
THEME: "LIFE IN CHRIST"

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS INFLUENCE IN THE SOCIETY

MATTHEW 5:13–16
Whiskey, Joshua

OUTLINE

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Introduction

"When you put a little salt in food, it changes the taste. When you light a candle in a dark room, everyone notices. That's what a Christian should be in society."

"If someone looks at your life, what kind of influence do they see—positive, negative, or none?"

MATTHEW 5. 13-16

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

To drive the lesson home, it'll help we **define "influence" clearly** and show how it works in everyday life before tying it back to the Christian life.

WHAT IS INFLUENCE?

Influence is **the power to affect people, situations, or outcomes without force**. It's not always about what you say, but what people see and feel from your life. It can be **positive or negative**.

Salt influences food by changing its taste. Light influences a room by changing its atmosphere.

Everyday Examples of Influence

- A teacher shapes how students think.
- A celebrity or social media personality shapes trends (fashion, slang, lifestyle).
- A friend can influence another to do good—or to do wrong.

"Who has influenced you most in life, and how did they do it?"

Christian Influence in Society

Unlike the world's influence (popularity, wealth, power), the Christian's influence is rooted in **character and Christlike living**.

Influence doesn't always mean being famous. It can be as simple as:

- A worker who refuses to take bribes.
- A student who won't cheat in exams.
- A neighbor who always shows kindness.

These small choices **shape the society** around us.

"You don't need a title to have influence—you just need a testimony."

Why Influence Matters for a Christian

1. **Silent Preaching:** People may never read the Bible, but they'll read *your life* (**2 Cor. 3:2-3**).
2. **Legacy:** Influence outlives us (**Heb. 11:4** – *"though he is dead, he still speaks"*).
3. **Responsibility** – Others are watching, whether we like it or not (**Rom. 14:7**).

HERE ARE BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF INFLUENCE (BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE) YOU CAN USE IN CLASS: POSITIVE INFLUENCE

1. **Joseph (Genesis 39-41)**
 - In Potiphar's house and in prison, he lived with integrity.
 - His influence saved Egypt and surrounding nations from famine.
 - **Lesson:** Righteousness influences society for good, even in ugly places.
2. **Daniel (Daniel 1, 6)**

- Refused to defile himself with the king's food.
- His faithfulness influenced kings and nations to respect the God of Israel.
- **Lesson:** Standing firm in faith influences even those in authority.

3. Esther (Esther 4-8)

- Risked her life to save her people.
- Her influence changed the decree of a king and preserved a nation.
- **Lesson:** Courageous influence can save lives and glorify God.

4. Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37; 9:27; 11:22-24)

- Encouraged believers, supported Paul, helped strengthen the church.
- His influence led to the growth of Christianity in Antioch.
- **Lesson:** Encouragement is a powerful form of godly influence.

5. Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5-11; Matt. 5:1-12)

- His teaching, humility, and sacrifice influenced history forever.
- **Lesson:** The greatest model of influence—servant leadership and love.

Negative Influence**6. Eve (Genesis 3:1-6)**

- Influenced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit.
- Her decision affected all humanity.
- **Lesson:** Wrong choices can influence generations.

7. King Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:26-30)

- Led Israel into idolatry with golden calves.
- His negative influence spread sin for centuries.

- *Lesson:* Leaders' influence can mislead entire nations.

8. Jezebel (1 Kings 21:25; 2 Kings 9:22)

- Influenced Ahab to worship Baal and commit wickedness.
- Brought corruption and violence into Israel.
- *Lesson:* Ungodly influence destroys families and societies.

9. Demas (2 Tim. 4:10)

- Negatively influenced by love of the world; abandoned Paul.
- *Lesson:* When Christians fall away, they influence others negatively too.

"Every Christian is an influencer—either for Christ or against Him. The question is not if you influence, but how you influence."

The Christian's Identity

- **Salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13)**
 - Preserves from decay (society needs moral guidance).
 - Adds value (brings joy, hope, and godly character).
 - *In what practical ways can we be "salt" in today's society?*
- **Light of the world (Matt. 5:14–16)**
 - Brings visibility to truth and righteousness.
 - Guides people to Christ.
 - *Why do you think Jesus said "a city on a hill cannot be hidden"? How does that apply to Christians today?*

3. Areas of Christian Influence

Conclusion

- A Christian's influence is **inevitable** – either positive or negative.
- *"You may be the only Bible some people will ever read."*
- *"If Christianity depended on your influence alone in your community, what would it look like?"*

1. **Personal Character** – honesty, integrity, humility (Prov. 22:1).

- *Question:* How does our personal character affect people's view of Christianity?

2. **Family Life** – godly marriage, parenting, respect (**Eph. 5:22–25; 6:4**).

- *Question:* How can a Christian family shine in today's society?

3. **Workplace/School** – diligence, fairness, avoiding corruption (**Col. 3:23**).

- *Question:* Why do many Christians fail to show good influence at work or in school?

4. **Community/Nation** – standing against injustice, showing compassion (**Mic. 6:8; Gal. 6:10**). What are some specific ways Christians in Nigeria (or your community) can influence society for good?

4. Challenges to Being an Influence

- Fear of rejection (Rom. 12:2).
- Peer pressure/compromise.
- Hypocrisy among believers.
- *What's the biggest challenge Christians face today in influencing society?*

5. Keys to Maintaining Influence

- Consistent devotion (Word & Prayer) – **John 15:5**.
- Boldness through the Spirit – **Acts 1:8**.
- Being intentional in choices – **2 Cor. 5:20**.
- Fellowship for encouragement – **Heb. 10:24–25**