

A Man Affected

Scripture Reading — Hebrews 13:7-8

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1 —

Jonathan Edwards, well known as one of America's great theologians, wrote, "There are two ways of representing and recommending true religion and virtue to the world; the one by doctrine, the other by example."

Edwards was the pastor of the large Congregational Church of Northampton, Massachusetts, for 23 years beginning in 1726. About eight years into his work there, the beginnings of revival began to be felt in response to Edwards's powerful preaching and teaching. This revival came to be known as the Great Awakening. In 1746, after the revival had peaked, Edwards wrote his great work *Treatise on the Religious Affections*, from which we will consider various passages this month for our reflection on living for the Lord.

The years after the revival were difficult for Edwards. In June 1750 he was dismissed, voted out by a majority of older members of his congregation. They didn't like his fiery, revivalist leadership and preferred to have church the way it was before he came. After serving for several years as pastor of a frontier mission in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, Edwards became president of the College of New Jersey (today's Princeton University) in 1758. He died, however, just a few months later. To the end, Edwards was a leader who was intensely in love with God and who showed it by his way of life.

Prayer

Lord, "teach me to love you" as leaders like Edwards have done, with "one holy passion filling all my frame . . . my heart an altar, and your love the flame." In Jesus' name, Amen.

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