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# Words of Truth

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## Controlling Who Influences You The Most

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I have met many so called “brethren” over the years that thought the world could not influence them. To those brethren, I often replied with this quote: *“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners”* (I Corinthians 15:33). It is an undeniable, biblical fact that those whom we spend time around have an influence on us (Proverbs 1:10-33, Proverbs 13:20, and Ephesians 5:6-11). If you disagree, you are not disagreeing with me. Every one reading this article is being influenced by those they keep company with.

This is not to say that we should all move to the deepest, darkest woods we can find and live there. For various reasons, it is necessary that we live in this world (Matthew 5:10-16, Luke 6:27-36, Romans 12:17-13:14, I Corinthians 10:25-27, Ephesians 4:28, Philippians 2:14-16, I Peter 3:8-4:19, etc.). While we are to withdraw ourselves from erring brethren, we cannot remove ourselves from living among the sinners of this world. Notice: *“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person”* (I Corinthians 5:9-13).

So, the questions generally come down to how one can balance living in this world, without becoming people of this world. There is a distinction there. Jesus made it when He was praying about the Apostles. Notice; *“I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth”* (John 17:14-17). You should have noticed how Jesus did not want the Apostles removed from the world, but rather to be sanctified [holy, separated] from this world.

The challenge that comes with teaching on this subject matter is that each and every one of us have different things that may influence us in different ways. Thus, it is impossible for me to teach one lesson that covers all who will read this study. So, I am going to focus on three general points that apply to all of us.

## **First, Know Yourself**

We need to examine ourselves and know ourselves (II Corinthians 13:5). You need to understand your strengths and your weaknesses without deceiving yourself (Galatians 6:3-5). The process of sin starts with what is enticing to YOU (James 1:13-16). As often as possible, put yourself in the company of those who will help you rather than hurt you (Proverbs 4:14-18).

## **Secondly, Balance Your Time Spent Amongst Evil With That Which Is Good**

There are two tools that the Lord has given all of us [saints] to be set apart from this world. The first is His word. Jesus prayed that the Apostles were to be sanctified and He specified that such was through the truth. The inspired word of God is able to build you up, give you an inheritance, and guide you in all things (Psalms 119:97-105, Acts 20:32, II Timothy 3:14-17, and II Peter 1:1-11).

The second tool that all of us whom are faithful have is faithful brethren to spend our time with. Faithful brethren are able to comfort, edify, admonish, and support us (Galatians 6:1-2, Ephesians 4:16, I Thessalonians 5:11-14 and Hebrews 3:13; 10:22-25). The world is tugging you in one direction. Let your brethren pull you back the other way to help keep you properly focused.

## **Thirdly, Maintain The Proper Focus**

For the sake of space in this article, I will simply quote the Lord's word: *"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience"* (Colossians 2:20-3:6). **STUDY THROUGH THAT!**

## **Conclusion**

The title of this article suggests YOU have control over who influences you most. That is a true conclusion (Psalms 26:4-5, Psalms 101:3-4, and II Corinthians 6:14-7:1). Don't give yourself into the hands of the wrong people!