

## Our Influence on Others

Influence that comes from without is annoying, at best, and devastating at worst, but the influence of life that we can have control over is that which we have on others.

Jesus was asked: “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets” (Matthew 22:36-40). When man is motivated by the principle to “love thy neighbor as thyself,” there will be a conscious effort to be aware of our actions. The apostle Paul told Timothy, “be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). Should not that be the desire of all men? Think about the influence we have upon the people close to us: Husbands and wives influence each other every day. Parents influence their children to either good or evil. It has been said that actions speak louder than words. It’s not what parents tell their children, as much as it is what the children see their parents doing. Have you ever met a parent that wanted their child to reach maturity only to see that child incarcerated for violating the law? Yet, parents will often show a disregard for authority in their own lives, and the children learn the lesson well. Parents that say, “you shouldn’t do that,” yet, they do the very thing they tell their children not to do. By what influence do you think the children will be affected, the verbal admonition, or the physical action of the parents?

Regardless of a separatist attitude that we may support the fact is we are all in this together. We will either be a good influence on those around us, or we will allow those around us to corrupt the good morals we desire to achieve. It’s true that there are wicked people in the world, determined to do their very best to destroy others; but as a rule, most people do not consciously set out to destroy, they are just unaware of the influence they exert.

Remember the words of Solomon, who said, “My son, if sinners entice thee, Consent thou not” (Proverbs 1:10).