

42--- Who Are Your Influencers?

When I finally accepted the Lord's calling on my life my heart was transformed. That transformation was the culmination of many people over the years sharing their faith with me. I had many influencers over the years. I attended my first bible study 10 years before I accepted Jesus. I recently found the bible study leader and thanked him for getting me started on my journey. Over that 10 year period I heard about Jesus from a business associate, a co-worker and the best friend of my ex-wife. Each of these influencers nudged me closer to accepting the free gift of my Savior.

Long before that 10 year journey there were two people who had a tremendous influence on me. They were the people in my life over the years that showed me Jesus by the way they lived their lives. The first person who showed me Jesus was my Granny. Granny was a sweet woman who raised five children during the 20's and 30's on her own. My grandfather died of consumption a few months before my mother was born. Granny kept that family together during the Great Depression. Her faith was the driving force in her life. She loved Jesus and every one of her kids and grandkids knew that our Granny showed us Jesus every day of her life. Her sweet disposition never wavered. Despite the tragedies she endured, her faith was greater than any tragedy. My cousin died in an automobile accident when she was 16. My cousin's death could have crushed Granny but her faith not only carried her through this dark time, it set the tone for how the family endured this dark time. Even though Granny was only five feet tall she will always be a giant in my eyes!

The second person that showed me Jesus was my uncle Paul. Paul worked for the railroad and during an accident at work fell and injured his optic nerve. Although the doctors were able to remove the tumor my uncle was left blind in his 30's. For fifty years my Uncle Paul kept that same sweet disposition I saw in Granny. Despite his blindness he stayed upbeat. I still remember when he sang "Amazing Grace" to me once I accepted Jesus. It brought tears to my eyes as he said "I was blind and now I see". It still brings tears when I recall that day. Here was a man with every reason to be bitter at the life he had, yet his faith wouldn't allow bitterness in. His strong faith, inherited from Granny, allowed him to touch many hearts during his 50 year journey with blindness.

I have shared my story to encourage you to examine your life. Think back upon those who showed you Jesus. Think back on those who shared the Gospel with you. Take the time to thank them!! The Lord uses His army of believers to tell His story. For centuries that was how history was passed from generation to generation---- by word of mouth. Just because we have the printed Word and the internet doesn't mean we need to stop sharing. We are Ambassadors for Jesus. We need to tell our own "Amazing Grace" story. We need to share how we have been transformed. We need to let folks know that peace and joy are the "Fruit of the Spirit" that the Lord has lavished on us.

Verses:

Jeremiah 17:7 "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him."

John 13:17 "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

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

Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Personal Reflection: Who are your influencers? Who are you influencing? What can you do to be a bigger influence on those in your sphere of influence?

Group Discussion: How can we encourage each other to reach out and thank our influencers?

How can we be stronger influencers?