

Influence
(Matthew 5:13-16)

Introduction:

1. The Lord's Sermon on the Mount is recorded in Matthew 5,6,7.
2. Jesus began His great sermon by presenting the Beatitudes (5:3-12).
3. After presenting the Beatitudes, Jesus talked about "influence."
4. Those who practice the principles revealed in the Beatitudes will have a positive influence upon others.

Discussion:

- I. JESUS IDENTIFIED HIS FOLLOWERS AS "*THE SALT OF THE EARTH*" AND "*THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD*"
 - A. (vs.13) Jesus first said that His followers are "*the salt of the earth.*"
 1. Salt may not seem to be very valuable, but it affects whatever it touches.
 2. Jesus was illustrating the fact that His followers have the ability to influence others for good.
 3. He also described the value of salt that has lost its saltiness.
 - B. (vs.14-15) Jesus next said that His followers are "*the light of the world.*"
 1. It might be possible to take light for granted, but it is a blessing to all people.
 2. Jesus was illustrating the fact that His followers have the ability to influence others for good.
 3. He also showed how a light that is hidden serves no good purpose.
 - C. (vs.16) Jesus presented the lesson He wants us to learn -- by doing good works we will have a positive influence upon others.
- II. WE CAN LEARN SOME VALUABLE LESSONS BY OBSERVING THE WAYS THAT PEOPLE HAVE INFLUENCED OTHERS
 - A. In the Old Testament we read about:
 1. Jeroboam who had a negative influence upon Israel (1 Kings 14:16)
 2. Joshua who had a positive influence upon Israel (Joshua 24:31).
 - B. No doubt we all have personal experiences that illustrate the far-reaching effects of positive influence.
- III. BY FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN IN THE BIBLE WE INFLUENCE THOSE WHO OBSERVE OUR BEHAVIOR
 - A. Let us trust in the Lord with all our hearts (Proverbs 3:5-6).
 - B. Let us seek God's kingdom and His righteousness first (Matthew 6:33).
 - C. Let us practice the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12).
 - D. Let us never grow weary in doing good works (Galatians 6:9-10).
 - E. Let us always speak properly (Colossians 4:6).

Conclusion:

1. Jesus considered influence to be so important that He dealt with it in His Sermon on the Mount.
2. Let us appreciate the fact that the things we do will influence others.
3. Influence is powerful, it is far-reaching, and it will last a long time.