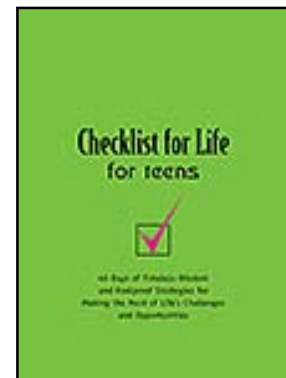


Role Models, “Leader of the Pack”

This title reminds me of a 1950’s song or movie; something about a motorcycle gang or the like. The proven pack leader that, as with the alpha of the dogs, has *proven his metal* with skin and whatever else earns the respect or fear from others.

Whether a good influence or not, the leader is in a very opportune position to influence or model behavior. Teens or **young folk** need role models – with the same natural desire as pack animals. Time and again, the male teen without a strong parent figure will seek out acceptance and authority through gangs or other organizations. Again, a role model is needed...and will be pursued – for good or bad...

Anyone can be a role model – even without a pack – and will influence others directly or vicariously. Old brothers influence younger siblings; parents influence their children; distant relatives and nearby friends and neighbors have similar possibilities. The question for the role model should be: “what kind of an influence am I?”



For the believer – whatever the age – is the root question: “am I glorifying God in my life?” When the believer understands the question and truly recognizes the ideal answer (and position), the prior question is subsequently answered...and certain. **Pleasing God results in being a good influence.** Okay, a person can be a good influence even if not a believer in Christ; but I’m focusing on the believer’s position simply because I believe that Christ is the essence of good and relationally passes it on...

This devotion encourages the reader in this relational goodness:

As long as the overriding desire of your life is to please him, then the influence you have on others can’t help but be a positive one.

Homework:

Please try to do these:

- Trust God to give you the ability to be a positive influence
- Understand the influence that others are having in your routine...life
- Remember that others are watching what you do
- Be mindful and careful around younger kids...who are watching you
- Realize that your life may be the only Bible others see

Things to Do:

- ✓ List the character qualities you want to emulate and figure out who in your life models these...
- ✓ Taking the above list, develop a set of goals for developing your character
- ✓ Select a celebrity-type character and – learning as much about them as possible – compare your goals with their lifestyle...
- ✓ Read a *classic* about Jesus as the ultimate role model (the suggested reading is *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas Kempis)
- ✓ Read about at least one *Radical Believer* from the book, *Extreme Faith*

Realize that the “shaping” of your character is not yours alone to determine. Your character is influenced by others and, as such, is formed from your fellowship – or who you *hang with*, read, study and relate by all other means. For the believer, character is formed by the presence of the Holy Spirit – who offers both *fruits* and *gifts* among other help for this journey called life. Most of all – and in keeping with this character – is preparation for the future world called heaven.

In Philippians, chapter 3; Paul encourages the young folks to be imitators of him – though with the honest admission that he does not “have this all together”.

I’m not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don’t get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I’ve got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I’m off and running, and I’m not turning back.

Part of the experience of the character development – and the entire Christian experience – is being honest and truthful about our life, our hearts. Until we are to see with honesty the *log in our own eye*, we will never be able to live the life of Christ. Paul exhibited this honest assessment in the scripture above; and he continued in the same vein and verse with the encouraging words:

So let’s keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you’ll see it yet! Now that we’re on the right track, let’s stay on it.

Stick with me, friends.

The Holy Spirit is able to bring this honest and truthful assessment to each person, each heart; but until the work begins, the person is spiritually blinded by their own pride and self-centeredness. Once at work however, the Spirit enables the life to glorify God and, in turn, to be that positive influence and role model.