

# The Individual Christian

## Influence

### Introduction:

The word influence means “the power to sway or affect based on prestige, wealth, ability, or position” (AHD 660). Jesus pointed out the importance of influence in the Sermon on the Mount when He said to His disciples, “*ye are the salt and light of the world*” (Matt. 5:13-16). Each individual Christian has the responsibility to see to it that they influence the world, other Christians, and family members in such a way that each class would bring glory to the name of God.

### I. The Christian’s Influence toward the World:

A. Jesus depicts the Christian as the “*salt and light*” of the world (Matt. 5:13-16).

1. Salt is used for both seasoning and preserving food.

a. Job spoke of the seasoning qualities of salt in Job 6:6, “*Can that which hath no savor be eaten without salt?*”

b. “Because salt was a necessary ingredient in any meal, it could symbolize the hospitality that cemented friendships (cf. the Arab expression, ‘there is salt between us’)” (ISBE v. 4; 286).

2. Metaphorically, salt represents the influential quality a Christian may have on others. Without spiritual salt individuals are distasteful to the heavenly Father and will be “*cast out and trodden under foot of men*” (Matt. 5:13). If; however, I salt the people of the world with the gospel message and they receive it, God will receive them. God delights in the “*loving, kind, just, and righteous*” (Jer. 9:24). People can learn to be a delight to God through the instructions of the gospel.

3. The Christian can therefore salt the world by teaching the lost and influencing them to obey the gospel. The Christian is to be a “*light*” to the world that makes manifest salvation.

B. Secondly, the Christian can influence the world by setting a good example:

1. Those of the world are watching our every move and so there is opportunity (Phil. 2:14-16).

2. I can cause one in the world to give glory to God by my actions (Matt. 5:16; II Pet. 2:11-12).

3. The Christian is the conscience of the world and so they will be judged for not turning a hearing ear to the Christian (cf. I Pet. 4:1-6).

### II. The Christian’s Influence toward Other Christians:

A. Elders serve as an example to other Christians (I Tim. 3:7).

B. Deacons serve as an example to other Christians (I Tim. 3:10, 13).

C. Evangelist serve as an example to other Christians (I Tim. 4:12).

D. Teachers of the gospel message are looked to for an example of godly living (Heb. 13:7).

E. All Christians who live godly in Christ Jesus serve as an example to other Christians (I Thess. 1:6-8).

### **III. The Christian's Influence toward Family:**

- A. Grandparents and parents set valuable examples for children to follow (II Tim. 1:3-5).
- B. Husbands and wives commanded to set examples for each other (I Pet. 3:1-7).

### **Conclusion:**

The Christian must be aware of his surroundings. The souls of men and women may be eternally affected by my actions. Individual responsibility demands that the Christian be kind, gentle, not easily provoked or provoking others to anger. The Christian is to set a good example and influence the world, other brethren, and family members so that they would bring glory to the name of God.