Series: Influence

October 7, 2018

Message 2:

**It’s a Control Issue**

1st Peter 1:13-16

*Guests - Handout designed with you in mind - Info and notes especially for you - won’t call or visit -*

*Next Steps*

*Generosity*

*Notes on Handout and in YouVersion App*

**Intro:**  I ran across a story of a mother who was shopping and her young son was with her. He had seen her make several purchases - then at one store the clerk handed the young boy a lollipop. His mother said, “What do you say?” The boy replied - “CHARGE IT!”

The boy had been influenced! We’re talking about influence!

Whether you realize it or not - you have influence! Every person here knows other people - we have relationships with one another - we have relationships in our family - in our work places - in our neighborhood - in our schools - in our community -

Every relationship has the potential of influence. Are you always looking for the opportunity to influence other people for good? Our love for Jesus and our desire to be like Him should motivate us to influence people for good!

As we move through the fall - and move toward the holiday season - there are powerful opportunities to influence others. People who don’t normally think of church and faith start thinking about it. Look for those conversations - look for opportunities to influence. We want to help you with that.

Last week we talked about how Jesus is our greatest example. He shows us how to have a positive influence on others - review that message!

In my opening story the mother may have lost a little control - over her spending and over her son!

**Big Idea: Influence is a control issue.**

When we talk about people who have control issues, we think of them always having to control others. I’m not thinking of controlling others - I’m thinking of controlling ourselves!

We are not going to have a positive impact on the lives of others, if we don’t have our own lives under control!

Perhaps the greatest issue that can erode our ability to influence others is our own failure to live a disciplined life.

**God is more interested in who you are in Him than in what you do for Him.**

We must spend the right amount of time doing the right things.

**T.S.:** 6 aspects of a controlled life that will influence others.

**> A life of influence begins with me.**

1st Peter 1:13-16 - So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. So you must live as God’s obedient children. Don’t slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn’t know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. For the Scriptures say, “You must be holy because I am holy.”

**When we discipline ourselves, we won’t have to be disciplined by others!**

*(Comment on this quote as you read it…)*

Dallas Willard, in his book The Spirit of the Disciplines writes, “What then is keeping Christianity from being that guide to life which it alone can be? Christianity can only succeed as a guide for current humanity if it does two things.

 “First, it must take the need for human transformation as seriously as do modern revolutionary movements. The modern negative critique of Christianity arose in the first place because the church was not faithful to its own message—it failed to take human transformation seriously as a real, practical issue to be dealt with in realistic terms…

 “Second, it needs to clarify and exemplify realistic methods of human transformation. It must show how the ordinary individuals who make up the human race today can become, through the grace of Christ, a love-filled, effective, and powerful community…

 “...we can become like Christ by doing one thing—by following him in the overall style of life he chose for himself. If we have faith in Christ, we must believe that he knew how to live. We can, through faith and grace, become like Christ by practicing the types of activities he engaged in, by arranging our whole lives around the activities he himself practiced in order to remain constantly at home in the fellowship of his Father.

 “What activities did Jesus practice? Such things as solitude and silence, prayer, simple and sacrificial living, intense study and meditation upon God’s Word and God’s ways, and service to others.”

The attributes listed there have been considered spiritual disciplines of Christianity through the centuries. In other cultures and at other times they have been much more effectively taught and applied than they have been in the recent Christian practice of Western civilization. These are disciplines that we must make sure we practice as a priority for our influence to be powerful and effective. We must develop our personal walk with Christ if we expect to have any effectiveness in our influence upon others.

**> A life of influence is an exemplary life.**

1st Thessalonians 5:23 - Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

Another way of putting this is to say that we are to live “above reproach,” or a person “whose life cannot be spoken against.”

Paul wrote about qualifications for certain roles in the church - but I don’t believe just a few people in the church should attempt to live this way - this is how we are all to control our lives if each of us are going to have the influence that we are capable of having:

1st Timothy 3:1-7 - This is a trustworthy saying: “If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position.” So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church?

 A church leader must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil’s trap.

Anyone who desires to influence others for Jesus should strive to live up to this Scriptural level of self-discipline. Don’t let there be anything that anyone can bring up against you to erode your ability to be used of the Lord to change lives!

**> A life of influence controls time.**

Ephesians 5:15-16 - So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.

We’re not talking about turning clocks backwards - or keeping our hair from turning gray.

Make the most of every opportunity! Make the most of your time! Control how you use your time! People who influence others know the balance between accomplishment and rest - and the difference between rest and wasting time!

As an influencer - here are things that are a waste your time -

* Focusing on past failures and discouragements

Don’t waste your time looking back at past sins, failures, and regrets.

Philippians 3:13 - …I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead…

* Procrastination

There is someone you can influence now - someone you are influencing now! Don’t put it off!

Don’t put off what needs to be done now! Get the job done!

* Interruptions

You don’t always have to answer the phone! You don’t always have to have the cell phone on! That’s why God created voice mail! Control your time and you will be a more effective influencer. Respond to emergencies, but get priorities done first. Control your time yourself, don’t let others control your schedule!

* Clutter

Keeping your life in order saves time!

- Failure to delegate.

There are some things you are doing that other people can do that will free you up to have more influence on the people in your life that God has given you to influence.

* Indecision

James 1:5 - If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.

This is how to make the decision! Pray about it, get peace about the decision - make the decision - and trust God!

* Lack of preparation

If I’m not prepared when I come in here, I’m wasting everyone’s time.

Don’t be unprepared for the opportunity to influence. A person living a controlled life is going to be prepared for any opportunity.

**> A life of influence sets priorities.**

What does the Lord want you to do? Determine what that is and put it first! Make it your priority. Example:

- Priority 1 - My relationship with God.

That comes first! If my relationship with Him is not intimate, then nothing else in my life will be as effective as it could be.

- Priority 2 - My relationship with my family. In this order:

 1. Spouse

 2. Children

 3. Parents

\* Children in my home come before my relationship with my parents - when my children are on their own and doing well, then my parents reach a point where they need me, this priority shifts.

 4. Siblings & extended family

* Priority 3 - My relationship with church family, friends, and those who need Jesus.

 This can include the ministry God has placed me in.

* Priority 4 - Rest -

If we’re doing what God has called us to do, if we are controlling our lives, there will be time for rest, relaxation, and rejuvenating our spirits so we can continue to live according to these priorities.

\* When you set priorities you set goals - make them specific.

* Who is it right now that you have the most opportunity to influence?
	+ Kids?
	+ Parents?
	+ Friends?
	+ Co-workers?
	+ Neighbors?

How are you going to do that? “God give me an opportunity!” That’s a great prayer - how about you make a plan along with that?

* Help them with their yard -
* Take them some dessert - just because - no reason - you don’t have to wait until somebody dies!
* Invite them over to watch a game - or play some games
* What’s your plan for your kids? How much devotional time do you have? Do you read a Bible Story at bedtime? Do you teach them how to pray by praying with them?

What’s your plan? What are your priorities?

Who are you inviting to church this fall - heading toward the holiday season? What are you doing to grease the tracks? Helping in the yard - sharing some food - inviting people for times of fellowship - that can pave the way for an invitation to church!

“I’ve got an idea for a small group!” That’s awesome! What’s your idea? Have you completed Next Steps? What will be the focus of the group? When are you going to start? What are you going to prepare? What are you going to require of the group? When, where and how often are you going to meet?

Leadership Training opportunity November 3rd …

We can help you do all of that! That is our priority! That is why we are here!

I’m not supposed to do the work of the ministry - My calling is to prepare you to do the work of the ministry - so you getting prepared to do what you’re supposed to do enables me to do exactly what I am supposed to do!

Pastor Sharon especially focuses on this - Pastor Dean focuses on NextGen (not just doing it, but enabling others to serve) - Pastor Seth focuses on Worship, Media, Young Adults - I focus on leading and enabling them - and mostly setting the template for our weekend teachings - Pastor Dean & Pastor Seth are going to help us more and more with weekend teachings - more than previous associates … I also lead a small group myself! This is why we are here!

“I want to start a business!” What business? When are you going to start? How are you going to get the start-up money? Is there a need in the community? How will you get initial clients?

“I want to pray more.” When are you going to do it. At what time of day? How much time are you going to spend?

Make your goals specific—not general! Write them down and establish time goals. This is an important discipline of living a controlled life of influence!

**> A life of influence is accountable to others.**

Ephesians 5:21 - And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

It has been said that accountability is the insurance for a disciplined life.

People who live a controlled life are not “loose cannons.” We are not to be a “law unto ourselves.” We are a part of the Body of Christ and each one of us is in submission to Christ and to one another. In order to be an effective influencer we must be in a relationship with someone who will hold you accountable to living this disciplined life we are speaking of.

Influencers allow themselves to be influenced. Never stop learning!

**> A life of influence never gives up!**

Life happens in seasons. Not every relationship lasts our entire lives. Not every ministry opportunity is for a lifetime ministry. But, if we are going to be disciplined people influencing others we are going to keep the commitments we make and not give up. When the going gets tough … well, you know how that goes!

Many are good at starting. Influencers under control are good at finishing. Emotions get people started—self-discipline - self-control keeps us going!

Persistence and perseverance are certainly biblical qualities that make for effective lives of influence!

**Invitation -**

**Remember Connection Card - video**

**Blessing -**

**Remember Next Steps - Remember to Give …**

*(Sources for this message include Foundations of Leadership, Discipleship Pathway Series, Course 301, Bethel Temple A/G, Hampton, Virginia, Pastor Ron Johnson & Leadership 301, Bethany World Prayer Center, Baker, Louisiana, Pastor Larry Stockstill)*