

Godly or Ungodly Examples, Philippians 3:17-19 – February 10th, 2019

- I want to talk with you today about a life principle the power of which I believe is largely underestimated in the life of a Christian.
- Namely, that of the power of influence our models and examples have in our lives to not only shape us but determine our fate.
- By that I mean whoever or whatever is the dominant influence in our lives can actually determine the future destiny of our lives.

- I think you would agree that for Paul to tell the Philippians to follow his example is a rather bold statement to say the very least.
- He even goes further in verse seventeen saying that just as they have them as a model to keep their eyes on to live as they do.
- In other words, he's setting himself and his life up as the example and a model of living a life completely devoted to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:1 - 1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

- Lest one think Paul is overly confident in his own self-righteousness let me hasten to say nothing could be further from the truth.
- The reason I say that is because of what Paul says in verses eighteen and nineteen about weeping over enemies of the cross.
- These enemies of the cross are all those who say, live for yourself, whereas Jesus says, pick up your cross and die to yourself.

Matthew 16:24–26 - 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

- I would suggest that the Apostle Paul is echoing the words of the Savior here in Philippians as it relates to living for the world.
- Specifically concerning those who are unduly influenced by the world and have insatiable appetites for the things of the world.
- It's for this reason that at the end of verse nineteen he says that these are the people who have their mind set on earthly things.
- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most subtle dangers to the life of a Christian, worldly influences would be it.
- This because, whether we realize it or not, we are all following the example of someone in our lives to whom we are influenced.
- The question becomes one of whether or not the example we're following is a godly example or a worldly and ungodly example.

1 Corinthians 15:33–34 - 33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." 34 Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

- There's an example of how bad company can corrupt good character, in the Old Testament book of 2 Chronicles chapter ten.

2 Chronicles 10:3–14 - 3 Then they sent for him and called him. And Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 4 "Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you." 5 So he said to them, "Come back to me after three days." And the people departed. 6 Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, "How do you advise me to answer these people?" 7 And they spoke to him, saying, "If you are kind to these people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever." 8 But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. 9 And he said to them, "What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?'" 10 Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you should speak to the people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us'—thus you shall say to them: 'My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist! 11 And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourgings!' " 12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had directed, saying, "Come back to me the third day." 13 Then the king answered them roughly. King Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders, 14 and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourgings!"

- There are many lessons to be learned from this, chief of which is the importance of those who we allow to speak into our lives.
- I find it interesting that had he heeded the wise counsel of his father's men, his reign would have been blessed all of his days.
- Instead, he heeds the unwise counsel of the younger men, and as such it led to his downfall as well as the destruction of Israel.

- I'll bring it to a close with a three-part question I think we would all do well to ask ourselves concerning those who influence us.
- If I'm honest with myself who is it in my life that has the greatest influence on my life? Are they an ungodly or godly example?
- How would my life change and how quickly would my life change if they no longer influenced me whether godly or ungodly?