

A Christian's Influence In The World

Introduction; We all have many influences that make us who we are.

- A. These influences begin very early.
 1. It begins with our parents and family. They help shape what we believe and the character we have.
 2. As we get older it is our teachers and friends. They also help shape what we believe and what we think is right and wrong.
 3. The church should also play a part in this. Our faith in a God and belief in the Bible as His word helps to shape our character and who we become. Unfortunately many do not have the blessing of being brought up going to the church.
 4. Parents help shape a child's attitude toward God and the Bible. Do they really see it is important in the family? Do they take their children to Bible study and the worship periods? Do they make sure their children do their Bible lessons?

- B. As we get older our view of life and right and wrong is affected by many other people and things.
 1. It may be the people we work for and work with. It may be politicians or newspapers or magazines or political writers. As we get into college and out of our home we are influenced by many things as we study political and social issues. The news media is often very biased. We need to beware of this.
 2. Yet all of our influence goes back to our parents. As we get older most of us resemble our parents in many ways.
 3. *Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.*
 4. Influence is not usually a **one time event** or even an event that happens a couple of time. Influence usually happens over a long period of time. The following story is told to illustrate this.
 5. *One of the strange sights on the Dutch Windward Islands in the Caribbean is the Divi-Divi tree. Because the winds blow almost constantly from the east, all of the branches grow on one side of the tree. You can look at a Divi-Divi tree and always know which is east and which is west. The wind didn't accomplish that in a day or a week. We do not always influence others suddenly. Sometimes it takes years.* –Pulpit Helps.

- C. Not only are we influenced by others, but we also have an influence on others. Christians especially must realize this.
 1. We may think we have no influence but we do. It may not be much but we do have a certain influence on those around us for good or bad.
 2. The world around us is either better off or worse off because we are around. We need to think about this. Someone has said, "*If we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem.*" Which are we?
 3. Christians especially need realize that they have an influence on the world around them. It can be for **good**. We can influence people around us to behave better. For example, many will watch their language just because they know we are a Christian. Sometimes we can even influence some to obey the Gospel.
 4. We can also influence the world to be **worse**. When we stand for the truth and say there is only one true God and one right way to live, we may influence people to even worse behavior. They may mock, ridicule and perhaps even persecute us. Consider Paul's words to Timothy.
 5. *2 Tim 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*
 6. We can also have a **harmful** influence on the world. We can '*hide our light under the basket.*' No one really knows we are a Christian and what we stand for. Keeping silence signifies approval. Our influence then goes with the ways of the world. We see then that we **do** have an influence. It can last a long time.

7. In 1969, Neil Armstrong walked on the moon. His footprints are still there. They will be there a thousand years from now! It is possible that our influence will last as long! –Bible Illustrator.

D. We want to consider how a Christian influences the world today.

1. We can divide the world into two kinds of people.

A. Lets begin with a quick study of Matthew 5:1-12.

1. These are called Jesus' "**Beatitudes.**" These are attitudes, characteristics and behavior of the true children of God. Blessed means happy and satisfied.
2. **Matthew 5:3;** It is the **humble** who have true 'poverty of spirit' and do not trust in themselves. They are therefore fully dependent on God and are the ones that will inherit the kingdom of heaven.
Matt 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
3. **Vs 4;** Those who are truly sorry for their sins and seek to change will find comfort in the blood of Jesus Christ. They will find forgiveness and grace.
Matt 5:4 *Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.*
4. **Vs 5;** The meek are then ones who yield their strength in submission to God. They will inherit the earth. They will be truly blessed by God for their obedience.
Matt 5:5 *Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*
5. **Vs 6;** Those who are hungry for truth and righteousness fill find it in God's word. They will be filled with a knowledge of what God expects of them.
Matt 5:6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*
6. **Vs 7;** Those who show mercy to others will find mercy from God. They do not ask God for what they are not willing to give to others.
Matt 5:7 *Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.*
7. **Vs 8;** Those who are pure in heart will see God. They are the kind of citizens He is seeking to be a part of the kingdom of heaven.
Matt 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.*
8. **Vs 9;** Those who make peace with God and men are 'sons of God.' Jehovah gave His own Son to make peace with man. We should make sacrifices to make peace with God and men as well. This peace is not world peace but spiritual peace –see Eph 2.
Matt 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.*
9. **Vs 10;** Jesus was persecuted for us. If we accept persecutions for Him, we will receive the kingdom of heaven for our sacrifices. We must consider ourselves blessed to be persecuted for truth.
Matt 5:10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
10. **Vs 11-12;** Taking a stand for righteousness often times brings persecutions and ridicule and rejection. We must accept it if we want to be a part of the followers of God.
Matt 5:11 *Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*
11. Many would not call these people blessed. But the scriptures do. They are not like the world. They are influenced by God and truth and not the world and Satan.

B. The first kind of people in the world are the blessed ones. These are **Christians.**

1. Blessed means **happy or satisfied.** These people are influenced by God and the Bible. They know who they are and what they have to look forward to. They are happy and satisfied with this.
2. They are not like the world. They are not proud, boastful and self-seeking. They know they are servants of God and are completely dependent on Him —poor in spirit, mourners, meek, hungry, etc.
3. *Phil 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

4. We can only have this peace when we know we are pleasing to God. We know in our hearts that we have 1) His help in this life and 2) a hope of something better when this life is over.
 5. This type of character makes us different from the world. It may cause us to be mocked, ridiculed and even persecuted. Yet we are still blessed and we know it.
- C. The second kind of people is **unbelievers**. They are not blessed.
1. This doesn't mean they have no happiness in their lives. They do. Yet their happiness is temporary and based on what they have now and not what they will have after this life is over.
 2. These people are not **poor in their spirit** but **proud and boastful**. They do not **mourn over their sins** but **boast** in them. They are not **meek and submissive** but **self-willed and selfish**. They do not **hunger and thirst to be righteous** but to have the **things of this world**.
 3. These people do not often show mercy. They try to take advantage of others. They do not strive to be pure in heart or life. They enjoy their sins and impurity. They do not sacrifice to make peace. They fuss, fight and argue. And they certainly would not rejoice in being persecuted. They strive to be liked and popular.
 4. The world persecutes those who are different. It opposes those who take a stand and say it is wrong. It loves its own and hates those who live righteous and holy lives –John 15:19.
 5. *1 Pet 4:15-16 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*
- D. The two groups in the world are very different and they have a hard time co-existing.

2. Believers influences unbelievers by who and what they are.

- A. Our influence in the world is based on **who** and **what we are** and not by **what we have**.
1. In Matthew 5:13 to 16 Jesus tells us about our influence in the world. It should be clear and powerful.

Matthew 5:13-16 *"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. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*
 2. **Matthew 5:13**; We are salt. Salt makes things **taste better** and it is a **preservative**. We should make the world a better place. We also preserve it by our influence. In Genesis 18:32 & 33 Sodom was destroyed because there were not ten righteous souls in it. Are there enough Christians to save the United States and for how long?
 3. Notice that we must be the salt of the earth. If we aren't then we are worthless and will be cast out. We must be a good influence in the world. We see that a Christians **can** lose his salvation.
 4. **Vs 14**; We are the light of the world and a city set on a hill. A city on a hill can be seen a long ways off. The lights of the city can be seen afar off. The traveler can find the city, even at night. Christians should stand out like this. People should see our righteousness like the city on a hill.
 5. **Vs 15**; We are the lamp that is set up high enough to give light to all the house. All men should see our light. Light in scripture is truth, knowledge and righteousness. We show the truth of God to the world by our lives, character, attitudes and behavior.
 6. **Vs 16**; We must let our lights shine before men. This is not for our glory but for God's. Our good works must be seen by men but for the right reasons. We cannot hide our light under the basket but we must not seek glory for ourselves. Many did in Jesus' day –and still do in ours.
 7. *Matt 6:1 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven."*

8. Notice that we are the light and the salt. Light and salt are not things we have to give. They are what we are. We are the light that shines before men. We are the salt that makes the world better. We are not salt shakers nor light fixtures. We are the light and the salt. **We** are what influences the world to be better.
- B. Being *blessed* means we have God's nature in us. We are not like the world.
1. *2 Pet 1:3-4 ...as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*
 2. We partake of the divine nature. We become **like God**. In order to do this we must escape the lust and corruption of this world. We must be different. Paul spoke of how different the Corinthians became.
 3. *1 Cor 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*
 4. Because we are different we are not special to the world. We are special (blessed) to God. We are purified by Him for good deeds. It is this difference that the world should see in us. This is the influence we have in the world and on it.
 5. *Titus 2:14 He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*
- C. Being blessed by God does not mean we have all the things of the world.
1. The light we shine before men is not the things we have. The world is not influenced by us because we have so much of this world's things. The world says, "*Whoever dies with the most toys wins.*" This is not true.
 2. We are still blessed or satisfied with what God has promised us. The world sees this. They see our happiness and satisfaction even though we do not have the things the world thinks brings happiness.
 3. *Phil 4:11-13 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*
 4. This is a satisfaction based on what we look forward to after this life is over and not on what we have now. For some in this world this may influence them to think about their own lack of real happiness and blessedness. It may cause them to think about their spiritual needs and obey the Gospel.
- D. We see that we influence the world by who we are, by our attitude, character and behavior.

3. Finally, we must interact with the world in order to be salt and light to it.

- A. Salt must be put on the food to preserve it or make it taste better.
1. God wants us in the midst of the world as salt and light. We are to let the world see us and our god works. We are careful to do our good deeds in a way to glorify God and not our own selves.
 2. *John 17:15-16 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."*
 3. *1 Cor 5:9-10 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the*

world.

4. We can only influence the world by interacting with it. If we do not interact, then it will not see our good works and know we are servants of the most high God. In the early centuries of the church many left the cities and went into the deserts and mountains to live alone. This did not really help them and so Monasteries and Nunneries were formed to get out of the world. This was wrong.
 5. Paul understood this principle as well or better than anyone. He was imprisoned in Rome with the threat of death over him. He longed for death and to be with Christ. Yet he recognized the need to remain in the world and be fruitful.
 6. *Phil 1:21-24 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.*
- B. Jesus is the light of the world. We should be too. We should reflect His light.
1. *John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*
 2. Jesus came to show us the right way to walk and live. Many do not follow the light but get lost in the darkness. Many in the world are lost in sin and know of no way out. We must find them and let our light shine before them. Corinth was in great darkness and Paul was told to keep preaching to them —Acts 18:9, 10.
 3. Light is truth, knowledge and righteousness. Darkness is ignorance, error and wickedness. The world is in darkness. We must walk as children of light —Eph 5:8.
 4. *John 3:20-21 "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."*
 5. When men see our good works they may appreciate the light and copy our good works and glorify God. They may even become Christians. Or they may hate the light and condemn us. As Christians we have died with Christ to the world. He lives in us. When they see us, they should see Jesus Christ.
 6. *Gal 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*
 7. Think of this. **Christ lives in us!** When the world sees us they should see the character and behavior of Jesus Christ. Think of this and think of our character and behavior. Are we light and salt? Is Christ really living in us?
- C. We see then that we must be in the world so it can see we are the light and salt of God.

Conclusion; There are many influences in this world.

- A. Children of God must be an influence for good.
1. We must beware of being influenced by the world. We must not follow the world. We must not allow the sin and wickedness of this world to affect us.
 2. We must live above the world. We must be the salt and light and let the world see us and our good deeds in Christ. We must strive to influence the world.
 3. Some will be better because of us. Some will even become Christians. Many though will oppose us and ridicule the truth.
- B. If we want to be a part of the Light, we must become a follower of Jesus Christ.
1. We must believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who died for us. We then repent of our sins and turn to the light. We turn from sin to Christ.
 2. We are then baptized into Christ to become a child of God. Our sins are washed away by being immersed in water. This is an act of faith. God said to do it and we obey Him.

3. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
 4. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
 5. *Rom 6:3-7 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.*
 6. See also Matt 28:18-20, Luke 24:44-48, John 3:3-6, Act 8:35-39, 17:30-31, 18:8, 22:16, Titus 3:4-7, 1 Pet 3:21, etc.
 7. Baptism is not a work that saves us. It is an act of faith. We submit to someone baptizing us because we believe the words of Jesus Christ. The water does not save. Our faith and obedience does.
- C. If the church can help anyone in their service to God today, please let us know how we can help.