

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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Satan's Influence in the World Today

By Brian Meade

We define influence as, *"The power to sway that something or someone has to affect other people's thinking, behavior, or actions."* The Bible speaks of Satan's influence over the sinful part of this world in I John 5:19, *"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one."* Satan is referred to as the *"the god of this world"* in II Corinthians 4:4 and in Ephesians 2:2 as *"the prince of the power of the air."* These titles refer to his influence or the power he has over the lives of the *"children of disobedience."* (Ephesians 2:2)



Satan's influence over this world is as far reaching as temptation and sin is in this world (I Corinthians 10:13; Rom. 3:23). And as long as we are around people—who enjoy the pleasures that sin brings them—we are going to face Satan's influence. Paul even said in I Corinthians 5:10 that we would have to go out of the world to escape all the immoral people around us. Some have even tried to escape the influence of Satan by building monasteries on mountain tops and far-away places away from men. But the church is to be the light that the world sees (Philippians 2:15; Matt. 5:14-16) and the epistles that are read by men (II

Corinthians 3:2). We cannot leave the world and ever expect to convert the lost from the world.

Someone once said, "Christians are to be in the world, but not of the world." And that is simply saying, we are here geographically in the world—but our hearts are not of (or belonging to) the world. Jesus prayed for His disciples in John 17:14-15, *"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one."*

#1 Satan promotes sin by making it the popular thing to do.

The attitude is expressed in the saying, *"Everybody's doing it."* This has been his strategy with various sins like drugs, alcohol, pornography, immodest dress, and fornication...etc. There is often the appeal that, *"it can't be too wrong if so many people are practicing it."*



But we should remember that what Moses said a long time ago, *"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil"* (Exodus 23:2) is still relevant today. God has not changed His mind about sin, even when it is popular with men!

And then there are role models who are held up by the world as people to imitate & emulate. Britney Spears, Lindsey Lohan, Miley Cyrus and others—often have great influence (because of their popularity) in very negative and hurtful ways. They popularize the worldly, sinful lifestyle as good fun for everyone.

#2 Satan's influence is seen when changing the perception of evil to good.

The Devil will *put a spin on sin* to make it seem harmless and good for us to embrace. But this is nothing new today—Israel had this same problem long ago as Isaiah wrote, *"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"* (Isaiah 5:20)

Years ago in our society—sins like adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and immodest dress—still had a sense of shame connected to them (Ephesians 5:12). But now our society takes pride in perversion and in those who come out of the closet to do evil openly! Satan has done his work well in this regard!

#3 Satan uses our own educational system to influence our children.



If the Devil wanted to reach as many people with his worldly message, how would he do it? If he were seeking to indoctrinate our children to his way of thinking about sin and immorality, what methods would he employ? We know very well, that Satan would love to influence as many young impressionable minds as he could while they are just learning about life. He would use our own educational system to teach whole generations of kids! Right along with mathematics, science, history & geography— they are being taught pragmatism, situation ethics, relativism, evolution, and tolerance for other views than the Bible. Sadly, the Bible is not even welcome in our educational system, nor is Jesus! In the classrooms, they are taught as fact that man has evolved from lower life forms, safe sex outside of marriage is expected by young people, all religions are equal to the New Testament teachings of Jesus, and marriage is redefined to include more than just one man & one woman for life. It seems more and more that the rights to train up a child in the right ways of God (Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4) are being taken away from parents by school systems that have very little respect for God. Especially, when vulgar & offensive material that is contrary to the scriptures are used right in our schools! We must teach our children diligently to counteract such teaching! (Ephesians 6:10-20)

#4 Satan uses a variety of media to influence us.

The devil will use whatever means he can to get his message out to the world. It is no wonder that we see his influence throughout all areas of our lives.

(1) Television. Christians must be careful and discriminating about the shows we watch on television. There are a lot of shows and sit-coms on TV. that are used to promote values and morals that God would not approve of. We must **NOT** watch programming that has open talk about sex with lewd innuendos, filthy and indecent language, and immodest dress...etc. (Ephesians 5:3-11)



David— a man after God’s own heart— said in Psalms 101:3, *“I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me.”* We must not allow Satan to influence us by what entertains us!

(2) Movies. Going to the movies can be entertaining and fun for the whole family. But again we must be wise to what we are taking into our mind. Hollywood is notorious for making movies that are not fit for human consumption. The ratings for a particular movie should give us a clue as to what content and subject matter a film will have. The “R” rating in movies should be a warning to Christians of content that has either graphic language, nudity, sexual content that is not fitting, or graphic violence that features death and murder in disturbing ways!

It can be that— Christians— can fail to do as God says in Philippians 4:8, *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”*

(3) The Music we listen to.



Christians know full-well that music can be a powerful influence on our lives. In Colossians 3:16, Christians teach & admonish one another by singing truths from God’s word. In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, the influence for good is positive, uplifting, and shows us what is good, holy, noble, and right. Songs can influence us in our heart as we sing from the heart (Eph. 5:19). What about songs on the radio that teach the ways of the world? First of all— not all songs do this — but there are songs that do convey a message that appeals to the carnal side of man. Paul talks about the carnal-minded attitude in Romans 8:5-8. That is danger of letting what we listen to influence for what is vile, wicked, and evil in nature. This can lead us away from God and His pure ways. Songs such as *“I’m gonna have you naked by the end of this song”* (has lustful thoughts and actions as its theme), *“I kissed a girl and I liked it!”* (sung by a female artist), *“I was born this way”* (promotes the gay lifestyle) have had an influence in our culture. What about songs that use profanity in their lyrics? Or promote violence? Or drug use? We must be careful about the lyrics of the songs we listen to or sing. If we are not careful, we can get caught up in the good beat of a song that sends a message of approval for sinful conduct. It may be popular and on the radio, but if it is promoting evil—we should not be listening to its corrupting theme (James 1:27; 2 Corinthians 7:1)

News and Notes:

Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Betty Hurst, Steve Switcher, Gail Armstrong, Nicky Curtis, Janis Johnson, Cheryl Ridgeway, Elmo Wilson, Martha Little, Kimberly McCullough, Martha Norvell (in Ripley Rehab) Charlene Newborn (had a fall). Sandi Poole (recovering from flu), Briley Briggs

Southside Church of Christ is having a 3 day meeting with their new preacher, Brother Joseph Lachausse— February 15th, 16th, & 17th. 7:30 PM Nightly. Helton Drive church of christ in Cullman, Al will have a singing Friday, February 2 at 7:00 PM. (Details for both events are on the bulletin board in the foyer)

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer:

Tim Harris Jr.

Preaching:

Brian Meade

Sermon:

"Some Facts About the Church"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Paul Johnson
The Book of Luke (Mike Willis)
Page 65, Question #12

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements:

Fred Johnson

Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:

Lee Busby

Song Leader:

Dan Cottrell

Lord's Table:

Paul Busby

Assisting:

Chris Callahan & Nathan Meade

Song Service:

Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16

Invitation:

Fred Johnson

Closing Prayer:

Brian Meade

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

January 31st:

Auditorium Bible Class:

Paul Busby
1 & 2 Samuel (Mike Willis)
Page 26, Question #8

Invitation:

Paul Johnson

Song Leader:

Adam Harris

Closing Prayer:

Tony Whittemore