

The leaven (kingdom of heaven) would have a great impact on the world; it will spread into all the lives of mankind. Are we like the leaven in **Matthew 13:33**, do we spread a positive Godly influence to all those around us? Are we like Isaiah who said, "Here am I, send me," as seen in **Isaiah 6:8**? In **Matthew 28:18-20** Jesus told his disciples: *18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

We are to be a light to the spiritually blind, we are to have a Godly influence on those we live and work around. Most of all, we are to spread the word of God everywhere we go either by word or action; both say a

lot about who we are. We need to be like the early apostles who turned the world upside down with the very words Jesus spoke.

1 Peter 4:7-11

7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." 9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

by Bill Davis

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Olsen Park Church of Christ

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Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Ken Ford
Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
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“Effects of Influence”

According to the Law of Physics, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. You know, that is so true with the influence we have on those around us and those we meet in public. It has been said that the first impression will always leave a lasting impression on those we meet for the first time. There are two types of people that we come into contact with every day as we go through life. First, there are those who are outgoing, happy, and easy to get along with. In other words, they enjoy life and most of those around them enjoy being in their company. Their influence on those they come in contact with is a positive one. On the other hand, all of us have been around those who have an "attitude" problem. They would pick and choose who they would talk to and have an attitude about them that shows they hate life in general. These individuals seem to be always mad at somebody or upset about something or someone. Most of us would agree that this type of person has a negative attitude and we would most likely avoid this person if we had a choice. Out of these two types of

individuals most of us would rather be around the person who is outgoing and always has a positive outlook on life. Influence is an effect we, as a person or as a Christian, will have on those around us. The effect we have on those around us will either be positive or negative; there is no middle ground. The type of influence we, as Christians, have on those around us is a choice we have to make.

Philippians 2:1-5

1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

One may ask, "How do I, as a Christian, have a good or bad influence on those around me?" A good example of influence on those around us is found in **Matthew 5:13-16**

13 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how

shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Does our light shine forth to everybody we come into contact with? Do we model Jesus in our everyday lives? Are we blind leading the blind or do we show them the way to salvation? Another good example is found in **Matthew 13:33**

33 The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was leavened.

Our influence can be compared to Salt, Light, and Leaven. As a Christian, we may ask, "How can my light be an influence to those around me?" One thing we need to understand about light is that it affects everything that it shines upon. Light guides those that use it properly; it warms those it touches. When Jesus started his ministry in **Matthew 4**, Jesus was a light in a world of death, evil, and hate. love, joy, and peace.

Jesus was love, joy, and peace. He had patience with those who were lost in sin. Jesus had kindness toward those he came into contact with; he showed them goodness and mercy and most of all, a way to be saved! Jesus showed them the Way, the Truth, and the Life, as seen in **John 14:6**

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

A good example of how my influence as a Christian can be compared to Salt is seen in **Colossians 4:5-6**

5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

In order for salt to be useful, it must come into contact with a substance to be preserved or to have an influence on a substance. In other words, salt has to be touched to have an influence. The presence of salt makes a difference in our lives and in the lives of others. The presence or absence of salt in our lives can spell the difference between savory food or tasteless food; between corruption or purity. The presence of Jesus always made a

difference in the lives of the people that he came in contact with, as seen in **Mark 2:1-2**. Jesus could not be ignored. Does our presence make a difference to those we are around? As Christians, do we try to preserve the word of God by teaching the word accurately to those we come into contact with? Do we study the Bible to know what is right and what is wrong? Do we speak where the Bible speaks and are we silent where the Bible is silent? Do we add to or take away to fit our own opinions? Do our lifestyles reflect the way we preach and teach? Do others know we are what we say we are; "Christians"? A good example of what our influence on others should be compared to leaven is in **Matthew 13:33**

33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

Leaven is ferment mixed with dough to make it light; or a piece of sour dough or bread thus mixed and used to lighten a larger mass. Leaven will cause a thorough change in the whole; and hence will be the force behind the parable in **Matthew 13:33**. In other Bible passages, yeast is used as a symbol of evil or uncleanness. Here it is a positive symbol of growth; it permeates the whole loaf.