

In What Ways do you Influence your World?

January 15, 2017 By Pastor Diana J. Perkins

This morning I would like to have you think about all the people who have had the greatest influence on your life. No one has ever gone through life without the influence of others around him. Whether it turns out for good or evil, our world view is shaped by our understanding of who God is, our experiences, our environment, our culture, as well as our inherited genes. We become the person by our thoughts. The Bible says, “As a man thinks, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7.

As children we look to others to affirm to us that we are valuable. Children are given to parents as an inheritance from the Lord. In Psalms 127, these words are written. God places an awesome responsibility on parents to train their children in the way they should go. See Proverbs 22:6.

In Deuteronomy 6, God gave commandments to the Children of Israel that if they obeyed, the LORD promised to bless their lives. God wanted them to have his very best and he instructed them so they could remain in his good favor which promised prosperity and blessings from one generation to the next. He told them to fear the LORD and keep his laws and to teach their children and their grandchildren the laws of God and their days would be prolonged on the earth. Their lives would be blessed and things would go well for them. He desired for them to increase mightily and they would prosper in the land flowing with milk and honey. The first thing He wanted them to remember is that the LORD our God is one LORD and we are to love the LORD our God with all our hearts, and with all our souls and with all our might. Individuals had the responsibility of applying that truth to their minds and hearts and were to be diligent in keeping these commandments given by God.

Parents are responsible to live a life before their children that will lead them to eternal life. God commanded the people to be diligent in teaching their children the precepts of God. Communicate them when they sit in their houses, when they are walking and going about their daily lives, and as they retire and lay down for the night, and then again when they arise to begin a new day. There is a song with the phrase sung by Kenny Rogers that says “You are always on my mind.” That is what the LORD desires from his people.

These verses continue by saying that God’s commandments are to be bound on our hands and they shall be in the middle of our foreheads.

When God is in control of our lives, whatever we do will be done for the glory of God. We will keep our hands from doing evil and our eyes will be focused on the good deeds that we can do to bless God and people around us. God continued his discourse by telling the Israelites that He was going to give them houses full of good things that they didn’t have to work for. He promised to protect them from their enemies, to give them prosperity and lands, and all he asked was their love and allegiance to him in return for his special favors to them. Compare this with what sin costs a person. The wages of sin is death. Satan goes

about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Sin always leads to regret and sorrow. He is a cruel slave master and bondage is the reward a person receives for their allegiance to him. Hell fire awaits him and he desires to take you with him.

If you read the Scriptures, you will see that even with all God's promises to them, the people turned to idol worship and sinned against God which caused them to be in bondage to heathen nations.

Psalms 127, says that "Except the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the LORD keep the city, the watchman awakes in vain. God promises sweet sleep to those who put their trust in him. Happy is the man who has the LORD's blessing on his life for God will give him children who will be a blessing to him. Read Psalms 128 and you will understand that it is God's will that we have happy homes, that husbands and wives live in harmony together and their children bring joy to their lives. It is God's will that we prosper as our souls prosper. 3 John 1:2. He desires to give us his Holy Spirit to guide us to everlasting peace and joy.

The secret of securing God's blessing on our lives lies in our placing our priorities in the proper order. In Matthew 6 there are some very pertinent instructions on building our houses (our lives). In verse 19, it tells us not to lay up our treasures on earth where moths and rust will destroy them and where thieves will break in and steal. That doesn't mean that we are not to save money or have nice things; it means not to place top priority on securing them and spend all of our energy on protecting them. That ties us to this world. Some people spend their whole lives working seeking to gain their fortune. At the end of their days, everything they have worked to secure is left for others and they will stand before God empty handed because their priorities were not in the correct order.

Verse 21 says that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Mark 8:36 says "What will it profit a man, should he gain the whole world, yet lose his soul?"

There is a story that illustrates this for us in Matthew 19:16. A rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked him "Good Master, what good thing can I do to gain eternal life?" Jesus asked him why he was calling him "good" for there is none that is "good" except God. The ruler wasn't addressing Jesus as God; he was addressing him as an equal man. Jesus clarified to him that there is no good works that anyone can do to deserve salvation and eternal life; the way to God is to forsake our idols, confess we are sinners, repent of our sins and accept his grace and mercy to forgive our sins thus changing our allegiance from Satan to our Heavenly Father. We cannot serve both God and money; we have to choose which one we will give our lives to.

Jesus told this man that he must obey the commandments. The man asked "Which?" Jesus repeated the ones that the man felt confident that he had kept which were "Thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor your parents, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The young man affirmed that he had kept all of these. What else would be required of him? In Mark 10: 21, it reads that Jesus looked at him and loved him. Jesus then touched on the one area that kept the man from the kingdom of God. He was very wealthy and his money was his god. Jesus said, "If you will be perfect, go and sell what you have and give it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, take up your cross and follow me." When the man heard this, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions.

What holds you back from giving your all to Jesus Christ and following him?

People have said this to me: "If I accept Christ, what will I do for work? I am a bouncer at a bar and make good money. I don't have an education to work anywhere else." One person said to me, "My wife won't go to church and it would cause problems in our marriage if I give my heart to God." Some say, "I will lose my friends and will be made fun of if I become a Christian." There are those who say, "I'll become a Christian after I have experienced life and all the fun of youth. Then I will give my heart to God. I'm not ready yet." 2 Corinthians 6:2 says "Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation." We don't know what tomorrow will bring. Putting God off for a more convenient time is unacceptable to him. If you hear his voice, listen and obey for he will not always plead with you to come to him. Satan is a liar and deceiver. He places obstacles before your eyes in order to keep you from attaining what God has in store for you.

This young ruler hung on to his earthly treasures and forfeited the great treasures that Jesus promised him if he would trust him and follow him. If only he could have had a glimpse of eternity and all that God has promised to those who love him. God wants us to love him for who He is, not what He can give to us.

1 Corinthians 2:9 says this "Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him."

I have tasted of the Lord's goodness and I can testify to the fact that He is good!

The guilt of my past has been erased; I have peace in my heart and joy in my soul. He has called me to be his witness to those who need a healer, a deliverer, and a friend. His love grows more precious to me day by day and the longer I serve him, the sweeter he grows. The more I learn about his grace, mercy and compassion, the more I feel drawn to help those who are in despair and in bondage to sin.

Come to Jesus! Don't rely on religion for you will be disappointed. Don't follow men's rules and rituals for they will lead you down the wrong path; build a relationship with Jesus Christ and read his word, follow his teachings and your life will be filled with good things. He will change your heart, give you a new purpose and deliver you from the bondage of sin. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23. Listen to the servants of God that teach the Bible and learn how to live a godly fulfilling life that will draw others to the Savior, Jesus Christ.