

Influence

The Principle of Influence: A working definition

Influence is the combination of INdirect forces we bring to bear on those around us in order to change another person's thoughts or behaviors.

Contrast "influence" and "control" in the following *illustration*: **Mickey in the Tub.**

Float a toy Mickey Mouse at the far end of the tub, away from the drain. Pull the plug. Mickey starts getting sucked toward the drain. *How can we rescue him?* **Controlling** his position would involve picking him up and moving him back to a safe distance from the drain. But God does not control us in that way. So, swirl the water around Mickey so that it creates a force opposing the "whirlpool" effect of the drain. In this way, you can move Mickey safely away from the drain without directly controlling him. God sometimes uses the **influence** of those around us to rescue us from temptation.

First main point of application:

We can influence those around us and save souls from Satan's destruction.

Who Am I?

I was saved from murder when I was a baby.

I reigned 42 years over Judah.

My grand-dad killed all his brothers.

One of my great-grandfathers was Ahab.

My grandmother was the one looking to kill me.

It was an old priest's wife who saved me.

My main accomplishment was to repair the temple (which my uncles had trashed, 2 Chronicles 24:7)

Answer: Joash (2 Kings 11 & 12; 2 Chronicles 22:10 – 24)

More about me:

All my family were evil, but I turned out okay.

HOW? By the **influence** of a godly man (Jehoida)!

Toward the end of my life, I did evil, and was killed for it.

WHEN? After the godly man died. (Compare the Israelites after Gideon's death, Judges 8:33-35.)

Second main point of application:

Don't be like Mickey (or Joash) who only do well when *someone else* is doing the work!

The Purpose of Our Influence: "That they may see your good works and glorify God...." (Matthew 5:16)

The Tools of Our Influence: Actions, Words, Thoughts, and Attitude

Adam's wife ... GAVE. "Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ." *1 Corinthians 11:1*

Job's wife ... SPOKE. "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt..."

Colossians 4:6

Solomon's wives ... HELD BELIEFS (1 Kings 11:4; Nehemiah 13:26)
Our attitude... (Facial expression; tone of voice; etc. should reflect peace, joy, confidence, assurance of our identity as a child of God, etc.)
Our choices (How we dress; priorities in general; how we entertain ourselves; how we spend our money; how we spend our time)

How to Avoid Being Influenced by Evil

Stay away from temptation; look for the way of escape. *1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:33-34*
Stay around good people; hold on tightly, but not too tightly. *2 Timothy 2:22*

Illustration of our influence:

Mountain climbers – like the church – create bonds between one another so that in case any should slip, the others can help them get back on the path.

Illustration of Satan's influence:

“Who's Got Who?” *Stand facing someone, preferably someone much bigger than you, with your elbows pointing toward them and your fists pointing straight up (offering them your wrists, in other words). Say, “Grab hold of my wrists. I'm going to pull you off balance.” When he grabs your wrists, push and pull and throw him off balance. Each time, ASK: “Did I CONTROL you, or INFLUENCE you?!” Continue to take all challengers until someone figures out to simply let go of your wrists so as not to be influenced by you.*

Illustration of God's influence:

Jesus' life is a compass, pointing the way. A compass can have a great guiding influence to hikers and explorers, if allowed to do its work. Don't close your eyes to God's compass by not reading His word!

God's love is a magnet, drawing us to Himself. A magnet has great influence... even on a rusty nail! Don't be a “toothpick,” immune or indifferent to His love.

The Spirit's work is a battery, energizing those who come into contact with Him (but not forcing anyone against his/her will – 1 Cor. 14:32). A battery has great power, giving “life” to inanimate objects like toys and machines, cars and clocks. Don't resist spiritual impulses just because, for example, you're young, or you're used to using your brain. And don't be “all negative.” We must touch both the negative and positive poles (sin and forgiveness) in order to receive the Spirit's life.