

Oaks-West Church of Christ

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Overcoming the World's Influence

by Ken Weliever

A Peanuts cartoon showed Peppermint Patty talking to Charlie Brown in which she said, "Guess what, Chuck? The first day of school, and I got sent to the principal's office. It was your fault, Chuck."

Charlie Brown responds, "My fault? How could it be my fault? Why do you say everything is my fault?"

To which she declares, "You're my friend, aren't you, Chuck? Then you should have been a better influence on me."

Influence. It's powerful. Potent. And penetrating. Influence is the capacity to touch the lives of others. To impact their beliefs. Behavior. Or character.

We often think of influence is a good way. As Christians we are called to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." However, if we're not careful the opposite

can occur. The world can influence us in a negative way.

In today's Bible reading, the elders of Israel came to Samuel and demanded a King. Up to this point, Israel had been ruled by Judges that God raised up. However, they demanded change.

Their reason?

"You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." (1 Sam. 8:5)

Years ago I read a book by Frank Bettger who opined there's two reasons people do things. (1) The reason they tell you. (2) The real reason.

These elders employed both reasons. Their excuse was the unfaithfulness of Samuel's sons. But the real reason was

Overcoming the World's Influence ...

they wanted to be like other nations.

The human need to conform to customs, practices and morals around us is nothing new. Israel desired to be like others. And in doing so, God said they had rejected Him from being their King.

The Bible teaches that Christians are to be different from the world. Paul admonished, "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds" (Rom. 12:2).

Consider these three ways in which we must not allow the influence of the world to lead us away from the Lord.

(1) Don't be influenced by the world's morals.

The world's immoral influence is alluring and enticing. James L. Standfield observed: "The world is the Devil's liar for sinners and its lure for saints." Satan still seeks to ensnare us the same way he did Eve and with the same three temptations as he tried to entrap Christ: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

We must be transformed from the desires, deeds, and deceitfulness of the world. There is pressure to conform through ungodly friends, salacious literature, and immoral mass media. Television, internet, facebook and even our iphone can and often do appeal to the lewd and lascivious.

(2) Don't be influenced by the world's thinking.

J. Oswald Sanders wrote, "A well-ordered life is the outcome of a well ordered mind." Christians are called to think differently than the world. Since so much in the world appeals to the obscene, off-color, and unclean, we must constantly renew our minds, refresh our spirits and revive our hearts.

How do we overcome the impure and ungodly thinking around us? Daily immerse yourself in the Word (Ps 119:11). Weekly worship with fellow Christians (Heb 10:25). Constantly pray (1 Thess. 5:18). Engage in fellowship with those of like faith. And discipline our minds to think on things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and admirable (Phil. 4:8).

(3) Don't be influenced by the world's motivation.

Israel's motives were wrong. They weren't influenced by God's guidance. But by a desire to be like the heathen nations around them.

Ours is a crooked, corrupt, and coarse culture. Actions and attitudes are often driven by greed. Pride. Popularity. Possessions. Power. And Pleasure.

Our motivation is beyond this life. It is spiritual. Eternal. And heavenward. "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col 3:2)

Never underestimate the power of influence. Not only your influence on others. But their influence on you.

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Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.



Upcoming Ladies' Bible Classes - cancelled until further notice.

All services are cancelled until further notice.

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.



Please remember the following individuals in your daily prayers:

June Owens

Jack Wilson

Jerry Richardson

Karen Hallmark

Shirley Perkins' brother, Leon

Morgan O'Hair

Dinah Williams

Joy Ulrich

Anne Stanberry

And continue to pray for each other

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

We have many that face challenges on a daily basis and need your prayers as well.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

