

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." *Hebrews 10:24no2 KJV*



A man lives by the water and his family is hungry, but he is not a fisherman and he's afraid of the water. Rather than berate the man for his lack of courage and skill, wouldn't it be better to buy him a brand new rod and reel with a fully loaded tackle box, and invite him to go fishing with you? The situation is hypothetical, of course, but the application is practical. As Christians we're to "provoke" to good works. Give people a reason to want to do good. Don't tell folks to go to church. Invite them to go with you and out to eat afterwards. It's always easier to do new things with someone else. The devil knows this well. How many people started smoking, drinking, and doing drugs by themselves? Your own conversion story is your best tool for spreading the Gospel. If it isn't worth anything to you, how do you expect others to place any value on it? If we really believe what we say, we would not hesitate to share it with others. Live Forever? Defeat Death? Streets of Gold? "*Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the Hope that is in you...having a good conscience; that...they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation (obedient lifestyle) in Christ.*" Your witness is only as real as your faith. If you don't believe God's Word enough to live it, you don't really believe it. Most of us fear rejection. We need to realize that for others to believe us, we must faithfully "practice what we preach," or obey what we teach. Why would someone want to do something that we don't do? Our lifestyle is not our testimony, but it gives our testimony credibility. If we don't obey God's Word, how can we claim to believe? We need to repent (return to obedience) and get right with God. We need to remove the beam from our own eye before trying to get the speck out of our neighbor's eye. I can't convince someone to do something I'm unwilling to do myself. It wouldn't make sense to try to get someone to smoke dope unless I "show" them by doing it with them. Now, I don't believe smoking dope is good, but you get the picture. Lead by example. To put a finer point on it, older Christians in the faith ought to help younger Christians want to live "by faith" by doing it and enjoying it. Knowing the written Word will enable you to know and hear the "*Word made flesh;*" the "*still small Voice*" of the Blessed Holy Spirit as He "*guides you into all Truth,*" via God's Word in your thoughts. Were you ever doing or thinking something and a phrase of Scripture suddenly came into thought? Or your conscience suddenly gave you a twinge? God speaking directly to you. If you can do things which are in direct opposition to God's Word and your conscience doesn't bother you, you are no child of God! Jesus said, "*I am the Good Shepherd. My sheep HEAR my Voice and they follow (obey) me.*" As you grow more intimate with God, you will fall more in love with Him! The joy in your heart will manifest itself on your face and in your actions. The Light of Truth will shine forth to all those around you inviting them to drink at the Spring of Living Water. It will be peculiar to the world and encouraging to the saints!

Encourage those who often falter,
Lest they grow more prone to wander,
If we give them Truth to ponder,
Of our Lord they will grow fonder. ~CGP

Christ provokes us with His Love. Paul said, "*The Love of Christ constraineth me.*" Jesus leads by example. It will require suffering on our part, but "*great is our reward in heaven.*" Love "*endureth all things.*" "*Consider one another.*" What does my fellow believer need? The best part of loving is giving.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35 KJV