

Protecting Our Influence

By Justin Morton

We all have our fair share of struggles, but there is one struggle we all wrestle with: the struggle to protect our influence. Whether we realize it or not, our influence is greater than we think. We have the potential to affect others around us even when we intend not to. It is because of such potential that everything we do in our lives, no matter how great or small, matters because everything we do has the power to influence other people.

When Paul was writing the young Timothy, he encouraged him to set an example for the believers in Ephesus in “speech, conduct, love, faith and purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). Why should Timothy worry about such things? Because these things have the power to influence those around us.

Friends, our influence has the potential to be quite powerful. It is for this reason we should do our best to protect our influence. Let’s consider a few reasons why protecting our influence is so important:

1. **Our influence can bring glory and honor to God** (Matt. 5:13-16). When other people examine our lives, the good we do can cause others to glorify God.
2. **Our influence can affect people in a godly manner** (Prov. 27:17). We can use our lives and influence to impact others spiritually. Timothy’s mom and grandmother modeled a godly influence for him that led to his spiritual development (2 Tim. 1:5).
3. **Our influence can affect people in an ungodly manner**. If we are not careful, our influence can have a negative impact on others spiritually. They may see what we are engaged in and perceive it to be okay to partake of. Just consider the evil influences of Eve (Gen. 3:6), Jeroboam (2 Kgs. 17:21-22) and Manasseh (2 Kgs. 21:1-11).
4. **Our influence can destroy our ability to lead others to Jesus**. The disciples in Jerusalem were afraid of Saul when he first tried to join them (Acts 9:26-28). His influence of persecuting Christians had spread and caused Christians to fear him. If people see us living our lives against the teachings of Christ, our bad behavior will hinder when we try to speak about the teachings of Christ.

Every day is a struggle because we have to be on guard of the potential we have to influence others. Whether we realize it or not, someone is always watching us. The question remains, “Is our influence good and bringing honor to God or evil and hindering our ability to lead others to Christ?” May we make a conscientious effort to protect our influence before others.