

# Jesus Is Worth It

## Part 10 - "The Marks of a Christian"

### Text | 2 Timothy 3:10-15

Delivered at Central Baptist Church on July 14, 2019, by Pastor Steven Edelman

#### Who are you modeling? What from your life is being caught by others?

**STORY:** It's often said that the more time you spend with someone the more you start to become like them. You may start to pick up on their mannerisms and behaviors.

Early in our relationship, I discovered that Megan, my wife was a conflict avoider. She was, what my mother regularly referred to her as, a gentle flower. On the flip side of our newly blossoming relationship, she discovered that I thrived in conflict! I enjoyed debate and the challenge of trying to sort things out. My family was very verbal and vocal with our thoughts and opinions. **If Megan was a gentle flower, I was at times a weedwhacker.** As we began our marriage, it became obvious that if a battle needed to be fought, a product be returned, or if a contract was to be negotiated, I had the privilege of taking care of it. Often times, when she had to deal with a difficult person at work, I would model for her on how to handle it. She would try to avoid conflict at all costs. A couple of years into our marriage we went through the process of buying our first house. We spent months looking at several houses in Abbotsford, and in the end, found one that was \*almost\* right. Our realtor made us a number of promises to help close the deal, and one of those promises was that he would legalize the suite...this was HUGE for us! Even though we got all of this in writing, he ended up not holding his end of the bargain. And this was NOT cool with Megan, so apparently, one day while I was at work, she took matters into her own hands... my gentle flower grew some thorns. I still remember, pulling into the driveway one evening and seeing the realtor come out the front door. As I approached him, he just said this: "I am actually scared of your wife!" I looked over at Megan who was just smiling in the doorway who looked like she just won a pillow fight with a bully. After he left, I asked her what happened, and she said "**I became you! I did all the things you taught me!**" She cornered him with the marks of truth, and he had to face the facts and the wrath of Megan. **She followed my example and imitated me for good or for worse.** Let's just say that at two decades into our relationship, we are a good match in conflict.

Just like in the story, we are all living examples or models to the people in our life. **Our kids, co-workers, friends, and family are watching us. Even MORE than that they are listening to us. They are soaking up our attitude towards work, our response to difficulty, the way we talk about people, the way we use our money, the way we handle conflict, and how we respond when we are frustrated. They are watching it all and are being shaped by the small, everyday moments. Not just the big ones.** A lot of what you do is caught and not just taught. How we live our life really does matter. **Who or what are you modelling? What is being caught by others?**

**(SLIDE 1)** We are in the middle of a series in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy called, "Jesus Is Worth It" and today is "Part 10: The Marks of a Christian." This sermon will help us understand the importance of modeling the gospel.

In 2nd Timothy, Paul is equipping a young pastor named Timothy to prepare for difficulty. Paul is telling him that life is only going to get more difficult because of sinful behavior. Paul is saying, look to my example when things are hard. The way you live matters.

**In the next few minutes, I want to focus on how we are called to:**

- 1. MODEL THE GOSPEL**
- 2. MODEL DISCERNMENT**
- 3. MODEL FAITHFULNESS**

**(SLIDE 2)** As people who love God, we are called to:

- 1. MODEL THE GOSPEL (3:10-12)**

- a) Paul's example because of the gospel (v 10) (SLIDE 3)**

Look with me at 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy chapter 3:10 which says, “*You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness....*”

In other words, Paul’s life was a real example of Christianity. **The word “followed” literally means to follow alongside, to accompany.** Paul was challenging Timothy to recall the discipleship experience that began with his conversion as a teenager during Paul’s first missionary journey in Asia Minor. **Some scholars say that Paul had been present and very likely was instrumental in Timothy’s conversion.**<sup>1</sup> Timothy would have heard Paul’s sermons, followed his teaching, and watched him make disciples. Not only did Timothy follow Paul’s teaching, but he also followed his conduct and his true character in private and in public. Paul is reminding Timothy to imitate Him, as Paul has imitated Christ. **Paul is reminding Timothy what the marks of a Christian look like.**

**Paul modeled the gospel by: (SLIDE 4)**

- i. Paul modelled by **teaching** the gospel message wherever he went. Sharing the gospel was just part of his rhythm of life. Paul was constantly talking about what Christ did for him!
- ii. Paul modelled Christ in how he **conducted** himself in all areas of his life. He was a man of character. Character trumps competency in ministry.
- iii. Paul modelled what it meant to live with purpose! His **aim in his life** in that he truly lived for Christ. His primary focus was building God’s Kingdom and everything else was secondary. It wasn’t just journeying or hanging out with other Christians. It wasn’t just hosting a Bible study. He was on God’s mission because he had a clear purpose.
- iv. Paul modelled a life of **faith** because he lived confidently for God.
- v. Paul modelled **patience as he** reflected a forbearance toward people and circumstances.
- vi. Paul modeled **love** by embracing both friends and enemies alike.
- vii. Paul modeled **steadfastness** or endurance as an attitude of perseverance that controlled discouragement under trying circumstances. Paul will shortly mention sufferings. Elsewhere he writes that such sufferings produce “endurance” or “perseverance” (as in Rom 5:3).<sup>2</sup>

**This is what Paul is saying, here are some of the signs that will help you navigate anything so that you know your life is pointed at Christ.** The lines that keep you on the road. These are the marks of Christian that Paul was telling Timothy to remember.

**Application:**

So, really, can we live up to this? This creates considerable pressure when we simply try to live up to a standard or change our behavior. Is it even possible? It means that we can never let down our guard. It’s too much pressure. If someone had open access to your life, what would they see? Paul is saying that we shouldn’t mind our life being under continuous inspection. If we are to say, “imitate me” our life must be lived in such a way that we don’t mind it being under constant watch.

How can Paul say this? **In some ways, the wrong question is can we be a model of the gospel? The reality is that whether or not we accept it, our lives are an example. People are modeling us without us always knowing it. It’s not a question of whether or not we want to be an example, the question is, who are you a living example of?**

**Story:** My youngest was having difficulty with something in the living room and in her little kid’s voice I hear “what the heck!” Later on, that same day at the lunch table she knocks something over and again says, “what the heck!” I turn over to her with the look of disapproval and said, “where did you learn to say that!?!? Well, the entire family looks and points at me! In that moment, I started to have a flash back of times I did say, “what the heck!” I also started to remember some other things that I did in front of

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes, R. K., & Chapell, B. (2000). *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: to guard the deposit* (p. 231). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

<sup>2</sup> Yarbrough, R. W. (2018). *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*. (D. A. Carson, Ed.) (p. 420). Grand Rapids, MI; London: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos.

my kids in moments of frustration that were also not so great! **I think we all need God take a mirror and ask Him to show us what actions we are displaying. He showed me how important it is that I modeled the gospel well.**

Are we living out the values we are teaching? As a follower of Christ, are we easily telling others to share but are we being generous with our resources and time? We can remind others to be thankful but how many times a day do we complain? We tell others to be patient but how do we respond when things don't go our way?

**Paul is saying to Timothy, follow my example. Imitate Christ!**

Next, let's look at Paul's problems because of the gospel.

**b) Paul's problems because of the gospel (v11-12) (SLIDE 5)**

Let's look at verse 11 and 12 together which says, *"You have followed... my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted..."*

What is persecution? It is defined as someone who is mistreated, exiled, killed or suffers for their faith. In these verses, Paul reminds us about the persecution and suffering he faced.

**Paul reminisces some difficult events to remind Timothy:**

- i. In Antioch – The Jews became jealous and talk abusively towards Paul (Acts 13:45, 50).
- ii. In Iconium – The Jews poisoned people against Paul and Barnabas who plotted to mistreat and stone them (Acts 14:2, 5-6).
- iii. In Lystra - Paul was stoned so severely in Lystra they thought he was dead ([Acts 14:19](#)). This is why Paul says at the end of verse 11, *"which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me."*

Paul is telling Timothy, "when we take a stand for Christ and live out the gospel in an evil world, you will be mistreated because of me." **Don't think it's bizarre when things get difficult. Know it is coming.**

**(SLIDE 6)** Jim Erwin says, **"Especially for American Christians, we have to accept this reality. We don't have persecution like other groups. We complain and moan about our conditions while we sit in an air-conditioned (million-dollar) building. We whine about the rights that we think are being taken away. We are upset that other groups which we don't like are beginning to get more attention than we are. This isn't persecution. This is inconvenience, but let's not confuse it with persecution.**

**(SLIDE 7)** Christians in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East who are being tortured and killed by Islamic State terrorists – those Christians are encountering persecution. They are suffering for their faith by their deaths. Using Paul's words, they are living a more godly life in Christ Jesus than we are. They don't have the inconvenience of saying: "I don't want to go to that church because they offended my family." They have to choose between life and death. But if we are really going to live for Jesus Christ, we need to embrace persecution."

Paul is saying, that people who love God will face problems because they are living out the gospel. It's not always happy BBQ's and air-conditioned services. You don't always see conversions and baptisms. When we do celebrate conversions and baptisms it's not about giving credit to a pastor because it's about what God did! This is why Paul is telling us that when we serve Christ, we are more likely to encounter abuse, mistreatment, and suffering, just like he did. Not self-glory or an easy life!

**We are called to teach the Word of God, be people of character, purpose, and love not matter what happens. This is what it means to be model the gospel.**

As people who love God, we are called to model the gospel.

**(SLIDE 8) As people who love God, we are called to:**

**2. MODEL DISCERNMENT (3:13)**

**Look with me at verse 3:13 which says, “while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”**

Paul is warning Timothy and the church to guard what is good. To make sure you are not deceived by evil people. **Evil imposters are simply people who oppose God and the good news. They may say they love God with their lips, but their lives model something different.** We outlined the marks of evil people last week. They were identified by being lovers of themselves, lovers of pleasure, and pride to name a few. Paul is saying that they not only succeeded in deceiving others, but also in losing their own ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

The **Greek word for deceiving** means something that causes one to wander, go astray or seduce from God’s truth or safety. **The point is, Evil people will deceive others, but sadly they themselves were deceived.**

**One of the main tactics of the enemy is to deceive us with counterfeit things.**

**Story:** My identity was stolen. I got a call from a police officer who said, “I just pulled over someone who said they were Steven Edelman and they had DL that name to prove it.”

**We determine if something is counterfeit by looking for the signs of authenticity. This is what it looks like to use discernment.** It is the ability to make judgments, to distinguish between, and recognize the implications of, different situations and courses of action. It includes the ability to “weigh up” and assess situations, individuals, groups, and what is from God and what is not. Someone with the gift of discernment can easily see what is counterfeit or how evil can deceive us.

*2 Corinthians 13:5 says, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you-- unless, of course, you fail the test?”* Then we test our own words and actions to be sure we are in the Faith and in sound doctrine.

*1 Thessalonians 5:21 says, “Test everything. Hold on to the good.”*

**This means we need to test what is being taught with scripture to make sure it’s right. We also need to test ourselves to make sure we are not deceived.**

**Here is a very practical way that we can use and model discernment for us and others. One of the ways we can test things It’s by asking the why question!**

**(SLIDE 9) Jonathan Dodson says,** “The why question is important because it gets to the motivation behind our sin; it addresses the heart. No one ever sins out of duty. We all sin because we want to, because our heart longs for something. If we don’t address the motivational issues behind our sin, we will only treat it superficially, adjusting our behavior, not our hearts. God doesn’t want mere behavioral adjustment; he wants affectionate obedience! To uncover your motivation, ask yourself why you gravitate to certain sins. What do you believe they will do for you? What is your heart longing for? What are you desiring or valuing most when you sin in a particular area?” For example, we may sin because we desire worth, companionship, peace, confidence, or convenience. These longings are not inherently bad; however, when they are counterfeit, they become deadly.”

**(SLIDE 10) Here are some ways we can be deceived by counterfeit sins... deep down we don’t believe God in some way.**

**Am I worth loving?** The lie you tell yourself, if you find sexual intimacy on the internet you won’t be lonely or stressed. We are only left feeling lonelier and more depressed. Why? **The counterfeit for love is lust.**

**Am I good enough?** The lie you tell yourself is that if you perform well, then you will have worth. The gospel says that if we are everything because of what Christ gives us eternal security. Something that cannot be earned by us. That we can never perform well enough to earn our God’s love. He loves us just the way we are! **The counterfeit for eternal security is performance.**

**Do I look good enough?** If I change something about my appearance than I will be beautiful and good enough. If I can just improve this one skill, then I will be good enough. Why? **The counterfeit for acceptance is self-improvement.**

**Do I belong?** False intimacy is created when you try to make yourself out to be something that you are not. If they only know this about me, then they will want me, and they would think that I am important. If I talk about myself, my position, my success, my skills, then I would belong and be chosen. People pleasing. Or we can easily drift into apathy... we may be telling ourselves that we will never connect or find community anyway, why bother. **Why? The counterfeit for belonging is false intimacy.**

**To model discernment. We must test these things and go deeper.** Many of our sins can be traced back to a deep belief in something about God or ourselves that is counterfeit. This means that we are living out a false sense of acceptance, approval, satisfaction, and self-worth. Once we discern our underlying motivation for sinning, we can replace it with the truth of the gospel. **That is why we need to learn and model discernment. We can't model the gospel if we don't use discernment.**

As people who love God, we are called to use and model discernment.

**Lastly, as people who love God, we are called to:**

**3. MODEL FAITHFULNESS (3:14–15) (SLIDE 11)**

**a) Through faithful instruction (v14) (SLIDE 12)**

Look with me at verse 14 which says, *“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.”*

**The word “continue” means to stay, abide, remain, and be faithful with passing on the living Word of God. In other words, Timothy “follow the pattern in God’s word which you have heard from me’ (1:13) and then to pass it on to others’ (2:2).**

Let’s keep reading 14-15 which says, *“and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings....”*

Timothy is being reminded that he became convinced of the gospel through the instruction of his mother, his grandmother, and his closest friend, the Apostle Paul. He had the privilege of learning the gospel from both the lips and lives of these three people. Such a powerful combination!

What would it mean if we could say to all our kids, *“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of because you know those from whom you learned it.”*

In the beginning we talked about how faith is caught. What this passage is emphasizing is that faith is not only caught, it’s also taught. It would be incorrect to say, **“Faith is caught not taught.” Why? Because it’s unbiblical. The Bible says that both are important.**

**Parents and grandparents are to use the Bible to shape who a child becomes and how the child lives. This is the pattern and command of Scripture.** Parents and grandparents in Deuteronomy were commanded to teach the ten commandments to children so that future generations develop an understanding of right and wrong. The father and mother in Proverbs provide an example how to train children to develop a biblical view of life as they instruct their son to make wise choices about friendship (1:10), money (3:9), marriage (5:18), work (6:6), and more. The grandparents of Titus 2 shape future generations by providing character training and guidance on how to be a godly mother and wife.”

This is why we need **pastors, Sunday school teachers, fathers, mothers, and grandparents teaching the Word of God diligently behind the scenes. You are doing a great thing for the Kingdom, thank you!** This is why we need to faithfully teach scripture in the home and in the church.

**(SLIDE 13)** Josh Mulvihill says, **“There is no substitute for living in a manner worthy of the gospel, but also let us commit to verbally teaching biblical truths to the next generation so that they may develop a deep, lasting, Scripture-saturated faith.”**

**b) Through faith in Christ (v15) (SLIDE 14)**

Look with me at the part of verse 15 which says, *“which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”*

Salvation does not come automatically from reading the Scriptures, but they “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Not by good works, or what we have done.” Paul further grounds his appeal for Timothy to continue steadfast upon that young man’s early knowledge of the Scriptures, from childhood—“and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (v. 15).

In the book *Culture Code*, the author Daniel Coyle talks about a guy named Tony Hsieh's who built a billion-dollar business and asked him about his secret strategy. He talked about this idea of creating connections and positive collisions with the people he worked with. "Collisions—defined as serendipitous personal encounters—are, he believes, the lifeblood of any organization, the key driver of creativity, community, and cohesion." He talks about moving things like furniture and objects out of the way so people could organically interact and connect.

That is exactly what we need to do as Christians. **We need to be people who help others collide with the gospel.** We need to move things and sin out of the way that misrepresent Jesus so others can see that He is worth it. There are no guarantees that people will find faith. When we model and teach our kids the gospel, we are creating collisions with the good news. This is how we help make others wise for salvation. **We show them that Jesus is better.**

**(SLIDE 15)** William Farley says, "Effective parents equip their children to overcome the world – not by changing and controlling their environment (things external to their children), but by going after their children's hearts. We change their hearts by teaching the gospel, modeling the gospel, and centering our homes on the gospel. The gospel, rightly understood and modeled, makes Christianity attractive. Effective parents make the gospel so attractive that the world cannot get a foothold in their children's hearts."

This is what the Spirit of God does for us as we model and teach the Word of God. This is why the author of Hebrews says, "*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart*" (Heb. 4:12).

To borrow from John Piper, he says, "The Word of God is living and active and penetrates to the bottom of our lives and rips the pleasant mask off the ugly face of sin. The only reason anybody sins is because at some level they are (culpably) deceived. They start believing the lies of sin instead of the promises of God. Sin whispers through the desires of the flesh and the rationalizations of the mind, your only hope of future happiness is to have an abortion. It whispers that you will not have a chance in the future if you don't cheat on this test. It says that you won't be noticed and liked if you don't dress provocatively. It says you will lose the one person who seems to care for you if you don't compromise your sexual standards. It says you won't have job security if you speak up about the dishonest practices at work. It says your life will be wasted in this relationship if you don't get a divorce. It says that only a fool would go on looking weak instead of getting some kind of revenge."

This is why we need to teach the gospel to ourselves and others. The gospel reminds us that Jesus is better than anything this world can offer. The gospel reminds us that we are all disasters without God. The good news reminds that we are loved even in the dysfunction and sin. When God changes the core of who we are - the marks and the fruit of the gospel show up! Is the gospel being manifested in your life? This is how our lives can reflect God's Kingdom. It's really seeing that Jesus is worth it!

**As people who love God, we are called to:**

- 1. MODEL THE GOSPEL**
- 2. MODEL DISCERNMENT**
- 3. MODEL FAITHFULNESS**

**Who are you modeling? What is your life passing on to others?**