

Who or What Influences You?

Influence

Influence -- the process by which an individual's attitudes, beliefs, character, development, or behavior are modified by the presence or action of others

There is a battle for the heart soul and mind of man - a battle for influence

- 51% of America's pastors have a biblical worldview. *Cultural Research Center, 2020*
- 12% of 18-24 identify as evangelical Christians. *Survey of Young Americans, Harvard Kennedy School, 2019*
- Top 10 influencers in the world on Instagram (CRISTIANO RONALDO...ARIANA GRANDE...DWAYNE JOHNSON @THEROCK...KYLIE JENNER...SELENA GOMEZ...KIM KARDASHIAN...LEO MESSI...BEYONCE...JUSTIN BIEBER...KENDALL JENNER
- 75% of Christian teens leave their faith when they attend college. Bombarded with competing worldviews. Professors are challenging their faith.

The fight for influence over man began in the garden & continues today

The LORD gave a clear and simple command & consequence = "you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" -

- Gen 2:15-17 ESV The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**"

How We Drift Away from the Influence of God

Satan directly challenges God's Word

- Gen 3:1-7 ESV Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

We add to the word of God

- 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, **neither shall you touch it, lest you die.**'"

We contradict the word of God

- 4 **But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.**

We buy into the promise of enlightenment (we know more than or better than God)

- 5 For God knows that when you eat of it **your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,**

We bask in the glory of self determination

- **knowing good and evil."**

We choose to live without regard to what God has said - and to influence others to do the same

- 6 So when the woman saw that **the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.**

We attempt to solve problems with their own wisdom

- 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And **they sewed fig leaves together** and made themselves loincloths.

Truths to help us Live under the influence of God

1. God's **commandments are for good -- "of the tree of knowledge...you shall not eat"**
 - a. Deu 10:12-13 ESV "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which **I am commanding you today for your good?**
2. God is (not just truthful) **He is truth - it is impossible for God to lie (Heb 6:18)**
 - a. Joh 14:6 ESV Jesus said to him, "I am the way, **and the truth**, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
3. **God's word is not to be added to or contradicted**
 - a. Rev 22:18 ESV I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: **if anyone adds to them**, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,
4. God is the **source of all true wisdom**
 - a. Pro 2:6 ESV For **the LORD gives wisdom**; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
5. **God is the one who determines what is good or evil**
 - a. Isa 5:20-21 ESV **Woe to those who call evil good and good evil**, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!
6. There is **an enemy who wants to convince us that God does not have our best interest at heart**
 - a. Rom 8:32 ESV He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, **how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**

My Way or His Way, My Thoughts or His Thoughts

Way (a road - a course of life or mode of action).....**Thoughts** (intention, plan)

- Isa 55:6-11 ESV "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; 7 let the wicked forsake his **way**, and the unrighteous man his **thoughts**; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
- 8 For my **thoughts** are not your **thoughts**, neither are your **ways** my **ways**, declares the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my **ways** higher than your **ways** and my **thoughts** than your **thoughts**.
- 10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
- 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.