

468 The Christian's Influence in the Community
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Moving the Church Forward Accepting the challenge of influencing our community.

Introduction:

1. People within our community judge the church by the individual members of the church. They look at the lives we live.
2. It is important that we live the Christian life daily.

(1 Tim 5:14 NKJV) Therefore, I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

(1 Pet 4:4 KJV) Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

3. There is a Children's song that we need to learn and live - "This little light of mine."
4. We must be the "salt of the earth" & "the light of the world" in our community.

Body

I. CHRISTIANS ARE SOCIAL BEINGS.

A. We are a part of the community in which we live.

1. If a person is normal, he will live with & among people.
2. We cannot afford to go out of the world.
3. We cannot excuse ourselves from society.
4. We cannot live the life of a hermit.

(John 17:15 NKJV) "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

(1 Cor 5:9-10 NKJV) 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.

(1 Cor 15:33 NKJV) Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

5. Jesus was no ascetic.

(Luke 2:52 NKJV) And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

(John 2:1-2 NKJV) On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

II. CHRISTIANS ARE TO EXERT A GOOD INFLUENCE IN THE COMMUNITY.

A. The Christian must live his religion & practice what he professes.

1. ILLUS: A man owned a gas station - Opened all day on Sunday. Christian giving him a hard time about it on Sunday morning while church was going on.

2. "If the church means so much to you, why aren't you there now?"

3. We must practice what we preach.

(Acts 1:1 NKJV) The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

(Rom 2:21 NKJV) You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?

(Mat 5:19 NKJV) "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

4. We must prove our profession by our performance. 1 Tim 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

5. We must present a picture of Christianity not hypocrisy.

a. Matt. 23:4

b. Matt. 23:13

6. Christians are to be "living stones" not "stumbling stones" (1 Pet 2:5).

7. The Christian must portray a friendly disposition.

a. (Prov 18:24 NKJV) A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

b. Snobbishness is a bushel that hides the Christian's good influence.

8. The Christian must take pride in his local community.

(Luke 4:16 NKJV) So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

9. The Christian must refrain from neighborhood gossip.

(Psa 15:3 NKJV) He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;

(1 Tim 5:13 NKJV) And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.

10. The Christian must keep his children under control.

a. Children should be taught:

- 1.. Courtesy.
2. Respect for age.
3. Respect for property.
4. Good work ethics.
5. To be Honest, Kind, & Helpful.

b. Children are a reflection of parents- as you are a reflection of the church.

11. The Christian must maintain domestic tranquility.

(1 Th 4:11 KJV) And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

(1 Pet 3:4 KJV) But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

(1 Pet 3:7 KJV) Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

12. The Christian must be willing to go the second mile to avoid making enemies (Mat 5:38-48).

(Rom 12:19-21 KJV) Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. {20}

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. {21} Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

13. The Christian must watch his speech.

(Titus 2:8 KJV) Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

14. The Christian must watch his dress.

(1 Tim 2:9-10 KJV) In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; {10} But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

15. The Christian must watch his temper.

(James 1:19 NKJV) So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

16. The Christian must watch his habits.

17. The Christian must be honest & live within his means. (Rom 13:8 NKJV) Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

III. CHRISTIANS MUST LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO WIELD A GOOD INFLUENCE FOR CHRIST IN THE COMMUNITY.

1. During concerted efforts in the local congregation.
2. During times of illness or at a death.
3. During times of community tragedy.

IV. CHRISTIANS SHOULD MAKE THE COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE BECAUSE OF THEIR INFLUENCE.

1. Do you think Nazareth was a better community because Jesus lived there?
2. Do you think where you live is a better community because you live there?

Conclusion

There is nothing in this world that can equal or compare with the Christian's influence.

I am my neighbor's Bible,
He reads me when we meet;
Today he reads me in my home,

Tomorrow in the street.

He may a relative or friend,
Or slight acquaintance be;
He may not even know my name,
Yet he is reading me.

Dear Christian friends and brothers,
If we could only know,
How faithful the world records,
Just what we say and do.

Oh, we would make our record plain,
And labor hard to see,
Our worldly neighbors won to Christ,
While reading you and me.