

CHAPTER 42

ARE YOU HAVING A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON OTHERS?

I. After your tenure at Ambassador College, whether two years or four, what kind of imprint will you leave on the lives of your fellow students?

- A. Will you have been a source of inspiration and motivation to them?
- B. Will you have helped them to build character and to grow in the culture and qualities of God?
- C. Will you have been a model of excellence they will long remember — an example by which they may pattern their lives?
- D. Or, will you have proved to be a stumbling block — a cause of irritation, frustration and discouragement?

II. In future years when your friends and associates flip through the Envoy and come to your picture, what will come to mind?

- A. Will they remember you for being a gracious, kind and loyal friend or leader who had a wholesome and positive impact on them?
- B. Or will they remember you for the pain and suffering you caused?
- C. What kind of image do you suppose will linger?

III. Make no mistake, you do leave a mark on every student with whom you come in contact.

- A. The effect may be ever so slight and subtle.
- B. Or it may be very strong and powerful.
- C. Whatever the case, you do literally influence — for good or bad — the lives of every person with whom you interact.

IV. For the assembly today, I'd like to speak on the subject of: "Are You Having a Positive or Negative Influence on others?"

V. Exactly how do you make an imprint on others and help mold their lives in everyday experience?

- A. I'd like to briefly quote from a research paper I did several years ago on how our behavior affects the people with whom we interface.

'To begin, let's talk about a vital fact concerning human behavior you may have never known before. It's a concept that when fully understood should change your attitude toward others and your overall approach to life. That important fact is: every human being generates a distinct magnetic field and radiates it to others. We may describe this field as: an aura, or an outpouring of one's inner self, mental attitude and personality. In some, we call it: charisma, charm, magnetism, vitality, energy, enthusiasm, life, etc. In others it's self-consciousness, inferiority, fear, sarcasm, cynicism, selfishness, immaturity, jealousy, envy, etc. Whatever its correct name, it's real and distinctly recognizable — we've all experienced it, felt it, sensed it and seen it in those with whom we interact on a daily basis.

'This brings us to a significant fact about understanding people — there are two broad and general types. These types are: (1) positive and (2) negative. Herein lies the secret of why we are attracted to some people and repelled by others. Just as with a magnet having opposite poles, so it is with people. One category attracts — draws you to them. The other repels — drives you away. There are occasions when we all reflect both roles but generally we are bent toward one or the other.

'Which end of the magnetic pole do you represent — negative or positive? Make no mistake, it's one or the other. Whichever it is determines how people view you: whether you are liked or disliked, attract or repel, whether you have few or many friends. But even more importantly, the image you project will determine in large measure the effect you'll have on their spiritual lives.

- B. Explain how brainwaves can now be detected up to 12 feet or so by delicate instruments that scientists have invented.
- C. Discuss the phenomena of mental telepathy and how our brain waves can seemingly affect people miles away.

VI. So we do leave a mental, emotional and spiritual imprint on others in the way we think, act and speak.

VII. As we shall soon see, not only is this fact proved in the Bible, it is also recognized by people in the world.

A. I'd like to cite a few quotes from some of the so-called great minds of history.

1. *'If you had the seeds of pestilence in your body you would not have a more active contagion than you have in your tempers, tastes, and principles. Simply to be in this world, whatever you are, is to exercise influence.'* (Horace Bushnell)
 - a. Did you catch the true significance of this statement?
 - b. Your very presence carries an impact!
 - c. Whether or not you realize it, others are indeed affected by your attitude and actions.
2. *'Planets do not govern the soul, or guide the destinies of men, but trifles, lighter than straws, are levers in the building up of character.'* (Martin Farquhar Tupper)
 - a. Note that even little, seemingly insignificant examples, leave their mark.
 - b. How important it is to be a model of Christian behavior at all times.
3. *'The least movement is of importance to all nature. The entire ocean is affected by a pebble.'* (Blaise Pascal)
 - a. This again proves that common, simple actions can have an impact on others like water rippling from a rock when thrown into a lake.
 - b. In other words — we give off vibes.
4. *'The example of great and pure individuals is the only thing that can lead us to noble thoughts and deeds.'* (Albert Einstein)
 - a. What tremendous value there is in example!
 - b. It points the way for others to see what the true Christian life should be.
5. *'I am satisfied that we are less convinced by what we hear than by what we see.'* (Herodotus)
 - a. Words are important — but seeing them lived is more convincing.
 - b. Allow others to see Christ living in you.
6. *'How easily we ignore the fact that those who admire us will imitate our vices as well as our virtues.'* (Thomas Stearns Eliot)
 - a. What a terrible thought to put a stumbling block in the way of neighbor and cause him to sin.
 - b. How careful we should be of our personal behavior.
7. *'Virtue will catch, as well as vice, by contact; and the public stock of honest manly principle will daily accumulate.'* (Edmund Burke)
 - a. Think of the good you can accomplish by pointing others to see the way of God.
 - b. Day by day and week by week you can help build up and edify their lives.
 - c. Your general lifestyle will serve as an ongoing reminder.

VIII. Now let's see what God, in His Word, has to say about this question.

A. The positive impact we can have on others.

1. General references.

- a. 1 Thess. 1:5-8 — *'For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. (6) And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit: (7) So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. (8) For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God's word is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.'*
- b. Rom. 1:7-8 — *'To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. (8) First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.'*
- c. Deut. 4:5-8 — *'Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. (6) Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. (7) For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? (8) And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?'*

2. Specific references.

- a. Prov. 27:17 — *'Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.'*
- b. I Peter 3:1 — *'Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.'*
- c. I Tim. 4:12, 15 — *'Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (15) Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.'*

B. The negative impact we can have on others.

1. General references.

- a. I Cor. 8:9-13 — *'But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. (10) For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idols temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; (11) And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? (12) But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. (13) Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.'*
- b. I Cor. 15:33: *'Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.'*
 - (1) The Today's English Version says: Do not be fooled. 'Bad companions ruin good character.'
 - (2) The Jerusalem Bible says: "You must stop being led astray: 'Bad friends ruin the noblest of people.'"

2. Specific references.

- a. Matt. 18:6 — *'But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.'*
- b. I Tim. 6:1 — *'Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.'*

IX. These verses prove beyond doubt that your personal actions, lifestyle and example are extremely important to God.

- A. He wants to impress on your mind that you do, indeed, leave an imprint on others by the negative or positive influence you exert.
- B. Remember, as stated earlier, just to exist in this world as a human being means that you exert an influence either for good or bad.
- C. Thus, many scriptures exhort us to lead a holy and righteous life so that God's great purpose may be glorified.

- 1. Matt. 5:13-16 — *'Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. (14) Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. (15) Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. (16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'*
- 2. Phil. 2:14-15 — *'Do all things without murmurings and disputings: (15) That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.'*
- 3. I Peter 2:9-12 — *'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (10) Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (11) Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; (12) Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.'*

X. The simple analogy of our being a clean and holy vessel should illustrate just how important your example is.

- A. II Tim. 2:20-21 — *'But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. (21) If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.'*

- B. What kind of vessel are you?
1. A vessel of honor filled with the pure oil of God's Holy Spirit?
 2. Or a vessel of dishonor filled with the venom of Satan, or poison of this world?
- C. Yes, your lifestyle and daily conduct do count very significantly with God.
- D. Just think! If a simple encounter can have a positive or negative affect on others, then think what your relationship will mean over a four-year period.

XI. I'd now like to list a number of damaging and hurtful examples to avoid as a student and then suggest some positive things you can do.

A. Negative actions to avoid:

1. A complaining and critical attitude or being generally down on life. This might be the result of such things as:
 - a. Your day-to-day pressures.
 - b. Having to study for tests, do term papers and homework.
 - c. Finding fault with your boss or distasteful aspects of your job.
 - d. Being asked to engage in extracurricular activities or do tasks that come with being an A.C. student.
 - e. The irritating things about dorm life or your roommates.
 - f. The administration and how College officials exercise authority.
 - g. Starting the day in a grumpy mood.
2. Failure to maintain personal standards. This might include such things as:
 - a. Sloppy dress and grooming.
 - b. Careless hygiene.
 - c. Unkempt surroundings and cluttered environment.
 - 1) *Disorganized and messy desk.*
 - 2) *Untidy closet.*
 - 3) *Unmade bed.*
 - 4) *Leaving dirty bathroom for others to clean.*
 - 5) *Cluttered laundry room.*
3. Lack of consideration for roommates. Some examples are:
 - a. Turning on light when others are sleeping.
 - b. Making excessive noise when coming in late or getting up early.
 - c. Opening door too widely after bedtime and allowing hall light to disturb roommates.
 - d. Letting alarm ring several times before getting up.
 - e. Setting alarm clock early then failing to get up — thus awakening others in your room.
 - f. Arising early on the Sabbath and disturbing fellow students.
 - g. Playing music that might be offensive to some.
 - h. Abusing the telephone — tying it up for long periods of time when others may need to use it.
 - i. Failing to be quiet during study hours.
4. General carelessness or inconsideration, such as:
 - a. Failure to keep appointments or fulfill promises.
 - b. Habitual tardiness.
 - c. Taking each other for granted.
 - 1) *Borrowing items without asking.*
 - 2) *Failing to return borrowed items.*
 - 3) *Snitching or stealing food from the fridge that belongs to someone else.*
 - 4) *Frequently asking for favors.*
 - d. Using sarcasm and put-downs or making cutting remarks without thinking.
 - e. Lack of modesty in the dorms.
 - f. Failure to comply with rules, regulations and standards of the College.
 - g. Treating Sabbath singing with levity and irreverence — or a failure to show respect for the songleader.
 - h. Failure to give proper attention to fellow students who are giving speeches in class or at an Ambassador Club.

5. General immaturity.
 - a. Selfishness.
 - b. Thoughtlessness.
 - c. Uncontrolled temper and emotions.
 - d. Self-indulgence and greed.

XII. What are some positive ways you can affect others?

A. Examples:

1. Habitually greet others with a smile and cheery disposition.
2. Make it a practice of saying 'thank you.'
3. Acknowledge the achievements of people and pay them a sincere compliment.
4. Go out of your way to give happiness to others and make their day a little brighter.
5. Keep your conversation on a positive plane.
6. Wherever you go spread joy and enthusiasm.
7. Never forget that you're an ambassador of Christ — therefore reflect the serving attitude of God's throne in heaven.
8. Be kind and thoughtful to all within your sphere.
9. Practice self-restraint and emotional control when you encounter setbacks.
10. Be the kind of Christian others can't help but notice.
11. Do this for God's honor and not for personal glory.
12. Don't push yourself forward and steal the limelight.
13. Allow God's nature to radiate and flow from you.
14. Treat each other with the same respect and dignity that Christ would treat you if He were on earth.

XIII. Is there a method of reducing these instructions to a simple formula to be easily remembered?

A. Yes, there is.

B. All of Christianity, God's Word and His will can be summed up in a single, simple word.

C. That word is love!

1. I John 4:8, 16 — *'He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. (16) And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.'*
2. Rom. 13:10 — *'Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.'*
3. II Cor. 5:14 — *'For the love of God constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.'*
 - a. The word 'constrain' generally means: to draw tight, to compel, to secure by or as if by bond, to clasp tightly. (See Webster's Dictionary.)
 - b. God's love, then, motivates or compels us to action.

D. If you will think about the true meaning of love in all your daily interactions and seek for ways to apply it — you then will have discovered the key of how to positively influence others.

E. This, of course, requires the power of God's Spirit working in your life.

XIV. To conclude, I'd like to give you some overall wrap-up points.

A. Summary.

1. *Be aware that you do leave a lasting imprint on others.*
2. *Realize that you transmit negative or positive signals to all with whom you come in contact.*
3. *Drill into your consciousness the power and impact of a good example.*
4. *Be conscious of God's will throughout the day and seek to be filled with His culture and qualities.*
5. *Be aware of the needs, comfort and welfare of everyone around you.*
6. *Guard your words and practice true Christian diplomacy.*
7. *Learn the importance of giving encouragement and building confidence in others.*
8. *Be an attentive listener whom others can easily talk to.*
9. *Strive to crush out self-centeredness and every form of vanity.*
10. *Avoid questionable behavior that might cause others to sin.*
11. *Remember, the effect of your example accumulates with each passing day.*
12. *Make it your goal to live like Christ and glorify God.*

B. This, then, is how you can have a positive and dynamic impact on your fellow students.