working. To do that, we had to take off some siding underneath our front porch and take out the insulation and fix some PVC piping.

Well, I just never got around to putting that insulation back and the siding back up because I thought since it was under the deck; that's not like really outside, right? It's kind of but not really. Well, I paid for that, right? So, we get to cleaning out. We borrowed shop vacs and fans from all our friends, and we just got to town. We cleaned that thing up. We got Servpro out there to figure it out and help us know where the water had been and what we needed to take out and all these things.

My father-in-law is a master carpenter, truly, floor to finish, the real deal. He knows how to do everything. I know how to do nothing. I mean nothing. I am starting from zero every single time a project comes up. Now, we start doing some stuff and he gives me a project. Okay, here we go; here's my chance to shine. He says, "I want you to chalk a line on the drywall. I want you to cut out that drywall and cut the insulation." The verbals here were like, "Uh huh, yep, uh huh, got that." In the back of my mind, no idea, no clue how to do that.

My father-in-law leaves and I do what I do more than I'd like to admit. I pull out my phone and I open up an application called YouTube. I type *how to chalk a line, how to cut drywall*. I'm on there for like 45 minutes and I'm ready to go. A couple of days later, I get down there, chalk the line, cut the drywall, cut the insulation and I step back and I go, "This is good. I'm the man."

James comes back a couple of days later and I'm very intentional because I'm looking for a little praise here. Like, you know, "Nice job." I follow him down to the basement, we walk into that room, and I can't even believe I said this. I go, "Look at that straight line. Does that look like a straight line to you?" James was very kind, "Yes it does." And I just couldn't keep my mouth shut. I had to go on and explain all the things I had learned and how I did it and all these great things. I said, "Yeah, I chalked the line and I cut it, but it would have been so much more helpful if I would have had that little level that sits on the chalk line that tells you if that line is straight."

James just give me that look like, *I have no ideal what you're taking about* looks. I'm like, "You know, it's just like a little level that sits on the chalk line to help me know that line was straight." He goes, "Why would you need that?" I go, "I didn't now how else to know if it was a straight line or not." He pulls out his tape measure and just walks over to the wall and goes, "You just measure it and make marks down the line of the drywall and then you just chalk it." It was one of those moments where two things are happening. I am like, *that's a good point*. In the back of my head, again the internal conversation is like, *You dufus, you dufus!* It even gets better, right? Because if he had seen the way that I did that... I'm lying on the floor with the chalk line extended all the way out here and I've got this big level and I'm like measuring it, trying to pull the line up to the level to see if it's level. It was worse than he even knows. He's probably going, *He is a dufus for doing that*. I looked so silly.

My story highlights something that I think you understand as much as I do, and that is that there is a huge difference between someone telling you how to do something and showing you how to do it. I could have saved myself a lot of time and looking like a dufus if I had just said, "James, how would you do that?" He would have just pulled out his tape measure and done the same thing. It would have been a 30-minute deal. But I didn't do that. What I got was "I need you to chalk it, cut it, and move on." I didn't have that perfect picture enough to follow that. This is why we get these sayings in our culture like this – "a picture is worth a thousand words."

I don't go to blogs to figure out how to install a ceiling fan. I don't go to blogs, or I don't read a manual... In fact, I've completely abandoned installation manuals. Is anybody else with me? Like just throw that thing away and pull up You Tube and move on with your life.

That's because I just need to see it. You can show me what to do, I can follow that. You give me an example, I can walk in it. You Tube is the second largest website on the internet. Think about this for a second; it has two billion users. Two billion streaming one billion videos a day. They're gross in add revenue in 2021 is 5.6 billion dollars. They understand something you and I understand. It is so powerful to see it done. Pew research did a study last year on You Tube users and found out that 51% of those that use and utilize You Tube are doing it to learn something. Fifty-one percent are using You Tube because they can see it and copy it. They can watch it and know how to do it.

I can't tell you how many things around the house or in my work or in my job that I've just said let me check out You Tube. I am known as the IT guy at my school. Mind you, we have no technology in our school so I am the IT guy for a techless school, but you would be surprised how much need there is for that. I simply just look at You Tube, walk into their office, click six buttons, and they think I'm a genius. All I did was do a little search... Now I don't tell them that, but I just search it and do it. I want to keep that title.

The truth is I often need to see it to follow it. I need the example to imitate. I need pictures often to help me learn and grow. And as we are in this series *A Good Example*, in 1 Timothy 4: 12, Paul is speaking to Timothy. And in this passage, he writes, **12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.**

Two weeks ago, Ted tackled speech, Shay had love last week, and today, we are going to be talking about conduct. One of the things that I think happens is when we become familiar with a verse, we glance over it. We don't give it the time that maybe fresh eyes would have if we read it for the first time. For me, one of the things that really pique my interest, that I want to camp on for just a second, is if you were to give me this passage and you were to say, "Scotty, tell me who it is that Paul is telling Timothy to be an example to." Do you know what I would say? I would say he's probably saying, "Be an example to those who don't know Jesus. Be an example to the unbelievers that you come into contact with." But he doesn't say that does he?

He says, ...**but set the believers an example.** Why? Why is he instructing Timothy to be an example to believers? Why is that he would say this. Well, again, coming back to my original opening point, I think, much like us, the You tube community, it's I need pictures. I need to see men and women following their conviction and commitment to Christ that I might imitate, that I might learn, that I might follow them. This idea of imitation, right? It is a concept that Paul is very adamant about. We're going to run through a couple of scriptures and you're going to get bored by the amount, as many times as I share, and Paul talking about this.

1 Corinthians 4: 15-16 - **15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me.**

1 Corinthians 11, 1 Be *imitators me, as I am of Christ.*

Philippians 3: 17 – *Brothers, join in imitating me.* Paul is pretty serious about this concept.

Philippians 4: 9 – *What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things and the God of peace will be with you.*

2 Thessalonians 3: 7-9 – *7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8 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. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.*

This concept that Paul is talking about – imitate me as I imitate Christ – is the same idea. Paul is presenting pictures to other believers about what it means to faithfully follow Christ in all facets of his life, in every nook and cranny of his heart. And this is not Paul saying, “Look at me, look at me, give me glory, give me praise,” but rather “See what Christ has done in my life, see how Jesus has changed me, see the new life I live and let us imitate and follow Christ together.”

So, today, as we jump into In Conduct, what does it mean then to be an example to believers in conduct. Fair question for us this morning. My answer to that would be this. Our actions show pictures of a life committed to following Jesus. If you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, you have made a commitment. You have died to yourself, you have fired yourself being a king and the master of your own life, and you have accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. He sits on the thrown of your heart. The old is gone; the new is come. Your affections change, what you desire in life changes. Everything changes when you make that commitment.

I think about people in my life. Biggest impact. Mike Higgins was my K-Life leader growing up. Mike was a big dude, but he had the most gentle heart. He was a gentle gentleman. I attended K-life for many years. I went to Club, and I heard him talk about Jesus and I heard him make a case for Christ week in and week out. But you know what was the most impactful thing to me? It was to see Mike Higgins not only preach the gospel but live the gospel. For when I was invited into Mike Higgins’ house, I got to see Mike and the pictures of what it meant to be a kind, encouraging, gentle husband. To see the pictures of him being a father, a patient, loving, kind man to his children. And I got to see him in many different contexts. And those pictures stayed with me. I am better for them. I’ve learned to imitate that.

There was an outdoor basketball court right across the street. Often times, there were some rough dudes out there who were really good at basketball. He’d take us over there and we would play. To see how Mike interacted with those young men, to see how he let a foul go and didn’t throw a fit or walk away frustrated from losing a game that meant nothing... Those are pictures that I am better for seeing.

I don’t think this was random on Mike’s part. I don’t think he fell into this. I don’t think it was happenstance that I just happened to have Scotty Mac along with me when I was doing life. He just

happens to be here. He just keeps showing up. No. He was inviting me. He was bringing me in. He was allowing me to see how he is following Christ in these different roles and responsibilities God has given him. I learned from that. I grew from that. "Come," he would say. Mature believers, we should be saying that. Come, young believer, come see what it means to lead a family devotion. Come to my dinner table and see what it means for us to be a family in prayer. Come, let me show you what it means to study the scriptures. Let me sit you down and walk you through that. Let me show you how I do this. Come, let me show you; let me give you pictures of what it means to run a business in light of being a follower of Christ. We can read that... There is no shortage of books and blogs and all that. There is no shortage of information, is there? But to see people living that out, to see them doing that is transformative. As they are following Christ.

I think it's a fair question for us to ponder this morning. What does the way you live your life, especially how you _____, say about Jesus? If somebody were to follow you around, somebody were to take... Let's just take one example. If somebody were to say, "Show me how you deal with your finances." In life and what does that reflect about Jesus? You can fill that blank with anything. How I run my business, how I treat people I don't know, how I treat people who say mean things online... What does it say about Jesus? What kind of pictures are we providing?

Sometimes, I think it's helpful for us to flip it. What would it mean to not be a good example? One way would be that we say one thing and do another. I believe we are in a culture today that is foaming at the mouth to jump on hypocrites. We are just ready to pounce on anybody that says one thing and does another thing. Now, this is not my stance or any of my beliefs but just take the Super Bowl for example. It was a phenomenal game. It was really hard to watch. Being a Chief's fan, I just wanted the Rams to win so badly. Ugh! I wanted the Rams.

But you know what? I loved pulling up the news and articles about the Super Bowl. There are just these wild stats. Stats about how many people were viewing, how many hot dogs were consumed. It was just like this incredible things that the Super Bowl is. One of the things... and I find this so alarming. As much as that was a phenomenal game, and Aaron Donald showed himself to be the man, I felt like I read as many articles or people commenting about the amount of celebrities not wearing masks at the Super Bowl. We are willing to just pounce on that. People that say one thing and do another.

Paul is saying to Timothy, "Be an example. Live what you believe. Follow in that. Be pictures that other people might follow."

One of the reasons that the McElvains have decided to be at Woodland Hills for nine years is because I know these people. I know the teaching team. Over these nine years, I've been able to develop friendships and relationships. I could have very well just sat at home and thrown a sermon on. But do you know why I don't? It's because when the teaching team gets up here – Travis, Adam, Shay, Ted – I see them, I know them, I know that what they preach and the convictions they have and their commitment to Jesus. They are living those things out. There is authenticity there. And I've learned from it, I've grown from it. They have provided pictures in relationships and fellowships and even saying, "Come, watch me; follow me." That's one of the big reasons we've been here; is that community and knowing.

I want to finish with answering the question: "How do we grow in conduct?" It's really simple, but really hard. It's two things for me. The first one is reflection. That maybe you would stop today at some point or this week, and you would sit down and you would ask the question – If I were to take a picture of all the roles, responsibilities, and hats that the Lord has given me – to be a father, husband, son, basketball coach for my boys, a student... - would people say, that there is a reflection of somebody who has committed their life to Christ? Would it be easily said, as we peer into those picture, "It's marked by a commitment to Christ."?

I also say that we ask the Lord to be a part of that. We invite the Lord into that. "Lord, reveal to me ways in which my conduct is not honoring unto you, that I look like the rest of the world, and I do not look like a marked life after Christ. That we would come and ask the Holy Spirit to come and reveal those things to us.

The second thing is much of my point the entire time and that is imitate. First and foremost, we imitate Christ. That's why we study our scriptures, that's why we gather together. We imitate Christ as he is the ultimate picture of these things. He is the perfect picture of these things. Think about it for a second. The audacity... The God of the universe sent his son to be born in a manger, to live a life amongst us. He didn't have to do that. He could have very well had men and women throughout history pen love letters, but he didn't. He demonstrated that. I always think of Romans 5: 8 - ***But God demonstrates his own love towards us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*** God sent his Son, the God Man, to the cross for us, demonstrating his love. That's living it out.

I don't know about you, but I can hardly get through watching The Passion each year. When I see Jesus being whipped... It's hard to see it, isn't it? Because when we see that, it takes it to a different level than sometimes when we read that. To see those pictures of Jesus being whipped and flogged, a crown of thorns, and nailed to the cross, it hits differently. Again, I think that's why things like The Chosen are very helpful and impactful. As we see somebody's depiction of what Jesus' life here on earth might have looked like. Those pictures really help us.

The second thing I would encourage you to think about is imitating other, more mature believers that you might humble yourself, that you might come and say, "Older man in faith, would you teach me, would you show me what this looks like in your life that I might also learn and walk in that." You can show me examples of how you do your devotions or how you treat people or what giving looks like for you. Often, I find that when I ask those questions, what I find is a lot simpler than sometimes I believe it to be. And the best way I know how to describe that is to give you a great story.

I came to C of O for two reasons. First of all, I was offered a basketball scholarship to pass the ball to a bunch of these guys in the back here. That was my job: just pass them the ball. But then the second thing was I heard about a program call then the Bonner Program. In that it was a community service work station where you got to serve different not for profit organizations and ministries in the area. I've already mentioned that K-Life had a really big impact in my life. When I heard that K-Life was one of those not for profit that I could serve in, I thought to myself, *I can play basketball and I can pay for my college by serving in a ministry that I wanted to serve in anyway? Done.*

So, of course, like a first semester freshman, I'm supposed to be at Club at a certain time and I show up late. I walk in there and Club is going on. I sit down. Worship is going on. I don't know a soul in there. I sit down. The door blows open in the back, there's a big bang, and up comes this kind of like America music. In walks this guy in jean shorts, an American flag tank top, and this mullet wig on with these glasses. He's just singing America... He's walking through the crowd and all these kids are loving it. He's telling this whole story and all the kids are going nuts.

Well, that happened to be Shay Robbins, so now you totally understand how that could be Shay 15 years ago. Shay was killing it. I'm excited to work for this guy. Well, a couple of months in, he calls me. He says, "Hey, Scotty, meet me at Skate Land Friday night." There wasn't much context other than that. So, I think it's a student event. I show up, he meets me out front and goes, "Hey, we're going in to love on kids and tell them about Jesus, let's go." We walk in and Shay just goes to work. He's loving on kids, talking about Jesus, inviting them to K-Life, just having a blast.

Now, that picture of evangelism was far more impactful to see Shay living that out than any lecture, than any book I could have sat down and read that night. The picture he presented to me was so helpful. Just going in and talking about Jesus, getting to know these kids, evangelizing. Sometimes we make it more complicated than it needs to be. And when I see it in other people's lives, I can go, I see that, I can do that.

The last one might be the hardest and it's for you to take an evaluation. Are you an example? Is there anything in your life worthy of imitation that we might strengthen the body of Christ, that we might be able to share with those younger in faith?"

I end with this story that I heard from Pastor Voddie Baucham. He tells a story about a master brick layer. This brick layer has been laying bricks for 30 years. A young man comes to him and says, "Brick Layer, can you teach me your trade? I see you have been committed to this for a long time. Will you teach me the tips and the tricks to do this thing right??"

The brick layer kind of leans back and goes, "I ain't no brick layer. I ain't no master. I got nothing to teach you. I got nothing to share with you."

That's ridiculous, right? That would be utterly ridiculous if that were true. My hope and prayer is that is not true for us as well. That we have been trying to follow Jesus for 10, 20, 30 years and we would say, "I have nothing to share with you. I have no pictures for you of what it looks like to follow Jesus."

We need pictures. We need men and women sold out to the cross of Christ, faithfully following through with the responsibilities and roles that God has entrusted with us that we are to be imitating Christ and playing that out in our lives. And as we do that, we bring along young men and women who are new in the faith and we say, "Watch me. Follow me. Learn from me." That we might also be doing that ourselves. That in each and every area of our lives, it would be said, "This is a picture of Jesus." We're not perfect. Only Jesus is perfect. But we do as best we can.

Father, I thank you that we are gathered here today to study your word. Lord, as we think about the picture you have provided us in Jesus, we are thankful that you've given us an example for us to follow in, for us to replicate and imitate. And Lord, may we begin to see our need for examples and seek that out, humble ourselves, ask questions, and may we also think in terms of how we can also provide pictures for young people in their faith.

Lord, you are mighty to save, you are beautiful and wonderful. Lord, we thank you and we praise you. It's in your name we pray. Amen.