

I like blue jeans and boots. Quite honestly, that's what I'm most comfortable in — always have been. In fact, I still have my first pair of boots.

Karan gets the awesome privilege of watching our youngest grandson a couple of days each week. I am still amazed at how much our children and grandchildren pick up from us. Sometimes it's almost scary.

I have a practice of walking to the back door and looking out over the pasture to check on our horses and dogs (and even our cat). I'll **usually** step to the door, stand and stare outside just to make sure everyone is present and accounted for. Just a habit.

The other day I captured our grandson, Rivers, doing the same thing. Attired in his comfortable jeans and boots, with the addition of the hat, he went to the back door and took his place staring out at the horses and dogs (and even our cat).



Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:1 (NIV): Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

He also wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 (NRSV):

⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸... **but with** toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. ⁹This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate.

The lesson is clear: *Demonstration precedes imitation.*

Christian leaders (clergy and lay) are to incarnate the life Christ expected of all followers. We are to demonstrate the life of Christ in word, thought, and action. John Maxwell said, "People do what people see. Leaders are models before they are ministers, mentors, or managers."

We often limit leadership to the tasks of setting and accomplishing goals and objectives. In fact, leaders are result oriented by nature.

However, spiritual leadership begins on a deeper level than goals and objectives. It begins with *character*. Spiritual leadership is built on the foundation of integrity, principles, and authenticity — all of which are developed in submission to the Holy Spirit. I might even say that *character* is the brand of boots we wear.

Paul demonstrated the character of Christ and then encouraged people to imitate what they saw.

And that leads me to **affirm** another connected timeless truth: *We teach what we know; we reproduce who we are.*

I don't know if our grandson knew exactly what to look for when he stepped to the back door, but he was doing what he saw me do. He'll **learn** in time and will be shaped by the practice.

I pray that we, as leaders and as followers of Jesus, spend time in the presence of the Father, allowing the Spirit to shape our character into the character of Christ. Then perhaps our churches, our families, our friends, and everyone we encounter will see something worth imitating!