

Speaking to the soul



A good example

Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith. Hebrews 13: 7

Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the USA, wrote: “A good example is the best sermon.” As I think back to those preachers that I have heard over the years, it is undoubtedly their way of life that lives with me. Some of them were brilliant preachers but their excellent exposition and brilliant sermon points have long since been forgotten. It’s all about example, and the writer to the Hebrews encourages his readers to remember their leaders who have taught them from God’s word and to follow the example that they have set. The Greek tense here is a command to keep on remembering them; there is something so precious about their example that it must not be forgotten.

I would love to hear about the Christian leaders that you have known. It would be good to make a list of them and against each name to put something that you need to remember as you live for God today. Here are the qualities I thank God I had modelled to me – godliness, warmth, conviction, wisdom, kindness, insight, gentleness, joy and compassion. None was perfect, but each leader gave me an insight into what it meant to live for God.

Reading the Bible is good, and hearing about those who have lived for God throughout history can be deeply inspiring, but we undoubtedly learn most from those we have had the privilege of knowing personally. So let us not merely thank God for those people but actively remember and seek to follow the example that they have set us.

QUESTION

Whose example do you need to follow particularly closely at the moment?

PRAYER

Lord, I thank you for all those Christian leaders that I have known and for the ways in which they have helped me to follow you. Amen

Photograph - View of Hereford Cathedral and statue of Sir Edward Elgar