**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, March 5, 2021**

Thought of The Day

An Example To Follow

Do you feel like you are a good example to others? How about a Christ-like example to your neighbors, workmates, kids, or spouse? What about when you are under pressure, how is your example? Does it change? When you are in traffic, or in a heated argument, frustrated with your kids, feel exhausted from the pandemic, been hurt or harassed by someone. Does it get harder to be nice as the emotional heat in life goes up? When the suffering of any kind comes into play, being a Christ-like example becomes more of a challenge!

The good news is that Christ Himself left us an example to follow when faced with situations like this. “For you have been called for this purpose, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you would follow in His steps, He who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being abusively insulted, He did not insult in return; while suffering, He did not threaten, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.” I Peter 2:21-23

While my family and I were at a restaurant one time, we encountered multiple issues with our waiter. In my view, the service was poor, the waiter was less than qualified to be in that position. I felt like we were basically having to suffer through the meal. I continued to be nice to him but at one point I shared with him our being dissatisfied. I quickly looked at his name tag to see who he was in case I needed to report him to the manager. Now get ready for this, the name on his badge said, Jesus! Wow, Jesus? So, here I was telling Jesus about all the mistakes I believed he was making while he only smiled in return. In other words, he did not retaliate when he was suffering. The parallel was striking! After it was over, I felt so bad I left him a big tip! I called it a guilt offering. In the end, we ended up becoming friends with him! The point is that an example of how to suffer like Jesus can even be found in your local restaurant!

So how do we become an effective Christ-like example through the difficulties of life? In I Peter 2 we find two things prior to this concluding thought.

1. Grow up and become like Jesus. In I Peter 2:1-3 we read, “Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” Folks, the road to maturity and changing can be a painful process. Let me ask you a question. Is there one thing or attitude in your life that you would like to rid yourself of? As Christians we say, I want to be like Jesus! He is my role model; He is my example! We all desire to grow up! But you see growing up has little to do with growing older! Aging and maturing are two very different things! So how can I tell the difference between the two? Only when we decide to rid ourselves, of things like, “all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind,” we have begun the process. This is followed by having a craving for the “pure spiritual milk” of the word. I don’t know if you are like me, but I love White Castle hamburgers! Their slogan is “It’s What You Crave!” I always end up eating more than I need. Do you know why? The craving is powerful! Peter paints a picture of craving milk like a newborn baby. Have you ever tried to pull a bottle out of the mouth of a hungry craving baby? The craving suction is powerful! When we rid ourselves of what needs to go, and replace it with a spiritual craving for the word, the natural result will be maturity and growing up in our salvation, becoming like Jesus!

2. Rise up to respond like Jesus. In I Peter 2:23 we read, “When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.” Growing up is the foundation for rising up! Jesus gives us an example of how to respond to life’s unfairness. Have you ever felt like some things are just not fair in life? Maybe you bought a car that was a lemon, a gadget off of the internet that was a rip-off, being falsely accused, an unfaithful spouse, or something worse in life. When this happens, some folks entrust themselves to Him who is faithful and others are ready to fight for their rights! We seem to be a quick-to-fight-back generation! Do we have rights? Sure we do! But in exercising them are we sometimes winning the battle but losing the war so to speak? Paul said when referring to his personal rights, “Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endured all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.” I Corinthians 9:12. What’s more important, winning arguments or winning souls? Let’s keep our eye on the ball! Big Picture! You know why Jesus died on the cross by the hands of godless men and was persecuted, mocked, crowned with thorns, scourged, nailed to a cross, and did not revile in return? That we might follow in His steps! Think about it!

Two questions:

1. Is your example to others making a positive or negative impact? If negative, what needs to change?

2. How would you describe your overall attitude during life’s difficulties? Philippians 2:3 says, “Have this attitude in yourself which was also in Christ Jesus.” Are there any attitude adjustments needed?