

Our Christian Influence

Introduction

1. Each one of us should be able to understand that we have an influence and that this influence must be used to further the cause of Christ, not hinder it.
 - A. Hindering the cause of Christ with one's influence is a sin in and of itself.
2. In this lesson, I want to reinforce the concept that we must excel at having a **good** influence on others.

Matthew 5:13-16

3. From this passage we understand that Christians are to be like salt and like light.
 - A. Salt is a seasoning that influences other things that we eat. It is an influence that improves flavor and adds to the taste of what we are eating.
 - B. It is not typical for someone to just pick up a shaker of salt and start eating it to appreciate salt.
 - C. Light is something that we use to see other things that are around us. It is an influence that improves our visibility of other objects.
 - D. It is not typical for someone to just stare at a light source, such as the Sun, to appreciate light.
 - 1) These things are influences for the purpose of flavoring or illuminating something other than itself.

- 4. Christians are like salt and light in that they ought to have an influence of good on those around them.**
 - A. But if our influence is not being used for good, then we are like salt that has “lost its savor.”**

- 5. What does the word “influence” mean?**
 - A. One definition reads, “The power or capacity of causing an affect in indirect or intangible ways.”**
 - B. Another definition is as follows, “To affect or alter by indirect or intangible means.”**
 - C. Christian influence would therefore be to positively affect or alter someone or something through the way one lives the Christian life.**
 - 1) Through the words that we speak or the actions that we do.**
 - 2) To indirectly cause another to choose that which is right.**

- 6. From the perspective of Christianity, a bad influence would be to negatively affect or alter someone or something through the way one lives one’s life so as to indirectly cause another to choose that which is wrong.**

Our Christian influence . . .

Should Reflect Good, Not Evil

1. Must know the difference between good and evil.

Hebrews 5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those **who by reason of use** have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

2. Influence must reflect that which is holy and pure.

Matthew 5:48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

1 Peter 1:15-16 but as He who called you is holy, **you also be holy** in all your conduct, because it is written, "BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

3. Our influence must not give place or opportunity to the devil to speak evil of us, Christ, or the church.

Ephesians 4:26-27 "BE ANGRY, AND DO NOT SIN": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, **nor give place to the devil.**

4. Example of Balaam; He used his influence for evil.

Revelation 2:14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold **the doctrine of Balaam**, who **taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.**

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Is Shown Through Our Example of Words and Actions

- 1. The choices that we make have repercussions in the lives of other people.**

Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should **be careful to maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable to men.

- 2. Words and actions must harmonize—hypocrites don't have a good influence.**

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, **without partiality and without hypocrisy**.

- 3. Examples in the New Testament.**

Tabitha/Dorcas

Acts 9:36 At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was **full of good works and charitable deeds** which she did.

Titus

Titus 2:7-8 in all things showing **yourself to be a pattern of good works**; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, **having nothing evil to say of you**.

Timothy

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but **be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity**.

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Can Be Seen Through Our Associations

- 1. We must never follow a multitude to do what is evil.**

Exodus 23:2 You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.

- 2. We must not associate with unfruitful works of darkness.**

Ephesians 5:6-13

- A. Have no association with evil because it will affect your influence.**
 - B. By not associating with wickedness, we shine the light of truth on that which is wrong.**
- 3. Our fellowship should be with the Father and His children.**
1 John 1:3-7

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Should Be Obvious to All

1. We should reflect the “excellencies” of God in our life.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

A. Excellence is obvious.

- 1) If it is not obvious that something is a good influence, then it is NOT a good influence.
- 2) If someone does not know you are a Christian, then your influence is not good.
- 3) It should be obvious to everyone we know whether we are a Christian or not.

Philippians 2:14-15 Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

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Will Affect Our Salvation

Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

1. **Salt that has lost its savor is cast out.**
2. **If we have lost our influence for good over those around us, then we will be cast out as well.**
 - A. **If we do not have a good influence on others, then they will have a bad influence on us.**

Galatians 5:9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for **whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**

3. **However, those who have influence for good will be rewarded by God for that good influence.**

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, **"that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."**

Matthew 13:43 Then **the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.** He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Conclusion

- 1. We have discussed our Christian influence.**
 - A. It should reflect good, not evil.**
 - B. It is shown through our example of words and actions.**
 - C. It can be seen through our associations.**
 - D. It should be obvious to all.**
 - E. It will affect our salvation.**

