

The Witness of Christian Leaders

Scripture Reading — 1 Timothy 3:1-13

[A leader] must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

—1 Timothy 3:7—

People look up to Christian leaders, expecting that the loving grace of God will shine through them. The apostle Paul considered it vital for Christian witness that overseers (elders and pastors) and deacons have a good reputation with those who don't yet believe. It matters to God what non-Christians think of our leaders!

In 1 Timothy 3 Paul describes the ideal leader. God has called deacons, pastors, and elders to lead his church by example. They're to depend on God's grace not only for the forgiveness of sins but also for the filling of the Holy Spirit. If they yield to one or more temptations regularly, a cold wind blows through them. It prevents the loving warmth of God from ministering to and through them.

Opening just one window in wintertime can make a house miserably cold. It doesn't matter if every other window is closed. It doesn't matter how well the walls are insulated. The house's capacity for being warm is compromised.

Christians and non-Christians alike can pick up on the coldness or warmth of our hearts. We all contribute to a great witness for God by caring about and praying for our leaders' spiritual vitality. May we all be filled with the Holy Spirit!

Prayer

Lord, forgive the sins that make us cold to you and others. We pray for our spiritual leaders. Light them up with your Spirit's fire and keep them from sin so that our witness together for you will be bright. In Jesus, Amen.

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