

THE VALUE OF INFLUENCE

Text: Proverbs 22:1

INTRO: The wise man is telling us that it is better to have a good reputation than to be materially rich -- but why? Why is a good name so valuable? The answer: because of the value of our influence on others, and the part it plays in our eternal welfare, and that of those who come under our influence.

I. THE VALUE OF INFLUENCE IS EVIDENT WHEN WE BECOME AWARE OF THE POWER OF INFLUENCE.

A. No one ever can or does “lose” his influence. Truly, he can lose its power to accomplish what is good, but he still exerts influence.

Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion? (Job 38:31). NOTE; The constellation Pleiades is viewed as a fragrant bouquet of flowers. Could Job keep a beautiful bouquet from filling the air with its influence? Neither can we destroy our own influence or that of others -- tho we must constantly be on guard that we do not damage its power to accomplish what is good.

B. Because of the power of a good influence, some will come to glorify God who would otherwise not have done so.
Matthew 5:16

C. A good influence is so powerful & valuable that it has been known to turn cowards into heroes.

Now when [the Jews] saw the boldness of Peter & John and perceived that they were uneducated & untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13).

D. The value of a good influence is further demonstrated when we realize that it either promotes or retards the growth of the kingdom of God.
Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of

heaven is like leaven, which a woman took & hid in 3 measures of meal till it was all leavened” (Matt. 13:33).

E. Because of the power of influence, no one is likely to go to either heaven or hell alone.

1. If there is anything that can enhance heaven, it must be to see others there who are there partly due to our own influence. READ I COR 3:9-15

2. If there is anything that can make hell worse than it already is, it would be to see those you love there, due largely to your influence.

Luke 16:27-31.

But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, & he were drowned in the depth of the sea (MT 18:6)

F. The power of influence is such that each of us has an influence on others, & at the same time, each of us is being influenced by others.

1. We should continually examine ourselves to see who is influencing us & in what direction. We may need to make some adjustments in our associations or in the amount of time we spend with them.

Evil co. corrupts good habits (1 Cor 15:33).

2 COR. 6:14-17

2. We must constantly be aware of the direction in which we are influencing those who look to us as examples. Again, certain adjustments will frequently be needed.

G. Also, because of influence, we will continue to affect the eternal destinies of others, even after we are dead.

1. I have known many to reject NT baptism because father or grandfather never submitted.
2. There are likely some present today who are here largely due to the good influence of someone who is no longer with us in the flesh.

II. OUR INFLUENCE IS VALUABLE ALMOST BEYOND MEASURE WHEN IT IS PROPERLY EXERTED.

A. Every parent is an influence on his own children.

1. I read a survey several years ago that where BOTH parents were faithful & active in the church, 93% of their children remained faithful. Where one parent was faithful & active, the figure dropped to 73%. Where the parents were regular in attendance but not otherwise active the figure dropped to 53%. BUT NOTE: In those cases where both parents were lax in attendance only 6% of their children remained faithful.

2. The influence of parents has been expressed in the familiar saying "like father, like son." Bible writers recognized this principle, JN 8:44, etc.

B. Every wife is an influence on her husband -- & vice versa.
1 Peter 3:1-2; 1 Cor. 7:16

C. Each of us has some influence on our friends. They are better or worse because of us. We influence people on our jobs, in our communities, in the marketplace -- & in turn, we are influenced by others in all these places.

1. Lot gradually drifted in the direction of Sodom till finally he was dwelling there, Gen 13:12; 14:12. By compromise his influence lost its power to accomplish good.

2. Daniel went down to Babylon a captive but by refusing to compromise, he became a blessing to 2 world empires, to his own Hebrew race, & to all Bible readers since his day. His captors tried to persuade him to partake of the king's wine & unkosher foods, but he stood his ground. They passed a no-prayer law, but he prayed anyway.
3. Let each of us strive to be a good influence as Daniel was, & now allow ourselves to be too greatly influenced by those whose moral & spiritual standards fall short of God's will.

III. FINALLY, WE SHOULD BE AWARE THAT EXERTING A GOOD INFLUENCE IS NOT OPTIONAL. WE ARE COMMANDED TO DO SO. MATTHEW 5:13-16

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example of the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity... Take heed to yourself & to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself & those who hear you. (1 Tim. 4:12, 16).

La Porte, TX, May 31, 1981

Exton, PA, April 24, 1988

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, August 8, 1993

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, October 11, 1998