



September 11, 2017

It is God's will for us to live His Word and help others to do likewise. One effective way we can do this is to be an example that others can follow in living the Word. As people follow our example, together we can positively influence the cultures around us.

Influencing cultures with God's Word results when believers follow clear examples of how God's Word is to be lived and then become examples themselves. In the first century, the Thessalonian believers influenced their culture by following the examples of Paul and his companions.

I Thessalonians 1:5-9:

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost [holy spirit], and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

And ye became followers [imitators] of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost [holy spirit]:

So that ye were ensamples [examples worthy of imitation] to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith [believing] to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

Paul and his companions lived the Word they taught to the point that the believers in Thessalonica changed from a life of idolatry to one of serving the living and true God (I Thessalonians 1:9). The Thessalonian believers' way of life, or culture, was so

influenced by the examples of Paul and his companions that these Thessalonians themselves became examples of living the Word to all those that believed in the neighboring areas of Macedonia and Achaia. In this record, godly change began with Paul and his companions choosing to live the Word they knew, and it continued with each person who chose to believe the Word and follow their examples.

What did Paul and his companions do as examples of the Word?

Acts 17:1-4:

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews [Judeans]: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

Paul and his companions taught God's Word and lived it. First, Paul spent time reasoning with people from the Scriptures. He opened (expounded) and alleged (explained) so that people who heard the Word could choose whether or not to believe. "Consorted with" means "attached themselves to." Those that believed also became companions of Paul. Those that didn't believe reported that the believers had "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). In actuality, their world, or culture, had been turned right side up with the truth of the Word. That's influencing the culture with God's Word!

If we want to influence our culture with the Word, turning things from "upside down" to "right side up," we can start by making the Word known to those we meet. Like Paul, we first take time to explain the Word so that someone can decide whether or not to believe. Secondly, we spend time with them and invite them to be a part of our lives, showing them how to live the Word. This is exactly what Paul and his companions did, as detailed in I Thessalonians, chapter 2. Verse 8 of this chapter gives a good summary.

I Thessalonians 2:8:

So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

Just like Paul and his companions, we too are willing to impart our own souls to people who want to live the Word by teaching them how to study the Bible, how to pray, how to prosper, and how to believe for victories in their lives. We spend time together over meals and fun activities and get to know one another's families and friends. These people are dear to God and to us! What a joy to live the Word with our newfound brothers and sisters in Christ!

Influencing cultures with God's Word results when believers follow clear examples of how God's Word is to be lived and then become examples themselves. It is God's will for us to influence our cultures with His Word, so let's choose to be examples of the Word that others can follow!

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