

Young People And Their Lord

Introduction. Human beings are influenced by other human beings. Alfred Tennyson said, "I am a part of all that I have met." Each Christian must work to make the best "imprint" upon the world that he or she possibly can. Therefore, it is not a matter of whether we have influence or not, but our concern should be with what kind of influence we have on others, and what kind of influence others have on us (cf. John 17:14-15; Ephesians 5:8).

Christians in the first century were known for their different way of life. Their commitment to purity in an impure environment was a powerful statement to their contemporaries. They saw divine power at work in the transformation of people who had once lived in sin. This has never changed. Saved people in Christ are called to live a changed life (2 Timothy 2:19). The gospel is incomplete if we fail to follow its implications for a radical change in daily life.

A Ford dealer who drives a Chevrolet probably will not be successful in selling his product. People will wonder why he drives a car other than the ones he is trying to sell. If you are a young Christian, we are going to help you understand the practical meaning of living for Christ in an evil age.

I. *Young People And Their Language*

- A. In Judges 12:6, the Ephraimites proved their ethnicity by mispronouncing "Shibboleth," which led to their death. Will your speech condemn you in the end (Matthew 12:36)?
- B. There are three types of speech which must be controlled.
 1. Cursing.
 - a) This means "to make light of something serious, to bring a serious matter into contempt, to show no respect; evil, wicked, or obscene talk" (Romans 3:14; Ephesians 4:29; 5:4; Colossians 3:8).
 - b) The Israelites were not to profane ("to wound, defile, or pollute") the name of the Lord (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12; cf. 1 Timothy 1:9). Also, dirty jokes and coarse jesting are the products of a dirty mind.
 2. Euphemisms.
 - a) The definition of a euphemism is, "The act or an example of substituting a mild, indirect, or vague term for one considered harsh, blunt, or offensive."
 - b) Maybe you use words like "golly," "gosh," "gee," "thank goodness," "darn," "heck," "good heavens," etc. People who use these words either think nothing about it whatsoever, or they think they are avoiding foul language.

3. Slander and gossip (Psalm 101:5; Proverbs 10:18; 11:13; 20:19; 1 Timothy 5:13), and whispering and backbiting (Proverbs 16:28; Romans 1:29-30; 2 Corinthians 12:20).

II. ***Young People And Their Friends***

- A. Good friends are worth their weight in gold (Proverbs 27:9). However, friends are human and they can influence you for evil.
- B. There are examples of good friends.
 1. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-41) and Philip brought Nathaniel to Jesus (John 1:45).
 2. Ruth refused to leave Naomi and was determined to return to her mother-in-law's homeland (Ruth 1:16-17).
 3. Naaman's servants got him to see his irrational behavior; after their questions he went and dipped in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:13).
- C. There are examples of bad friends.
 1. In 2 Samuel 13:3, Amnon had a friend Jonadab who helped him hatch a plan whereby he was able to rape Tamar.
 2. Job's friends accused him wrongfully and were no help to him in his terrible plight (Job 6:14-21).
 3. Though he was sorry, Herod beheaded John due to the influence of Herodias and her dancing daughter (Matthew 14:6-10).
- D. Don't let your friends influence you into drinking, cursing, smoking, cheating, lying, fornication, etc. (Proverbs 13:20). Furthermore, social networking such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace, along with cell phones and digital cameras make it easy to record your life in a instant, erasing your good name and destroying your righteous reputation.

III. ***Young People And Their Clothing***

- A. Three words in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 dictate how a woman is to be dressed. Although Paul is giving instruction as to how women should dress in the assemblies, the principles is universal. If modest apparel is appropriate in worship, it is appropriate everywhere. If it is inappropriate in worship services, it would be difficult to show that it is right elsewhere.
 1. Respectable or modest clothing.
 - a) The word denotes orderliness, or something neatly arranged. It does not mean "modest" in the sense of being opposed to what is immodest, or which tends to excite improper desires, but what is appropriate or suitable.
 - b) This means that the appearance of a woman will not be offensive to anybody (cf. 1 Timothy 3:2, "good behavior").

2. Modestly or shamefacedness.
 - a) The word means a demeanor of respect and reverence toward others. It is best reflected in a discussion of godly character.
 - (1) The reason these questions are so serious today is that we have forgotten how to blush (Jeremiah 8:10-12). We feel no sense of shame!
 - (2) This attitude refrains from going over the limits of modesty, as well as from the dishonor which immodesty would cause.
 - b) Our defenses are lowered because of the abundance of "acceptable" exposure in our world. Christians even get bogged down in discussions of what is and what is not proper. If you have to ask, it probably is not.
3. Self-control or sobriety.
 - a) The word stands basically for perfect self-mastery in the physical appetites. It definitely had a sexual nuance when applied to women.
 - b) Inappropriate attire exposes the body to the view of others. A godly woman will think this exposure is disgraceful and disrespectful.
- B. According to Peter, when we get the heart right, everything else will fall into place (1 Peter 3:3-4). The Christian should dress to show that their minds are occupied with better thoughts. If the inner person is righteous, the outward person will reflect it in their dress.

IV. ***Young People And Their Service***

- A. After becoming a Christian, God wants you to be faithful or "trustworthy, dependable, reliable" (Matthew 25:21, 23; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 17; Revelation 17:14).
- B. There are several people who were faithful to the Lord mentioned in the New Testament: Timothy (1 Corinthians 4:17), Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21), Epaphras (Colossians 1:7), Onesimus (Colossians 4:9), Silvanus (1 Peter 5:12), and Antipas (Revelation 2:13).
- C. It will be easy and tempting to let matters like work or extracurricular activities (sports, FFA, 4-H, band, chorus, homework, etc.) become a stumblingblock.
 1. Remember that when you violate your conscience by failing to do what you know is right, such as miss services, you sin (James 4:17).
 2. Balak cast a stumblingblock before the Israelites and caused them to sin (Revelation 2:14). Activities, which are not wrong in and of themselves, can do the same!

V. **Young People And Their Future**

- A. Happiness in your life all depends upon making the right decisions, and the younger you make them the better!
 - 1. Young women who will model the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10-31 will attract boyfriends worth making into husbands.
 - 2. Likewise, young men who learn to treat their girlfriends respectfully will have wives who will be wonderful, lifelong mates (Ephesians 5:25, 28, 31, 33).
- B. But before you reach the point of marriage, you cannot let the courtship go too far. Inappropriate touching and fondling is referred to as "lasciviousness," and it is condemned (Mark 7:22; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; 1 Peter 4:3). Going a step farther, young people must resist fornication before they are married (1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:8).

Conclusion. Socrates said, "Let him that would move the world, first move himself." What about your influence? What about those closest to you, who know the most about you and stand to be influenced as much or more by you than any other person? Have they become more spiritually minded, less spiritually minded, or no apparent change either way? Are you ready to face your challenges and glorify your Lord (1 Peter 2:12)?

Your commitment to honesty, truthfulness, chastity, and other virtues which belong to righteousness will be your most powerful statement to people who know you. The easy part of obedience is the taking of the free gift. The hard part is the daily surrender that goes with having Christ in us. Just enough of the old tendencies remain to allow Satan an occasional entrance. If that entrance is not closed quickly, he can reclaim us. The same word used to describe the change in Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-3) is used of the change that takes place in the Christian in the course of our spiritual maturity (2 Corinthians 3:18).