

Upcoming Events...

Galatians Class: Every Thursday at 1:00 p.m.

Business Meeting: Today at 4:30 p.m.

Ladies Bible Class: January 21 at 4:00 p.m.

Barnabas Group Meeting: January 30

Influence

“There is no power on earth that can neutralize the influence of a high, simple and useful life.” - Booker T. Washington -

“Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.” - Albert Schweitzer -

January Birthdays

5 John Aguiar

14 Juanita Small

January Anniversaries

8 Bob & Debbie Pescador

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Sunday.....6:00 p.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:

Mike McKnight

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Ready or Not ... 2018

By David Bragg

(modified; original article was for 2017)

Can you believe another year is in the books? Time marches relentlessly onward without asking for either our consent or approval. 2017 isn't even cold yet and 2018 is already relentlessly marching forward. Nothing you and I can do will ever get that time back. With each passing day, we creep closer towards time's end. But, as always, with Jesus there is good news.

- 2018 will bring with it days of defeat and success.
- 2018 will bring with it both sadness and great joy.
- 2018 will bring days of suffering balanced with days of healing.
- 2018 will bring with it days of loss and others of enrichment.
- For some 2018 will bring with it a day of finality.

But there will not be a single day in 2018 that we will have to encounter alone! We have One who can lift us up from defeat, comfort us in sadness and sustain us through suffering. There is One who can truly place momentary loss into eternal perspective. And not to be forgotten, we have each other, charged with the duty of sharing in life's highs and lows (Romans 12:12-15) and with bearing "one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2).

While we are powerless to keep time from sifting through our lives like sand through our fingers, we can do something about how we spend it. While much time will fall wasted at the feet of humanity, as a follower of Christ we can use our time to God's glory and time will ultimately deposit us in His timeless glory.

The Power of Influence

By Robert Notgrass

One of the most striking ways the Bible teaches us concerning the power of influence is with the illustration of leaven. The statement, “*A little leaven leavens the whole lump*” is stated twice in Scripture (1Corinthians 5:6, Galatians 5:9). In fact, the word “leaven” is used 11 times in the New Testament and in each place, it is used with reference to the pervading power of influence. Now, leaven is a substance that causes fermentation, like yeast, and when only a small amount is added to a large lump of dough it ferments the whole lump. Thus, while it is small in quantity that permeates the whole substance it comes in contact, so it is with influence, meaning, that it only takes a little to have a great effect.

Now, influence can be either for good or bad. The kind of influence we have on others is based on what we allow to influence ourselves and if we are not careful, some influences may be slowly corrupt and change us. One can see the influencing power of leaven by the way it changes the dough’s shape and temperature. Thus, if we allow the leaven of this world to influence us, our lives will slowly be changed from what God would have them to be, into lives filled with worldliness and sin. For, it only takes one companion with wicked thoughts and lifestyle to gradually lead us into the same kind of sin. Likewise, evil influences are all around us and if we are not careful, we could infect our minds with filth and desires that God does not want us to have. Therefore, we must focus on the good and have good influence on others less we do wrong and be held accountable for our wrongful influence on others.

Now, whether we think so or not, there is someone who is watching us. Consciously or not, someone is being influenced by our words and actions. Thus, what we do and say might seem insignificant, but in reality, our influence has a far-reaching effect. We have influence in our community, in the work place, and especially in our homes. Children are mainly molded by the kind of influence they receive from their parents and children who are influenced by parents who are worldly minded and insensitive toward sin, will grow up to have the same mind set. Therefore, we must never allow our influence to become a stumbling block to others. For as Jesus declared, “*whoso shall cause one of these little*

ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh!” (Matthew 18:6-7 ASV). Now, what are we allowing to influence our lives? What kind of influence am I having on those around me?

Friendship with the World

By Jon Mitchell

“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” James 4:4

The Laodicean church was strongly rebuked by Jesus for basically wanting to have it both ways: to be recognized as followers of Christ while still embracing the sin of the world. That’s why he called them “lukewarm” and wanted to spit them out of his mouth (Revelation 3:14-22). The Christians addressed by James seemed to be following a similar path.

What was a problem two thousand years ago is still a problem today. The temptation to conform to the world (Romans 12:2a) is strong. The power of influence cannot be overlooked. We are influenced by the people around us every day in numerous ways. The clothes we wear, the way we comb our hair, the cars we drive, the food we eat...these choices and more are made by us as a result of the influence of the society around us. Yet, God calls us to be different from the world, so different that they will notice, wonder why, and malign us (1 Peter 4:2-4). Well, no one likes to be mocked. And so, Satan tempts us very subtly, just as he did with the Christians of James’ day, to conform.

What we need to remember is that we became part of the bride of Christ when we obeyed the gospel and he added us to his church (Romans 7:1ff), and we are basically committing spiritual adultery by unrepentantly embracing the sin of the world rather than striving to live as God would have us to live. By doing so, we become the enemies of God. Is that really worth “*the fleeting pleasures of sin*”? (Hebrews 11:25) Read Revelation 21:8 and decide for yourself...