

Being a Good Influence for Christ: [3-3-13]

Text: 2 Corinthians 3:2-3-“You are an Epistle of Christ known and read by all.”

Intro: Influence is powerful!

² You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ³ clearly *you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.*

- a. What is influence? Influence is the ability of a person to compel others to think, feel or behave in a certain manner.

“Influence is like having a nose on your face, everyone has one.”-Knight’s Treasury of 2000 Illustrations.

- b. Our influence on others has the potential to affect hundreds in our lifetime.
- c. Jesus uses several metaphors for the right kind of Christian influence.

[Matthew 5:13, 14-16]

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.

- d. Today, we will look at the power of influence in the Christian’s life.

1. Influence Of A Changed [Converted] Life To Christ.

- a. Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19

Acts 2:38 – 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

Acts 3:19 - ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord

- b. This change is produced by the word of God. [Psalm 19:7; 1 Peter 1:23]

- Psalm 19:7 - The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;
- I Peter 1:23 - ²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever
- c. Influence of a new person in Christ. [Romans 6:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:17]
Romans 6:3-4 - ³ 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
II Corinthians 5:17 - ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
- d. Influence of evil to good influence for Christ. [1 Corinthians 6:9-11]
⁹ 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.
- e. One of the greatest ways we can influence others is by living a Christ-like life. [2 Corinthians 3:2]
² You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

2. Epistles Are Written For The Good Of Others.

- a. The motto of all great men has been, "God first, others second, and self last."
- b. Example of Christ. [2 Corinthians 8:9; Matthew 20:28]
II Corinthians 8:9 - ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich
Matthew 20:28 - ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

- c. Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:4-5

Galatians 2:20 – 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
Philippians 2:4-5: ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

3. Epistles Should Be Written As To Easily Be Known And Read.

- a. Acts 4:13-“ Blessed is the influence of one true, loving human soul on another.” –George Eliot.
b. Romans 12:1-2- “ Let us live in such a way that no one would ever say, “I never knew you were a Christian and a member of the Church of Christ.”

Conclusion: Influence is powerful! I would like to conclude today’s lesson with a poem written by Leroy Brownlow called: The Gospel according to you. “ There’s a Gospel according to Matthew; To Mark; To Luke: To John too. There’s another Gospel that many are reading- the Gospel according to you. All teachings we find in the bible are facts we know to be true; you must live right them to make them the gospel- the gospel according to you. Many read not the words of the Bible; I will tell you what some of them do-they are reading the book you are writing- the Gospel according to you. There’s great power in Gospel preaching, the Bible teaches that this is true. But the sermon most likely to influence others is the Gospel according to you. God help us to be faithful to Jesus- to live all His teachings so true, so that all may see His Spirit in the Gospel according to you.”

“You are writing a Gospel, a chapter each day; by things that you do; by things you say. Others read that Gospel, whether faithless or true! Say! What is the Gospel according to you?”