

DEVOTION FOR SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CAN ONE PERSON MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

“For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.”

2 Corinthians 9:2 (NIV)

“It isn't so important that you know 250 people. What's important is that everyone you meet knows 250 people. That means, in essence, that every time you develop a strong relationship with someone new, you've potentially expanded your personal sphere of influence by 250 people every single time!”

Bob Burg

Did you ever wonder how our American society got in the shape it is in today? By that, I mean how our relationships came to be what they are. Much of our American culture used to be marked by *"Yes, Sir"* and *"No, Mam."* We were taught that people should be quiet in libraries, worshipful in church, and respectful when watching someone putting in golf. We relied without much question on our professionals --- doctors, attorneys, and clergy. The policeman was the neighborhood friend, and the community "grapevine" was the authoritative source to parents of what their children really did when they were away from home. Neighbor parents were almost as likely to discipline you as your own parents (I can attest to that personally!). Long before the advent of credit cards, workmen and business people floated short term loans and initiated contracts based solely on a handshake and the integrity of a personal promise. Can you imagine that there once was a time when *"a man's word was his bond?"*

Most of us complain frequently that these times are past. Truly, many indications do point to the fact that our society has changed; often for the worse! We lament the loss of something so necessary for our general well-being and true sense of "community." Many people simply have given up on recapturing the values of days past or of creating a better society. After all, what real difference or change for the better can each of us make?

As the quote above says, each of us has a great deal of influence! The rays of our relationships and influence branch out like a spider's web to touch the lives of over 250 other people. In fact, our words and our actions affect hundreds of people. The real question, then, is whether our influence will be for better or worse! From the youngest of us to the oldest, all of us make significant impressions on others each day. Most of these are seemingly small; at least to us. But, to the other people whose lives we touch our words of encouragement and our actions of love and care are perceived as the touches of God himself!

"You are the salt of the earth." (Matthew 5:13). Look for ways each day to "flavor" other lives for the better.

"How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?" (1 Corinthians 7:16). Even at home, our influence and daily actions affect the lives of those we love most! Don't give up on family members in your prayers and love!

"The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia --- your faith in God has become known everywhere." (1 Thessalonians 1:8). Our reputations spread everywhere --- both good and bad! Even our reputations can be used by God to bring others to himself!

"By faith, Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith, he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith, he still speaks, even though he is dead." (Hebrews 11:4). We are all concerned today about our legacies and what we leave for our heirs. What could be a better inheritance than a good example and faith in Almighty God?!

Can you make a difference this week? Absolutely! And, according to Bob Burg, you'll have an influence on at least 250 people. How, then, should you live? Trust God for your help this week, and touch others for him. Invest in those human networks of grace, because the payoff will be astounding! God bless you as you do that every day.

**My life shall touch a dozen lives before this day is done,
Leave countless marks for good or ill ere sets the evening sun,
This is the wish I always wish, the prayer I always pray;
Lord, may my life help other lives it touches by the way.**

---Selected

Soli Deo Gloria!
Don Yancey