

"Making An Influence"

BCM – Sunday evening service

Last week Pastor Robert talked all about friends and making proper friendships and how who we allow into our lives is very important and should be looked at wisely.

This week I want to continue that in a different direction. Our friends influence who we are and help to shape us either in appearance or personality. Tonight I'm going to talk a little bit on the influence we have on others around us.

Gandhi, everyone knows who he is. He is a man that had a strong set of moral beliefs. He didn't hold any leadership positions. He was a man that saw people fighting and believed in peace. He believed in it so strongly that on several occasions he went on a hunger strike and almost died until the people in India would stop fighting.

Gandhi didn't have a position yet he made a worldwide impact. One hundred years later people can see what he did and are inspired.

Gandhi had influence.

Look at some other people in the media, sports, or movies. Look at what they stand for or to the impact that they've made on people.

Deion Sanders, he's no doubt a great athlete. He hit .533 in the 1992 World Series with the Reds and in football he's a 2x Super Bowl Champion, 37 career interceptions, 17 touchdowns with the Dallas Cowboys.

Over the years he has had some controversy in his life. People thought he was too arrogant and stuck up for sports with his dancing on field and his over-confident attitude. But something changed inside of him. He put it like this,

"I tried everything. Parties, women, buying expensive jewelry and gadgets, and nothing helped. There was no peace. I mean I was playing great. I got all this media attention and everything the world has to offer, but no peace, no joy, just emptiness inside."

Finally a former team mate named Marc Logan, from the 49's, met him for breakfast had read to him Romans 10:9-10

9That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

He said that verse hit him like a ton of bricks. That's the first time something like that had ever made sense. Now Deion Sanders uses his media time more wisely. He is very outspoken about his faith in Jesus Christ.

Deion Sanders has influence.

Just like Curtis Brown from the San Jose Sharks. He uses TV time to talk about his faith.

Curtis Brown has influence.

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I want to relate all of this now to a man in the Bible. Paul. I reference Paul a lot when I teach and preach because Paul messed up.

Paul messed up bad. He was human and messed up just like humans do. Paul was a Pharisee, that meant he was a teacher of the law. (Meaning the law of Moses; Old Testament Leviticus type laws.)

He was known by many. He had a bad reputation though. He was known for his bad attitude and short temper and violence toward Christians. He was a Christian killer. Eventually all of that changed.

In Acts 8 it says, **3But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.**

He had no reason for this.

- But still, Paul was in the public eye. Just like Alec Baldwin. He is all over the news and TV right now. He was a man of influence. He had a voice. But after hearing what he says to his family and loved ones he just ruined every bit of integrity that he had.

Paul, once he was converted, once he started to believe in Jesus changed. No longer did he go around killing and imprisoning people. But instead he went around spreading the teaching of Jesus.

If I was one of the people at that time I'm not sure I would want to believe anything coming from his mouth. He had a bad reputation.

Paul had influence.

I know pretty much all of us here are not in the public eye. And we're not playing for any professional sports teams but there is one thing every one of us in this room has in common:

- All of us have the power to influence a life. A life at work, at school, or at home with our family.
- How are you going to influence others?
 - Are you going to just try to live a life for yourself? Are you going to do your own thing and hope that others don't follow that? That doesn't cut it. You are being watched. People watch your every move.

My purpose tonight is to make somewhat of an influence on you all. I'm only given so much time to stand up here and speak but in this time I want to bring to your attention that we have a responsibility towards others.

Maybe some of us in this room have a reputation. Maybe it's a bad reputation like Paul's. But wasn't condemned. In acts 9:15 **But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.**

If God can use a man like Paul, he can use each one of us.