Introduction:

1. I heard it when I was a young man. I still hear it today: “Practice what you preach.” It is a powerful statement and one that ought to be true of every preacher, teacher and Christian. It is something Scripture enjoins upon us, Romans 2:21-22; Matthew 23:1-3. We dare not be hypocrites.

2. For purposes of this study, I want to turn this imperative statement into a question: “Can I preach what you practice?” Every day you are practicing something, and by your actions you likely “preach” to more people than I will have a chance to preach to on any given Sunday!

3. Can I preach what you practice and still be faithful to my work as a gospel preacher?

The Lesson:

I. Can I preach what you practice in personal Bible study?

A. I know that I can with some Christians. The Bible is truly a part of their lives. They read it, study, rely on it, live by it—and are ready to meet God because of it.

1. I can preach that, like King David, they take great delight in it, Psalm 1:1-2.

2. I can preach that, like Moses, they teach it to their children, Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

3. I can preach that, like Timothy, they give diligence to learn Scripture, 2 Timothy 2:15. You may be someone who is just getting started in Bible study. Can I recommend the Dowlen Road reading plan? We are here to help you in any way we can.

B. Can I preach what you practice about Bible study? There has never been a time when the Bible is more neglected and abused. Some Christians and even whole churches have abandoned careful Bible study. When that is the case, I can’t preach what they practice. We should each ask ourselves, am I earnestly studying God’s Word, spending quality time learning from God?

II. Can I preach what you practice in being a light for God?

A. I know that I can with some Christians. They are out to influence others for good. They care about the impact they have on others. They care about their reputation, not rights!

1. I can preach that they are salt and light for the Lord, Matthew 5:13-16.

2. I can preach that they genuinely want to be different in a wicked world, Philippians 2:14-15.

3. I can preach about good men and women who impact family for good, 1 Corinthians 7:16. You might be new in the faith—or just now learning about how to live a godly life that influences others for good. God bless you for your desire to be a light for Him.

B. Can I preach what you practice in being a light for God? I hope so. But, you need to know that some who claim the name of Christ insist that they will do what they want to do because it is their right and nobody is going to tell them otherwise—not even God. When people look at our Book, and then look at our lives, they need to know that both are real! I hope I can I preach what you practice.
III. Can I preach what you practice in regard to your speech?
   A. I know that I can with many Christians. Maybe they were converted 40 years ago; it may have taken a while to clean things up, but their speech has been clean and correct for decades!
      1. I can preach the honesty and integrity of their speech, Matthew 5:37; Colossians 3:9.
      2. I can preach clean, godly, kind and loving speech, Colossians 3:8.
   B. Can I preach these things about you? My best friend in high school was a member of the Lord’s church (I had never heard of the church of Christ). Ten years later I learned he was a Christian. He was a Christian while in high school, but he talked just like I talked! I cannot preach what he practiced; I cannot preach what I practiced back then. Can I preach what you practice today?

IV. Can I preach what you practice about places you go?
   A. I know I can do that with most Christians, because they care about living pure lives. They avoid places where they should not be, and go to places where they should be.
      1. I can preach that they stay away from the clubs because they live right, 1 Peter 4:3.
      2. I can preach that they want to avoid the very appearance of evil, 1 Thessalonians 5:22.
      3. I can preach that they (and their kids) are in place when God’s people assemble, Acts 2:42.
   B. Can I preach these things about you? I would hope that our congregation is made up of an ever growing number of Christians who make good choices like these. (There is a part of me that wants to ask: “Will you be present at the next service? Can I preach your practice with God’s approval? I want to ask that, but I won’t.”)

V. Can I preach what you practice about giving to God?
   A. I know that I can with some Christians. They are sacrificial in their giving. They think the work of God is the most important thing on earth. There might be someone, somewhere who thinks money given to God is thrown down a rat hole—but not these Christians. They believe!
      1. I can preach that they give as the Lord has prospered them, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.
      2. I can preach that they give bountifully and with purpose, 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.
      3. I can preach that they are not trying to give less than the Jews (10%), Acts 20:35.
      4. I can preach that they will be blessed by God for their generosity, 2 Corinthians 9:8.
   B. Can I preach these things about you? There has never been a time when American Christians have been more blessed financially by the God of heaven. It is the government that needs to make some cuts in finances—not us. God has caused us to overflow with blessings.

Conclusion:
   1. The question still remains: “Can I preach what you practice?” If I do that, will my preaching be faithful to the book? Will God be pleased with my preaching?
   2. A final question: Can I preach what you practice about obeying Jesus in baptism? Have you been delaying your baptism? Can I preach that men should delay their obedience to Jesus? You know that I cannot preach that and be faithful to the book? Acts 22:16 says, “What are you waiting for?”