

Love: The Qualitative Difference (3)

What Christian Men Need Most Today (in my opinion)

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A Lovingly Bold Spiritual Influence

INFLUENCE:

What is influence?

“Influence is the power to have an important effect on someone or something. If someone influences someone else, they are changing a person or thing in an indirect but important way.”

There is a line in the song “Old Hippy” by the Bellamy Brothers that says “I ain’t trying to change nobody, I’m just trying real hard to adjust.” It is a “live and let live” philosophy of life. I don’t want to bother anybody. Just leave others alone, and mind your own business. This is a reactive stance to life. It is like a box turtle (not talking about a snapping turtle) that is content to amble through life at a rather slow pace, minding its business and if messed with goes into its shell and waits it out. The turtle just wants you to leave him alone. He doesn’t want to hurt you. He has a shell to protect himself from you.

Influence can have a bad connotation as in “influence peddling” (“the use of position or political influence on someone's behalf in exchange for money or favors.”)

The word “influence” is not found in the Bible per se, but the principle is taught.

The entire reason why Jesus came to this earth was to affect change. He saw the earth as a very messed up place, broken, corrupt, and lost. Jesus on every level of His ministry was about exercising influence on the world, culture, society, nations, groups of people, families, institutions, and individuals to bring about first salvation and then a change of thought, words and actions. As a follower of Christ that is what we are called to do. We have been influenced in order that we might be an influence.

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matt.5:13-16)

Your greatest influence are on the people who are closest to you.

LOVINGLY BOLD

The way Paul said it was “speaking the truth in love.” (Eph.4:15) It is time for men to speak up, to be bold, not to cower or be timid, or go into hiding. Boldness is a good thing but loving boldness is even better. So what does it mean to be lovingly bold? Let me focus on four aspects of love:

- It always protects-Man’s protective instinct is needed now in our society. Others need this protection from not only physical threats, but from emotional, institutional, philosophical, and spiritual threats. The family and the church is under assault-our values are being attacked. Truth is being rendered meaningless. Men need to prepare themselves to defend the faith.
- It always trusts-Men must have an unflinching trust in the Father who is able to deliver us from evil. Men must not fight in their own strength or power. We need men whose faith is strong and focused on the one who is greater than the world.
- It always hopes-Men need to be hopeful and optimistic. We must not buy into the pessimism of the age, the despair, the despondency, the cynicism. Our hope is not in politics or some economic system or even in science. Where does our hope come from? From the Lord who is our hope.
- It always perseveres-Men we must not quit. It doesn’t matter how old you are-we must not quit. We must keep on going and use the last measure of our influence to do as much good as possible. We must be tenacious, and never given up.

SPIRITUAL

Above all men need to be spiritual. Paul wrote in 1 Cor.3:1-3, “Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly-mere infants in Christ. I give you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. Indeed you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?”

We have enough “mere men” in the kingdom. We need mature, spiritual, authentic and growing men in the kingdom, the church. We need men who are truly disciples of the greatest MAN that ever lived, and the most spiritual man who ever lived. We need men who are committed to being like Jesus.

- To be spiritual means to be mature, grown up, men not children in Christ
- To be spiritual means to be walking in step with the Spirit
- To be spiritual means to be godly in word and deed
- To be spiritual means to be authentic and growing
- To be spiritual means to be learning to know God and Jesus better
- To be spiritual means to take responsibility to be ON MISSION
- To be spiritual means to be good at love, faith, hope, purity, joy, and peace.
- To be spiritual means to look like Jesus.

The complexity of our world requires that we have men who are able to lead our families, churches, and some who will lead in government and business to navigate these waters lest we crash on the rocks or run aground. Men-this is your day-a day to accept the challenge to be authentic and growing having a lovingly bold spiritual influence.