

Influence of God's Church – "Be the Light"

Be a Powerful Influence for the Kingdom of God in Your Community

Intro: As followers of Christ, even as Christ's true fellowship in the last days, we are called to be a great influence and light for the kingdom of God and the message of Christ in our time. We are to share Jesus with the entire world. But often, we find that our churches and our meetings have little influence or effect in reaching the people. At times, not a single soul will come to our meetings or be affected. We also find people in churches, who don't desire to stick around or invite others. But, why not? Why so little interest? Why does it seem that our influence with others is so small and seemingly ineffective? Is there a way to change this? Let's explore Scriptural evidence, and follow it. God has the answer. One thing I know is that *we preach a sermon by our life, before we ever open our mouth.*

God's Call to Influence

- **Let your light so shine** – a city set on a hilltop (**See Matthew 5:13-16**)
 - Salt and light to the earth – The savor. The brightness. **Intentional influence.** Placed on a candlestick/lampstand. (not under a bushel; not worthless). **DO NOT LET IT BE HIDDEN. DO NOT BE WITHOUT SAVOR. BE SET ON A HILL. BE THE LIGHT. BE THE SALT.**
- **The Head, Not the Tail** – God wants us to be the head and not the tail
 - **Deut. 28:13.** "And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:" [See also **verse 44**]
 - The blessings, light and influence here are conditional upon our obedience to God – our listening to, treasuring, and taking to heart **in our lives** the commandments and teachings of the Lord.
- **Deut. 4:5-10.** These commandments shall be your wisdom, glory and honor among the nations.
 - The wise **live them and teach them diligently** to others. They **DO** God's word. **IN THIS**, they will have a **POWERFUL INFLUENCE** upon the nations around them **for God's glory.**
 - **Imagine:** Love, kindness, mercy, no divorce or adultery, no lies, no cheats, no exploiting. Honoring our parents/Obedient children. Solid families. **VISIBLE** kindness to the poor/all.
- Leadership/influence: "*Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.*" (Maxwell, 11, 20).¹
- **Matthew 4:23-25** – People followed Jesus from everywhere and heard His words. **Why?**
 - Jesus drew people to Himself, because He loved and cared for people. God's visible love.
 - "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (**Acts 10:38**)

Isaiah's Call for Israel to Be God's True Light (Self-serving vs. Humanity-serving Worshipers) (Isaiah 58)

- (v.1-2) Joyfully ignorant of their sin. God calls "the house of Jacob" to repentance.
- (v.3-5) Evil living has been mingled with religious rites. Sin plagues hearts while purity is absent.
- (v.6-7) God's true "fast" involves loving and practical compassion on all souls in need.

¹ Maxwell, John C. *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. 2007. Thomas Nelson. Nashville, TN.

- Undo evil burdens, set people free, break evil yokes, deal your bread to the hungry, bring the poor who are cast out to your house, clothe the naked, hide not from the needy.
- (v.8-10) Light and Health emanate from living God's way of loving service for others. The Glory goes before and behind, that all may see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ working through us. God will hear and answer our prayers. Our "light shall rise in obscurity, and [our] darkness shall be as the noon day" (v.10).
- (v.11) All of God's truest blessings are SURE to follow this experience! We'll be satisfied in drought. We'll have fat bones. We'll be like a watered garden. And like a spring of water which NEVER fails to produce that life-giving, blessed, fresh, and pure water.
- (v.12) Those who SPRING from this environment will be TRUE REVIVALISTS and reformers of truth. BE the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in – BY LIVING THIS WAY.
- (v.13-14) If we refuse to trample upon God's holy Sabbath, and CHOOSE to DELIGHT in the LORD, doing His ways, speaking His words, and honoring Him, THEN we WILL delight in God and God will POUR OUT His richest blessings upon us. God will make us RIDE UPON THE HIGH PLACES of the earth – He will give us the BEST OF THE BEST and SET US as His Lights and Leaders of the Earth. (THIS PROMISE IS TRUE – AS ALL ARE – and we can experience this same blessing and purpose of God today IF WE SO CHOOSE. Surrender all to God and put He and His ways *first*).

The Heart, Life, and Teachings of Jesus on Saving Influence

- **Jesus was the light of the World (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46).** Do you want to be like God/like Jesus? Let's know Him. **Psalm 146:5-10.**
- Jesus taught **practical love** for souls to be a hallmark of the faithful. Matthew 25:33-40.
- **Influence through actions. Influence through words.** (they go together)
- "When at a feast, Christ controlled the conversation, and gave many precious lessons. Those present listened to Him; **for had He not healed their sick, comforted their sorrowing, and taken their children in His arms? Publicans and sinners were drawn to Him; and when He spoke, their attention was riveted on Him.**" {Our Father Cares, 57.2} [*sermon by life, before we open...*]
 - Jesus had a powerful influence with others. His words had powerful influence. His words had this affect and interest BECAUSE, **He:** Healed their sick, Comforted their sorrowing, Took their children in His arms, *And likewise.*
- "Christ taught His disciples how to conduct themselves when in the company of others. He instructed them in regard to the duties and regulations of true social life, which are the same as the laws of the kingdom of God. He taught the disciples, by example, that when attending any public gathering, they need not want for something to say. His conversation when at a feast differed most decidedly from that which had been listened to at feasts in the past. **Every word He uttered was a savor of life unto life. He spoke with clearness and simplicity.** His words were as apples of gold in pictures of silver." {Our Father Cares, 57.3}
- "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, **"Follow Me."**" MH, 143. {ChS 119.3}

Appeal: Will you pray and choose to be the influence God wants us to be? (by Him, in word and deed. Without Him, we can do nothing – John 15:4-5, 6-8; but with Him, ALL things are possible. Phil. 4:13)