

Influence

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You, too, can be an influencer! Sometimes we believe we are too unimportant or insignificant to influence the actions or beliefs of another individual. We may think no one will pay any attention to what I have to say or what I do. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

It is true that some people may have a greater sphere of influence than others, but there is no one who has no influence at all. We all have some influence or effect on other people. That influence can take different forms as we live our lives. We influence others with our speech, with our actions and with our lives. People listen to what we say and how we say it and what kind of person we are. They see what we do and determine what is important to us. They may look at our lives and modify their lives based on what they see in us. We will have an influence on others. The questions we need to answer are:

1. What kind of influence are we?
2. What kind of influence do we want to be?

I believe, as Christians, we all want to be an influence for good. We want people, seeing our lives, to see the influence Jesus has had on us. We hope they see us conducting our lives similar to the way Jesus handled the issues He faced while here on earth. We know:

- He was gentle - **Matthew 11:29**
- He was humble - **Philippians 2:8**
- He was forgiving - **Luke 23:34**
- He was merciful - **Hebrews 2:17**
- He was just - **Zechariah 9:9**
- And to sum it up, He was righteous - **Isaiah 53:11**

What kind of influence would we be if people could see those same characteristics in us?

Then there is the other side of the coin. There have been other Bible characters who did not have an influence for good, rather an influence for evil. When we study the kings that reigned over Israel after the death of Solomon, we find that most of those leaders influenced their people, but not in a good way. They caused the Children of Israel to sin and because of that sin, the people were ultimately taken into captivity. When the kingdom was divided between Israel and Judah, Jeroboam became king over Israel. He is notable for leading the people astray by his wicked ways (**1 Kings 13:33-34**). He is even given credit for causing Israel to sin in future generations, because they continued to follow the example he set. All of the kings that followed him continued in sin because *“Jeroboam drove Israel from following the Lord, and made them commit a great sin. For the Children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did, and did not depart from them”* (**2 Kings 17:21-22**).

We realize we are going to have an influence on the people we come in contact with. It may be the people in the grocery store or the people in the car next to us on the highway or the people we meet walking down the street. They will see how we act and form an impression about us and our character. They will be influenced by what they see and hear. Therefore, we need to conduct ourselves in such a way that the impression they receive will reflect the same values and life style that Jesus displayed. We need to be sure their lasting impression of us is nothing like the wicked Jeroboam or those he influenced. Rather, we want the people who observe us to be drawn to Christ; drawn to Him by our influence; because they see the way we conduct our lives.