



The Voice Of Truth

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How Is Your Influence?

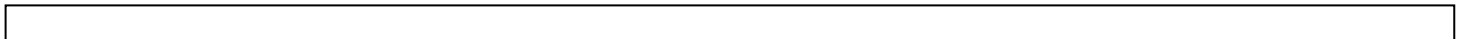
By Jimmy Pettigrew

Influence is that moral or spiritual force, or power, by which we have an effect upon a person. The power of influence is staggering! Webster defines influence as "The acts or power of producing an effect." Human behavior is POWERFUL! There is nothing more impressive than the influence of a pure Christian life. It is the most powerful, undeniable argument for Christianity; read carefully Matthew 5:13-16. Here Jesus is saying that the citizens of His kingdom are to have a saving influence in the world. Salt is good and useful for purifying and preserving. Faithful followers of the Christ are to the human race what salt is to food. They are to preserve the life of Christ in the world.

Jesus said if the salt has lost its genuine salty quality, it is fit for nothing; this is the reason it is cast into the street where it is trodden under foot of men. So, if the disciples of Jesus have lost their savor, they, too, are

good for nothing, but to be cast out. The salt of Palestine is not made from clean salt water, but from marshes along the sea, and is so mixed with impurities as not to keep its quality very well. Sometimes it becomes utterly worthless, without taste and without value; it's good for nothing, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown. This is the reason why it is cast into the street. A Christian who doesn't have that saving influence in the world is good for nothing, but actually destroys the cause of Christ! If Christians become untrue and degenerate spiritually, they cannot have a good influence on the world. Christians should guard against losing their identity in the world; rather they are to influence the world to become Christ-like. The Christian is not worldly, but he is always touching lives of the world.

The world urgently needs worthy examples of Christians. Christians are to



imitate God in purity in order that the world may see God living in us! How is your influence????

THE CROSS

By Jimmy Pettigrew

What does the cross mean to you? To me, it means VICTORY!!!! The cross gives us the victory over our enemies. Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world," Galatians 6:14. Paul glories in the cross of Christ. Let us examine the importance of the cross, which gives us the victory over our enemies.

The cross gives us victory over sin. The little word sin reveals man's basic failure and problem. Sin has always been a problem for the whole human race (Romans 3:23). Sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). All unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17). Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Sin brings death (Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4). The cross of Christ reveals the tragedy of sin. Christ died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6-10). God made His Son a sin offering (2 Corinthians 5:21). It wasn't the nails that held Christ to the cross, but our sins and His love for us! Through Christ's blood, men may now be redeemed from the rule of sin (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19); cleansed from the guilt of sin (Hebrews 9:14). As Christians "walk in the light" of

God's word (Psalms 119:105), they are kept cleansed from sin (1 John 1:7; 2:2).

The cross gives victory over self. Sin is basically selfishness. The selfish nature of sin is seen in the personal desires of the prodigal son (Luke 15). One of the most difficult things is denying self. Because of the power of selfishness, Christians must "deny self" (Matthew 16:24), and give ourselves to the Lord. "Crucify self" (Galatians 2:20). One must be willing to surrender to the Lord to serve Him; give of themselves (2 Corinthians 8:5).

The cross gives victory over Satan. Satan is identified as "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-2). He uses enticements to lead men into the fulfillment of lust (James 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 2:11). Christians, by the power of Christ's blood, can be delivered from the world (Galatians 1:4; 6:14). There is power in Christ's death to motivate men to flee sinful, worldly lusts and live for the Lord (John 12:32-33). Men can cease to be Satan's servants (Romans 6:17-18). Christ gives us the victory if we will follow Him!