

THE FOLSOM
VIEW

“...HAVING THE EYES OF YOUR HEART ENLIGHTENED...” EPHESIANS 1:18

A PUBLICATION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST MEETING AT 900 E. NATOMA, FOLSOM, CA 95630

Influence: The Potential for Good and Evil

BY DAVID HARTSELL

Influence as a teaching tool is not taken very seriously today. Yet, it is one of the most powerful forces that we can have over people. The word influence is from the Latin and literally means, “to flow in.” It is the power of people or things to act on others, seen only in its effects. In the physical realm radiation would be a good parallel to influence. Radiation can be used constructively, as in X-rays and treatment of cancer, or it can be devastatingly dangerous, as in radiation poisoning. Let us examine several characteristics of influence that mirror those of radiation. We will see the detrimental and positive effects of influence.

Influence, like radiation, is unseen but its effects are often very clear. Jesus once told His disciples to, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matt.16:6). He was talking about the negative effects their doctrines had on so many people. Paul put it this way, “Evil company corrupts good habits” (I Cor.15:33). Sometimes it is difficult for us to see the bad influences surrounding us. We might be dating someone or have close friendships with people who do not hold to Christian ideals. Let us take inventory of the things that affect us. Are those influences making us better or taking further away from God? There are avenues of good influence that we can choose. Early Christians were those who positively affected so many people. Their love and sacrifice for God and

their brethren silently reached out and attracted many to Christ (Acts 2 & 4).

The longer we stay around radiation the more contaminated we become. Likewise, the influences that touch our lives have an accumulative affect. Peter instructed wives with unbelieving husbands to win them to Christ without constantly nagging them about obeying the gospel. Instead, these godly women were to live the gospel message before them (I Pet.3:1-3). Often the best lessons preached are delivered in this way. Sadly, Satan’s sermons are given in similar ways. We might not walk among the ungodly but we might invite detrimental influences into our houses through various forms of media. How many have allowed TVs and computers to take their hearts away from God?

Finally, large doses of radiation are deadly. This is also true of influence. Many understand this concept. They agree that the adulterous man

at Corinth had to be withdrawn from immediately (I Cor.5). There are occasions where the most deadly influences are disguised in “good people.” Peter is an example of this. His partiality for Jewish Christians over gentile ones caused Barnabas and other Jews to take part in his hypocrisy (Gal.2:11-14). We must

never blindly follow people regardless of all the good they have accomplished in the past.

Influence is a wonderful tool for good and a dangerous one for destruction. Let us surround ourselves with those things and people that will help us go to heaven. Train our hearts to be the good influence that will aid others in reaching eternal salvation.

“INFLUENCE IS A WONDERFUL TOOL FOR GOOD AND A DANGEROUS ONE FOR DESTRUCTION. LET US SURROUND OURSELVES WITH THOSE THINGS AND PEOPLE THAT WILL HELP US GO TO HEAVEN.”

VIA AUBURN BEACON

Maturity

BY DAVID POSEY

“THEREFORE LET US LEAVE THE
ELEMENTARY DOCTRINE OF CHRIST AND
GO ON TO MATURITY, NOT LAYING AGAIN A
FOUNDATION OF REPENTANCE FROM
DEAD WORKS AND OF FAITH TOWARD
GOD.”

HEBREWS 6:1

There has been a lot of talk around here about “maturity” in the last couple of years. We’ve had two classes on it and several sermons have addressed it. But do we know what it is?

“Mature” is an adjective that simply means “having completed natural growth and development.” Biblically, the idea is that, at any given time, we are at the place we should be in our understanding of Scripture and how to put it to use in our lives.

Still, maturity is one of those biblical concepts that is hard to define and describe. Yet we tend to know it when we see it—at least the absence of it. I’m not sure how many times I have ascribed some action of some member of the church to “immaturity,” but I know it’s a huge number. I’ve acted in an immature way myself more times than I care to admit.

Most church problems and most relationship problems are caused by the immaturity of someone. If everyone would grow up, then a lot of problems would be solved overnight.

We see immaturity in kids when they throw a fit and kick and scream and bang their fists on the floor. But adults throw “fits,” too, although usually in more subdued way. Like children, the “fit” is a calculated way to get attention. This obsession for attention can fester into harmful words and actions. The immature person may talk behind people’s backs or make some outlandish statement or just harbor a grudge.

Some manifest their immaturity in less public ways, and their lack of growth keeps them from becoming a truly useful disciple of Christ. Some just don’t spend enough time in God’s word.

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation” (1 Peter 2:2). Instead, they long for attention and approval.

The following is a test of your maturity. See how you do.

A MATURITY TEST

1. Do you tend to blame other people when things go wrong?
2. Do you make excuses for your failures?
3. Do you prefer to ignore difficulties and hope they’ll go away on their own?
4. Do you sometimes blame your poor background for why you’ve never fulfilled your potential?
5. Do you ever tell “a little white lie” if will get you off the hook?
6. Do you avoid taking responsibility, if possible?
7. When things don’t go your way, do you withdraw (“take your ball and go home”)?
8. Do you feel like a victim more often than not?
9. When you are caught doing something you shouldn’t, is your first response to make excuses, lie about or otherwise justify the act?
10. Do you feel that if only _____ would happen, you’d be happy?

I believe mature people will find this test very easy to score. The more “yes” answers, the more immature you are.

All of us “have our moments.” All of us feel sorry for ourselves at times and are really pitiful. But an immature person blames others and views himself as a victim. He may strike out at other people—those who are, in his mind, causing his problems.

All of us need to carefully examine ourselves (II Cor. 13:5); our thoughts, motives and intentions of the heart. We may find that we have some growing up to do and if that’s what we find, then we need to seek the spirit of Christ and “go on to maturity.”