Example Of The Believers

Intro: Paul declares that we are an epistle in 2 Corinthians 3:2 “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.” An epistle is a letter. For example the epistles of the New Testament are letter written to the various churches or individuals.

1. Paul states that we as Christians are epistles that are known and read of all men.
2. The world reads the life of one who professes to be a Christian. They read something to God’s glory and praise or something that is contrary to God.
3. In what ways are we read? Paul gives us an answer in 1 Tim. 4:12 “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

I. PAUL SAYS WE ARE TO BE EXAMPLES OR EPISTLES OF THE BELIEVERS IN TWO WAYS.
   A. In Word.
      1. What we say and what we teach.
      2. We are to teach only the truth of God because nothing else will save us or others.
         a. 1 Cor. 1:10 “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”
         b. 1 Pet. 4:11 “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”
         c. 1 Tim. 4:16 “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”
      3. Eph. 4:29 “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”
      4. Col. 4:6 “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”
      5. Mat. 12:36-37 “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”
      6. Neh. 13:24 “And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people.”
         a. Speech of Ashdod was a “mongrel dialect,” so the children did not know how to speak Hebrew.
         b. Do we have the speech of the world or of God?
      7. What does our speech betray of us.
   B. In Conversation.
      1. This is the old English word and means manner of life.
      2. We are to behave in a right manner in our lives.
      3. We are to do everything to God’s glory; Col. 3:17 “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
4. People, more especially, children watch what we say and what we do. If for no other reason we should live a Christian life for them.
   a. Teenagers, little children want to be like you and act, “grown up” so they are going to act like you.
   b. Commercial of a boy following his father around and doing just what he did.

II. THE NEXT FOUR IDEAS OF THIS VERSE EMPHASIZE HOW THESE TWO ARE TO BE EXPRESSED.

A. In Charity (love).
   1. We are to say and do what we say and do in love to man and more especially in love to God; Mat. 22:36-40 “Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38This is the first and great commandment. 39And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”
   2. Show that love is the principle reason and the motivating force of all our conduct.

B. In Spirit.
   1. The manner and disposition in which it is done.
   2. If it is done in an unholy or unloving way it is unfruitful.
   3. 1 Cor. 13:1-3 “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

C. In Faith.
   1. By being faithful to the trust, people, and to God which is placed in us.
   2. It is made up in keeping, preserving, and then delivering up when required whatever is entrusted to our care. But, we are also to improve these things. Lose nothing that God gives and improve every gift that he gives.
   3. Parable of the Talents; Mat. 25:14-30 “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money. 19After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. 22He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over much things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:”
to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with
usury. 28Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29For unto
every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be
taken away even that which he hath. 30And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there
shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

D. In Purity.
1. Keep yourselves pure.
2. Denotes chastity which excludes all impurity of spirit, manner, or act.
3. Teenagers this is especially true for you. Especially since every time we turn around we
are bombarded with sex.
4. Men are not looking for a wife that has been to bed with every man around, but one
that is pure.

Conclusion: Are you being the type of example a Christian needs to be?