

On Father's Day we tend to hear about the attributes people admire in their fathers or remember them for: hard work, patience, integrity.

Our dads are examples to us. This morning Shane read from Ephesians chapter 6 "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord," Dr. Hovis talked about how he learned a lot about cars and business from seeing his father work. I've learned a lot about how to treat people and to have a good sense of humor from my own dad.

Anybody can tell us what to do. But the people we probably learn the most from are the ones who *show* us how to live. The same way our dads are examples of life and Christian character for *each* us, so is our Heavenly father an example for *all* of us.

In his First Epistle to the churches in Asia, Peter explained how God's people should act. He writes, "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." As far back as the beginning of Creation, God gave Adam and Eve rules. He gave his commandments to the Israelites through Moses. But the purpose of our lives is not to follow strict codes. It is to have faith and to set an example by following the one God himself set for us when he entered our world in human form.

Having such a good example as Christ himself to follow, I wonder sometimes "what kind of example am I?". When I go to work or school or hang out with my friends, would my dad be proud of how I follow his example? Would God? Would my friends guess I was a Christian if they didn't know? Do I set an example for the people around me?

Whether we like it or not, whether we try to be or not, as Christians we *are* an example. As many mornings and afternoons and nights as I spend at one church or another I know the people around me know that I'm a Christian. More than likely, so do the people around you. When they hear the words that come out of our mouths, when they see how we treat people or what we do with our lives, they are seeing an example of *something*. Is it a good example? One they would want to follow?

None of us can claim to be perfect. That's just something we have to accept about being human. In fact, God has used the *imperfect* examples of some of the people closest to me to show me exactly what *not* to do. But remembering that we are going to be an

example, for good or for bad, and representing Christ and his church to those around us, we should remember to look to Christ's example of life if we hope to share his love with those around us.

Titus 2:7 says "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness." In *everything* set them an example. Not just when we put on a shirt and tie to go to church. Not just in attending bible study during the week or maybe going on a mission trip on summer vacation, but in the way we act throughout every day we should *follow* Jesus' example and *be* an example to the world.