



The Faithful Steward

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Influence, the Stewardship of Relationships

“Be determined never to incur another debt. Deny yourself a thousand things rather than run in debt. This has been the curse of your life, getting into debt. Avoid it as you would the smallpox” (CS 257).

Debt causes us to focus on ourselves instead of God.

“There is a direct relationship between how I use my money and the quality of my spiritual life” (The Purpose Driven Life, Rick Warren, p. 46).

Psychologists tell us that the most introverted person will have an influence of about 10,000 persons in his life time. This means that we all have the power to influence others. Nobody is an island to himself. No individual lives for himself. John Maxwell states: “If your life in any way connects with other people, you are an influencer. Everyone is an influencer of other people” (John Maxwell, *Becoming a Person of Influence*, pages 2, 3).

Parent’s Influence

We first learn about influence through our mother’s soothing voice and warm embrace. Whatever she says or does affects how we feel and what we think. In her sphere of influence, no one is more important; and we sense it even in our infancy. All great leaders became great due to the influence of a mother. The mother exerts one of the most powerful influences at home. A child’s first teacher is his/her mother. The work of a true Christian mother is the most important and sacred work that God has given them; there is not other work that equals this. “To a very great extent the mother holds in her own hands the destiny of her children. She is dealing with developing minds and characters, working not alone for time, but for eternity. She is sowing seed that will spring up and bear fruit, either for good or for evil. She has not to paint a form of beauty upon canvas or to chisel it from marble, but to impress upon a human soul the image of the divine. Especially during their early years

the responsibility rests upon her of forming the character of her children. The impressions now made upon their developing minds will remain with them all through life. Parents should direct the instruction and training of their children while very young, to the end that they may be Christians. They are placed in our care to be trained, not as heirs to the throne of an earthly empire, but as kings unto God, to reign through unending ages” {*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 244}.



Influence for Good or Evil

In one way or another we influence people for good or for evil. Our lives are a light that shines and cheers others or it is a dark influence that leads to despair and ruin. “We lead others either upward to happiness and immortal life, or downward to sorrow and eternal death. And if by our deeds we strengthen or force into activity the evil powers of those around us, we share their sin (*Prophets and Kings*, page 94). “It is the Lord’s will that you should exert a wide influence for good” (*This Day with God*, page 71). A life is not significant except for its impact on others. Without influence, there is no success. The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence.

Our Christian life and our conduct should be a positive influence with the people we come in contact with. “Remember that in your life, religion is not to be an influence among others. It is to be an influence dominating all others” (ST, August 31, 1904). You will have a good influence upon others and may win them to the service of Christ.

Influence, the Stewards of Relationships

“In essence, the stewardship of influence is the stewardship of relationships. Your life may have an impact in some field; but ultimately and most significantly, your influence affects other people” (Kirk Nowery, *The Stewardship of Life*, page 36).

In the book entitled *The Stewardship of Life*, Kirk Nowery states that there are three primary objectives at stake in the stewardship of influence:

1. Influencing people to know the One True God
2. Influencing people to believe in and follow Jesus Christ.
3. Influencing people to live a normal Christian life.

Influencing people to know the One True God.

There is only one true God and as Christians we will do everything in our power to proclaim Him to everyone. He is the true God because He is the creator and Lord of all. He is the true God because He is the only Savior of mankind. **Influencing people to believe in and follow Jesus Christ.**

It is one thing to say that there is a true God. But it is quite another thing to say that there is only one way to follow Him. The Bible is specific when it says, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). As stewards, it is our duty and mission to communicate this undeniable truth. A faithful steward’s responsibility is to evangelize and make disciples.

“In the stewardship of influence, the making of disciples is imperative. It is something we absolutely, positively must do....

Disciple making is not synonymous with evangelism, but begins with evangelism. First, a person is led to faith in Christ; then that person is led to follow Christ. Leading someone to faith in Christ is evangelism. Leading someone to follow Christ wholeheartedly is disciple making. The process of discipleship begins the instant one trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior, and it continues throughout a believer’s life” (Kirk Nowery, *The Stewardship of Life*, pages 41, 42).

Influencing people to live a normal Christian life. If Jesus is my Savior and Lord, in all my



relationships – whether to family, friends, acquaintances or others – you are a witness for Him. What I do or say, how I act or react, by my attitudes I display, others will see God either honored or dishonored. My words, my actions, my behavior, my dress, my attitude, my pocketbook--everything should preach that we are here on this earth to influence others. “Not only with our words should we speak to the people, but everything pertaining to our person should be a sermon to them, that right impressions may be made upon them, and that the truth spoken may be taken by

them to their homes. Thus our faith will stand in a better light before the community.” {GW92 151, 152}

A “Christian’s influence depends on his or her character” (George R. Knight, *The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier* on Matthew, page 89).

How do we Influence Others?

How do we influence others? Not only by our words, our actions but also by our thoughts. The faithful steward is a well-balance Christian that thinks clearly and positively. Thinking clearly means maintaining the right view of God, of self and of life situations. Thinking positively is a matter of looking for and finding the good even when everything may seem bad. Negative thinkers can have a damaging and even destructive effect upon those around them because negativity by its very nature pulls down rather than builds up. As an individual influencing others we influence people to live the normal Christian life not the abnormal Christian life. As an influencer, live in a way that is loving and gracefully, never corrupt. Ideally, there should be no conflict between our actions, our words, our attitudes as we practice the stewardship of influence.

Influence is a gift given by God to be used in a wise and timely manner. How we use that talent will have eternal consequences.

Let us remember that we are the salt of the earth and we bring flavor to this world. Let us be the salt of the earth by intermingling with our society and influencing others for good. Let us remember that we are the light of the world that shines in dark places. Let us remember that