

Donna's Devotional

Live by Example

It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.—Romans 14:21

As blood-bought children of God, we have a responsibility to examine our lives to make certain that all that we do or say is safe for our brothers to follow. Discernment is needed to understand appropriate behavior in all situations. People are different and God requires us to be careful not to be an offence to them. God has given us gifts and He expects us to use those gifts in a way that will build up our fellow believers not in a way that will injure ourselves or set an evil example for those who are weak.

There are many things that we have the right to do and perhaps we can do them without sinning, however if a weaker brother sees us do those things and it causes him to fall into sin, we are responsible. If I were an expert mountain climber, I could follow a path that might be perfectly safe for me; however a child might follow in my steps and fall and injure himself. This is true in the Christian life. It is not my place to demand my "rights" but to live in a way that will help those who follow me to walk on the right path.

I remember many examples of adults in the church where I grew up. Some of those examples have helped me do right when faced with temptations. Other examples led me in the wrong direction by attitude or action. Through the years I have not forgotten what I saw or heard from adult believers. Our actions will become the model for the behavior of others. It is a selfish thing to behave in a way that would put a stumbling block in their path.

Our sins are forgiven when confessed, however that does not change the effects of the bad example. The image of the evil deed or the evil word has made its impression on the minds of others. We understand the beginnings of the evil behavior, but we never know the final effects. It is important to live a life of self-control--one that will glorify God in our bodies and spirit. This can only be done as we are dominated by the Holy Spirit.