

THE PROBLEM OF INFLUENCE

Sermon by Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the great problems all of us have is THE PROBLEM OF INFLUENCE.
2. We have the problem of being influenced by the wrong people -- I Cor. 15:33; Deut. 20: 8; Prov. 1:10
3. We all live between good and bad influence in our lives:
 - (1) Through influence we use the language spoken around us.
 - (2) Through influence we wear the clothes worn around us.
 - (3) Through influence we wear the hair styles we do.
4. An evil woman can have a powerful influence on a man -- Prov. 5: 3, 8 - 9; Prov. 6: 24 - 25
5. A good woman has a powerful influence on a man -- Prov. 31: 10 - 12, 23; I Pet. 3: 1 - 5

I. HAVING THE RIGHT KIND OF INFLUENCE IS THE DUTY OF EVERY CHRISTIAN

1. Jesus said, "*Ye are the salt of the earth*"-- Matt. 5:13
 - (1) Salt has been used through the ages as an agent of influence in the preservation of meats.
 - (2) Christ is teaching that Christians are agents of influence in preserving the world from corruption.
 - (3) Their influence preserves the world in which they live.
 - (4) Christians have a saving influence.
 - (5) Their influence is felt through their teaching and preaching as sin is rebuked and men are encouraged to live righteously -- Acts 24: 24 - 25; Eph. 5:11; Tit. 2: 11 - 12
 - (6) The morally upright lives of Saints rebukes the ungodly behavior of the wicked and points men toward God -- I Pet. 4: 1 - 4
 - (7) The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah demonstrates HOW the righteous preserve the world -- Gen. 18: 23 - 29,38
 1. For the lack of ten righteous, the four cities of the plain were destroyed by God.
 - (8) There was not enough salt in the world in Noah's day -- Gen. 6: 5 - 7
 1. God destroyed the world with water.
 - (9) "*Righteousness exalteth a nation: But sin is a reproach to any people*" --Prov. 14:34
2. The Lord compared the Christian to the "*light of the world*"-- Matt. 5: 14 - 16
 - (1) Jesus is the light of the world -- John 8:12
 - (2) The Christian is a light only as he reflects the light of Christ.
 - (3) As he reflects the light of Christ, he is a shining light in a world of spiritual darkness -- Phil. 2:15; Eph. 5:8
 - (4) His life stands out in CONTRAST to the lives of men in spiritual darkness.
 - (5) Christians, by good works, teaching, and their example, are to dispel spiritual darkness -- Eph. 5:8

II. HOW TO HAVE A GOOD INFLUENCE

1. Don't be a stumbling block -- Rom. 14: 13; I Cor. 10: 21 - 33
 - (1) I need to be sure I am not doing that which is questionable in the minds of brethren.
2. Be uncompromising.
 - (1) Stand for what you believe -- Eph. 6: 13 - 14

- (2) "*Contend earnestly for the faith*"-- Jude 3
 - (3) We lose our influence by compromising; when you compromise, people lose respect for your sincerity.
 - (4) The person who is strong in the faith is respected.
 - (5) We lose confidence in the person who has no convictions and tries to "work both sides of the street".
3. Show your faith by your works -- James 2:18
- (1) Practice what you preach.
 - (2) If we don't, the world will say, "I am not interested in what you say because I see what you do."
 - (3) If we exhort others to attend the worship, but we don't attend, our words carry no weight.
 - (4) If I tell others how to live, and they see I don't live it, it is vain effort on my part -- I Tim. 4:12
4. Serve the needs of others:
- (1) "*But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant*" -- Matt. 23:11
 - (2) The selfish, self-centered life carries no influence-- Matt. 20:28

III. AREAS OF INFLUENCE NEEDED TODAY

1. Sexual Fidelity
- (1) Christians should stand out as LIGHTS in the world by "*fleeing fornication*"-- I Cor. 6: 18; Eph. 5:3
 - (2) Men and women who are Christians should manifest sexual fidelity to their mates -- Heb. 13:4; I Thess. 4: 3 - 6
 - (3) Young Christians should practice premarital chastity.
2. Loyalty to the marriage bond.
- (1) Divorce and remarriage are occurring frequently among people of the world.
 - (2) Christians need to be careful to maintain their loyalty to the marriage covenant.
 - (3) Jesus taught there are only two things that break the marriage bond:
 - 1. Death
 - 2. The innocent party can put away the guilty party who has committed fornication -- Matt. 19:9; Rom. 7:2
3. Modesty of dress -- I Tim. 2: 9 - 10
- (1) The world goes naked today.
 - (2) Dresses are split up the leg.
 - (3) Mini skirts
 - (4) Shortest of shorts
 - (5) Tightest of pants
 - (6) Men do no better -- there is NO double standard.
 - (7) Immodest dress is lasciviousness -- Gal. 5: 19
4. Purity of speech
- (1) Our society uses great filthiness of speech.
 - (2) God's name is used in a profane manner with little thought.
 - (3) In our society the Christian's speech should stand out as different -- Col. 4:6; Eph. 4: 29; Eph. 5:4; James 1:26

5. In Morality

- (1) Christians should stand out as "light" in the midst of a dark world.
- (2) Our age is troubled by drunkenness and drugs.
- (3) It is an age given over to Lasciviousness.
- (4) It is an age given over to illicit sex and perversion.
- (5) The world is clamoring for immoral movies and television shows.
- (6) We must be LIGHTS in the midst of all this darkness.

6. In Bible Knowledge

- (1) Our society has grown up without the knowledge of God.
- (2) Bibles have been available in our country, but people have not studied them.
- (3) The average man in the world knows nothing about the Bible.
- (4) Christians should study the Bible -- 2 Tim. 2:15; I Pet. 2:2
- (5) The Christian who knows the Bible and how to use it is a light in the world.

CONCLUSION

1. Morality and good works lead men to praise God -- Matt. 5:16; John 15:8; Rom. 15:6; I Cor. 6:20
2. When the saints cease to live as God commands, who will provide the preserving influence in the world around us??

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