

Influence: What does God want us to see?

Influence – a power indirectly or intangibly affecting a person or a course of events. We all have influence and we are all influenced...so what does God wants us to see about it? In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus talked about it (*Matt. 5:13-16*) and there are many examples in His word about the affect an influence can have on our efforts to serve the Living God. A God that asks us to be “transformed (*Rom. 12:2*) and to live differently than the world (*1 Peter 1:14-17*) will certainly use His wisdom to show us the power of influence through the examples, warnings, and exhortations we can find in the Bible. Let’s search His truth with open eyes to find the path to victory as He prompts us to walk in the light. (*1 John 1:7*)

I. Influences in our Culture: What does God say?

- a. Consider the law gave to His people of old. (*Deut. 4:44-45*) It was designed to set them apart from those around them (*Deut. 12:2-5; 23-25; 29-31; 14:3-21; 18:9-14*)
- b. He still wants us to see the importance of living differently today – guarding ourselves from the influence of the world (*1 Peter 2:9; Phil. 2:15-16; Titus 2:6-8; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Cor. 8:20-21*)

II. Influences in our Relationships: What does God say?

- a. Think about Solomon – his background, his wisdom, his relationship with God. He was not immune to the power of the influences he allowed. (*1 Kings 11:1-11*)
- b. What can we find in God’s word about our own relationships and influences today? (*1 Cor. 15:33; Prov. 13:20; 22:4-5; 16:29; Ps 1:1-4; Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:14-15; 1 Cor. 5:6, 11*)

III. Our Influence for Good: What does God say?

- a. The example of Jeroboam in the Old Testament shows us the lasting effect of a poor influence. (*1 Kings 12:25-30; 16:26; 21:22; 2 Kings 10:31; 23:15*)
- b. We have a powerful influence, as well. We interact with so many others in our lives. Which way will we lead them? (*Eph. 5:8; Col. 4:5; Rom. 12:2; James 1:27; 1 Peter 1:15; Titus 2:12*)

Romans 13:11-13 helps us see how God wants us to live. He asks us to “put off” the works of darkness and to “put on” Christ. There is a constant pull from the world to live as they do; yet Gods pulls us closer to Him by giving us Christ. (*Rom. 8:32*) Which way will you be influenced? Where will you set your heart?