

HOW CAN WE INFLUENCE OTHERS?

By Keith Greer

"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. You are the light of the world A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." {Matthew 5:13-16}

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught many powerful lessons. One lesson centered on our duty, as Christians, to be an influence upon others. Rest assured we influence people around us, either in a good way or a bad way. This is a powerful tool which we have at our disposal. "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad" {Matthew 12:30}

How do we use this tool to its fullest potential? How can I be the best influence for Christ that I can? Let us endeavor to give some suggestions from God's word.

OUR SPEECH. How we speak tells people much about our Christianity. "Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so." {James 3:10} A Christian who speaks out of "both sides" of his mouth, is not a good influence.

"Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deed .. " {Colossians 3:9} We must be people who always tell the truth! Please read Matthew 12:34-37 and Ephesians 4:29.

LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER. How we treat other brethren, says something about our Christianity. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35) For others this is a sign of discipleship. "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart," {1 Peter 1:22}

How can we encourage and lead others to desire to be in God's family, if we cannot get along? "But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!" {Galatians 5:15} Such a simple concept, but many souls are lost due to not showing proper love between brethren.

FAITHFULNESS. My life should be one of faithfulness to God in all areas. "But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." {James 2:18} What if one leads a "double life"? Can this possibly be an influence for good? Read Matthew 6:24.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CHURCH. The scriptures plainly tell us Christ loved it enough to die for it. Ephesians 5:25. He bought it with His own blood, Acts 20:28. Yet, how often do we worship with the saints? Attend Bible classes? Do we attend gospel meetings? If work needs to be done,

do we volunteer? When a Christian is not really committed to the Lord's church, what kind of influence does he have?

PURITY OF LIFE. Christians should be an example of moral goodness. "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. "[1 Timothy 4: 12] How can we influence people who live in the world, to please their master Satan, if our morality is no difference then how they lived by the morality of the world standards and not God's? Can we not understand the world needs to see the vast difference in how God's people view true morality and despise the false morality of the times.

Looking back at Bible history this is exactly what God had hoped and designed for His people. Living such lives by His standards that mankind would learn God's ways are better. Sadly, they allow the influence to come from the world and lead them away from God. History is repeating itself. ***