

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Review Republican
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By Pastor David W. Cheatwood
Of the Hedrick Church of God
info@hedrickchurchofgod.org

LOVING OTHERS MAKES GREAT TEACHERS

“Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go” (Matthew 8:29).

A number of years ago a Johns Hopkins University professor asked his graduate students to locate 200 boys, ages 12-16 and research their family backgrounds. The assignment was then to predict their future. The students were sent to the slum area of the city to find the boys. The conclusion reached by the graduate students was that 90 percent of those researched would spend time in jail. The final chapter of this study would not be completed until 25 years later.

When the 200 original students were sought after, some 25 years later, John Hopkins sent the researchers into the slum area again. Some of the group still remained in the slums; others had moved away, a few had died. In all they were able to locate 180 of the original 200. What they found amazed them. Only four had ever been in jail (remember the prediction had been 90 percent of 200)!

What caused this figure to be so low when all indications pointed to a larger number? When the researchers began to ask this question they found that they were getting the same answer, “Well, there was this teacher” Pressed further, the researchers found that the teacher in all cases was one and the same. The boys had all been influenced by the same teacher.

The graduate students traced down the teacher, now living in a retirement home, and inquired about her remarkable influence over a group of boys who were headed for a life of crime. She really could not think of any reason why she would have this kind of influence. She did mention that “I truly loved my students.”

Matthew 8:18:22 (NASB)

18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side. 19 And a certain scribe came and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” 20 And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” 21 And another of the disciples said to Him, “Lord, permit me first to go

and bury my father.” 22 But Jesus said to him, “Follow Me; and allow the dead to bury their own dead.”

Every one of us are teachers. Our influence over others is either good or bad. We can love those around us enough to bless them or we can be so self centered that we miss our opportunity to bless them. My High School Basketball Coach told us that there were at least three people at every game that were looking up to us and we better set the best example for them to follow.

The man in our Scripture reference seemed to want to follow Jesus. Jesus warned him that life would not be easy for him if he chose to follow him.

Another man wanted to bury his father. Jesus instructed him to either follow him or go home and take care of his father.

These replies might seem strange to us, but to follow Jesus takes a commitment. This is not an easy road that is followed with ease.

If you are a follower of Jesus, how is that working for you? Is everything smooth and easy, or do you find the road difficult? I heard a new Christian share that following Jesus was hard work. He was not complaining. He was just saying that this new life in Christ was more difficult than he imagined. He is still following Jesus and growing in his faith and devotion to God and His Son.

Why did the school teacher in our story have such a success rate with the students under her care? When asked, she didn't seem to think she had done anything special. She did remember how much she loved those boys and I believe that made all the difference.

Ask a child what love is and he will spell it “TIME”. They know that if you care about them you will spend time with them. We cannot learn to love each other without spending time with each other.

Remember when you use to hang out with your friends. Did you go places together? Did you do things together? Were you involved in each other's lives?

When you met your spouse, did you ignore each other? Could you talk with each other long into the night? Did you want to spend all of your time together? Love draws us together. It never drives us apart.

I still love to go shopping with my wife. We recently went to the new IKEA store in Fishers together. We had a fun day, bought a few things and had a nice supper out afterwards. It was a grand day. It was grand because we were spending time with each other outside of our regular routine. We still love each other and enjoy each other's company.

The school teacher in our story loved her students. They probably didn't get a lot of attention at home. Here was someone who treated them special and took notice of them and their lives. How did that affect them? Instead of 90 percent ending up in jail, only 4 followed the way of life that led them to jail. The others knew someone cared about them and expected them to do their best. She gave them the will and the desire to do better with their lives. Most of all she loved them and they knew it.

Are we doing that for others? Are we encouraging them to excel at this thing called love?

So What Shall We Do?

Remember Jesus' words; "Follow me"? Are you living a life that says follow me? Are you walking close enough to God and having a positive influence on others? God calls us to love Him and each other. You can read the Bible from cover to cover but the message doesn't change. God wants us loving others like He loves us. I hope you will pick up His challenge and love one another. You never know what a difference you might make in another's life. You are a teacher. What are you teaching?

For more information, Pastor David W. Cheatwood may be reached at info@hedrickchurchofgod.org