

## Leaving Footprints By Bob Young

As one gets older, one spends time thinking about one's life. Perhaps the tendency to review and evaluate one's life is a normal part of aging. I will soon enter my eighth decade. (For those who are not quick at math studies, that means I will have my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday!)

One way to think about life is reflected in Heb. 13:7: "Remember your leaders, those who told you God's Word, look carefully at the results of their conduct and behavior, and imitate their faith." In this verse, life is summarized in two concepts—conduct and behavior, lifestyle and actions. Everything we do has a result, and the combined results will be the measure our existence on this planet.

What will be my footprint? Since life is measured by results, another question comes to mind: To what am I dedicated? And more questions quickly come: Who am I? Who are you? I can think about and evaluate my life, but others will ultimately decide if I have correctly thought about who I am and who I want to be. I would like to think about my life like this--

- I am (or I have tried to be) a teacher, preacher, professor, missionary, exegete, servant, author, evangelist, spiritual leader.
- I am (or have tried to be) a good husband, father, and grandfather.
- I am (or have tried to be) a friend, confidant, mentor, brother in Christ, neighbor, kingdom person, member of God's assembly of believers. I would add: encourager, lover and pursuer of people.

Merely leaving footprints in the paths of this world will have little meaning or impact eternally. Where and how we leave footprints matters. The primary way Christians leave footprints is through the lives of others. John wrote that when we Christians one day rest from the troubles of this world, our works will continue and remain as an example (Rev. 14:13). These are our footprints left for others to follow.

We can leave different kinds of positive footprints. Each kind of footprint has an impact on others.

- Footprints of spirituality, Phil. 3:7-17. These footprints come from evaluating life by a different set of standards—how we spend our time, what we find enjoyable, how we think, the place of prayer in our lives.
- Footprints of personal service or ministry—helping, caring. People remember your heart.
- Footprints of example, conduct and behavior, John 13:15, 1 Peter 2:21. Jan and I received an email from a couple we recently met. They wrote, "We want to learn to love like you love."
- Footprints of influence. Leadership is done indirectly more than directly, 1 Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:7.
- Footprints of attitude, footprints of unity. Am seeking to build walls to exclude, or am I opening doors to include others?
- Footprints of priorities—salvation, evangelism, and Bible study. Let us teach others to evangelize; let us teach others how to study.

These footprints are measures, on this earth, of the result of our lives. The measure of life is not how many attended, how many were baptized, how many dollars were spent, or any of the other measures that are often used. Jesus' prayer in John 17:11 clarifies the point: none of those you have given me have perished. The question is, how many persevere? Some churches have numerous baptisms and many people placing membership, but after a time little has changed.

Let each of us resolve to leave the kind of footprints that will matter for eternity!