

## **REQUIREMENTS OF A GODLY LIFE**

Matthew 5:13-16

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INTRO. (1) Everybody is influencing somebody, you may not know the amount of power you have to produce a change in someone else, whether great or small, but you do influence either for good or bad. Therefore influence is a responsibility and an opportunity. (2) In the society we live, the world often is intimidated and feels threatened by believers who are sharing the gospel on the outside of a church building. The same ones may peddle their pornography and pseudo philosophies about life and all their evil and godless ideas, which they call “freedom of speech.” But when Christians share the gospel, they say that we are forcing our beliefs upon them. What hypocrisy! (3) Influence begins at home; it moves among our neighbors, friends, at school or work. What kind of influence are you having? -- not “if” -- but what kind?

### **I. STRONG CONVICTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE, 1 Peter 3:15**

#### **A. Daniel Is An Impressive Example Of A Good Influence.**

1. First test: “Will you obey the king or God?”
2. Had unusual opportunity to stand in king’s court after 3 years of training, but would not eat food ordered for him, Dan. 1:8.

#### **B. His Basic Conviction Concerned The Word of God.**

1. Eating unclean meat (Lev. 11) or meat sacrificed to idols (Exod. 34:15) was forbidden by the law given to the Jews.
2. “Conviction” is a strong belief based on an unwavering, unchanging principle.
  - a. “Preference” is a desire or choice made on circumstances at the moment (may often be changed).
  - b. Daniel had a conviction, not just a preference!

#### **C. Conviction Serves As An Anchor In Time of Storm.**

1. When blasted by criticism, overwhelmed by temptation and pressure, living by convictions instead of preference will influence others.
2. Others will be drawn seeking to know what gives you stability in midst of storm because they too need that in finding their way of life.

### **II. UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO OBEY GOD, Luke 9:23.**

#### **A. Commitment and Convictions Are Used Differently Here.**

1. Our commitment is not to a set of principles, but to the Lord! (we are not “unfaithful to the church” but to “God”!)
2. Guideline: Like line in middle of road on dark night in downpour; you cannot see, but as long as stay close to middle line, you know where you are.

#### **B. Do You Have A Hidden Price Tag On Your Convictions?**

1. When Daniel was challenged to eat pagan food, no price tag on his convictions.
2. Story is told of a beautiful woman seated next to multi-millionaire at banquet. When offered \$ 100,000 to spend weekend together, she agreed. Then when asked how much for tonight, she responded, “What do you think I am, a prostitute?” He replied, “We have settled that; now all I want to know is your price?”
3. Is there any basic conviction that something is wrong which you will not do? But if somebody offered you a large sum of money you might do it?
4. When you sell out, you destroy your influence for good.

### III. COURAGE WHEN FACING LIFE'S CRISES, 1 Cor. 16:13; 1 Peter 4:17.

#### A. Daniel Could Have Been Sent Immediately To Prison or Death.

1. He demonstrated courage later when interpreting an unpopular dream of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2) and of praying (Dan. 6).
2. We must be willing to suffer if necessary for things we believe to be true.

#### B. It Is Easy To Be Strong If All Others Are, But What About When Alone?

1. If in business everybody is agreeing to something you know is absolutely wrong, would you stand up? Even if it costs your job?
2. Is there anything you would sell out for to get a raise, or a promotion?
3. People are drawn toward those of courage. How many of you are drawn toward cowards? Are you drawing any toward the right through your courage?

### IV. CONFIDENCE IN GOD, 2 Tim. 1:12

#### A. Have Faith that God Will See You Through.

1. Daniel believed God could alter his circumstances (and He did).
2. His 3 Hebrew companions believed God could deliver them, but even if God chose not to, they could not change their convictions, Dan. 3:17-18.

#### B. Must Express This Faith Even When Risky

1. Actions speak louder than words. Demonstrate your trust in God when in a difficult situation. Are you willing to believe when no one else does?
2. It is in these times we can influence others. Do not wait until isolated because we have no influence then: "no contact, no impact"
3. Daniel influenced kings: Dan. 6:16, 20. King Darius could not ignore the constant obedience and faith Daniel had.
4. Listen to the letter King Darius wrote: Dan. 6:25-27

### V. CALMNESS IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS, Phil. 4:11-13

#### A. How Do You Respond When Under Pressure?

1. Others watch how you respond to burdens and when pressured, or others attack you mercilessly.
2. They may dislike you, be totally opposed – or the opposite, but all will look to see how you respond when the bottom drops out.
3. Will they see you start ringing hands, frightened, and worried? Or will they see you stand with overwhelming sense of indescribable calm and peace?

#### B. Under Pressure Gives You An Opportunity To Tell Others Who You Serve.

1. The most obnoxious unbeliever wants to know how you can face it without vengeful retaliation. They know how they would respond ... "I tell you what I would do!" "Doesn't bother me."
2. Acting calmly in midst of difficulty is a mighty sermon, Heb. 13:5-6.

### VI. A CHRIST-LIKE SPIRIT OF LOVING FORGIVENESS, Eph. 4:32

#### A. "Father, Forgive, They Know Not What They Do!"

1. Never heard of Daniel being belligerent, vengeful, hostile, angry about being captured and taken as slave from homeland.
2. Don't hear him talking to friends about how awful the king is, making him eat this food, nor later when Darius threw him in the lions' den.

B. Be Willing To Forgive Immediately.

1. The world does not know how to have this spirit. The world says, “defend yourself, fight back, retaliate, look for ways to get vengeance on those who have wronged you; don’t stand there and take it.”
2. Christ says, “Learn to forgive and you will be forgiven. Learn to love your enemies, and you will find an inner peace.”

VII. CONSISTENCY IN OUR HOME, 1 Cor. 15:58

A. We Will Not Be Perfect, But We Can Be Consistent.

1. The king said of Daniel, “your God, whom you serve continually...” Dan.6:20. You consistently believe in Him, adhere to His principles, stand up for belief, and worship Him.
2. Daniel did not have anything you cannot have: conviction, commitment, courage, confidence, calmness, and forgiveness. But do you make a similar impression on those around you that you “constantly serve the God in whom you believe?”

B. The Life of the Lord Is Seen In You.

1. Others may be saying, “I knew it wouldn’t work.” Or, they may instead be saying, “I wish I were like you.”
2. We are not perfect, but if our attitude is right, when we do make a mistake others will know we did not purposefully, willfully do it.

CONCLUSION: Think about 5, 10, or 20 years from now ... How many are going to be in heaven because of your life? You do not have any choice whether you influence another; you only choose whether it is for good or bad!