



CEO Devotional – December 1, 2014
Written by Tom Van Weelden, Evergreen Environmental Energy

I'm Not a Role Model

“I AM NOT A ROLE MODEL.” With that tag line for a 90’s Nike Ad, Charles Barkley ignited a debate on the role of athletes in American society. Now, the inappropriate actions of another group of professional athletes has reignited this debate and opened an often heated discussion. This sobering reminder about shirking the responsibility of role model provides a unique opportunity for us as Christians to reflect on our own personal responsibilities. I am not speaking about TV preachers, radio personalities, or teachers; I am speaking to all who lead formally or informally at work, school, in the political arena, and in their own families. We are all role models, in that our choices are being watched and our behavior is being emulated.

The good news is that as God calls, He also equips. Jesus calls us out as Salt and Light, and these are the roles by which we are to live and affect the lives of those around us. Each of us is significant in his impact but radically different in his style. If you lead as Light, you should be aware of the length of the shadows you cast; if you lead as Salt then be aware of spending so much time with those who need seasoning that you lose your own flavor.

Again in the NT Jesus reminds us that “whoever should cause one of these children to stumble” better they had not lived. While it is easy to think *I would never intentionally expose a child to...* We forget about how our day-to-day attitudes and actions influence those around us. Even non-Christians can usually avoid the big oops’ as role models, but it is who you are in the small moments that sends a louder message. How you treat your wife, speak to those under you and above you. Your demeanor while dealing with trials. What you watch, listen to, read, decide to complain about, etc. All these things send a message to people around you about what is important to you and offer a model, be it good or bad, on how to live life.

The role you lead is always being evaluated by young and old alike, those you know and those who you don’t even recognize. God has provided me numerous examples of this over the past year. My dad passed away after a couple years of home care, and after he passed I had numerous people approach and share observations such as:

“My husband and I thought the way you were there for your dad was amazing given your travel schedule.”

“I wanted to tell you that the respect your family showed your dad has changed the way my family deals with my parents.”

My first thought upon hearing these things, was that I don’t remember those folks ever seeing me with my dad. But that is the point; it was the moments I did not realize I was being watched that mattered most to those doing the watching.

Another example of people seeing the small things came in a recent phone call from the parent of one of my son’s (he’s now 24) grade school friends. He said “my son is getting out of prison in a couple months and we wondered if you would be willing to come over and talk with us after he gets home.” I had no experience I thought would resonate with them and no wisdom I felt would be helpful. But I was wrong. I attempted to duck an awkward interchange, noting my obvious lack of experience in or with prison. I’ll never forget the dad’s reply. “My son and I have watched your family for years, and we believe we could benefit from talking to you.”(At that point I had to say yes – meeting to come)

Howard Hendricks(deceased) of DTS has said, “Lead out of the overflow of a good life.” That is a Role Model.

So Charles, for better or worse, you are a role model, and so are the rest of us. But those of us who choose to be characterized as a Christian Role Model, we better understand the risk and responsibility that accompanies that choice.

Walk Well