



Influencing or Influenced

If you like cucumbers like I do, you probably enjoy a fresh one from the garden now and then. What happens to that cucumber though if you drop it into a jar of vinegar or a brine mixture? Why, it becomes a pickle, of course... it is still basically a cucumber but it has been changed, influenced by its environment. I say all this because of an incident that occurred recently involving the actions of a Jet Blue flight attendant. His interaction with a passenger escalated into an event that made news around the world. If you watch the news you know what I'm talking about. Both parties had an opportunity to prevent this altercation with the proper response, but what I'm deeply concerned with is the lack of response by others around them. Take for instance a group of 100 people. If you were to ask them to raise their hands if they consider themselves a Christian, I would venture to say that the number would be between one-half to three fourths. That means there would be that many individuals who profess to hold and abide by the teachings of Jesus.

Now, that being said, I ask you why were there no reported attempts to make peace, either by the two directly involved in the altercation, or by those in the surrounding area? Jesus taught us, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." (Matthew 5:9) Where was the peacemaker? Where was the salt of the earth, the light of the world? (Matt 5:13, 14) Each of these Jesus uses to describe His followers. Both salt and light affect or influence those or that which it is in contact with. I ask you now, as a Christian are you influencing or being influenced? What would you have done, were you sitting in range of this event? Would you have intervened on behalf of a peaceful resolution or would you have chosen to 'stay out of it'? In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul speaks of the influence 'a little leaven' has on the loaf when speaking of a sinner in their midst. He was talking about the influence that sinner was going to have on the church at Corinth if allowed to continue unrepentant contact with members. The analogy he uses is one that we all understand; yeast (leaven) is what makes (influences) bread rise. Because of this influence Paul instructed them to have nothing to do with the sinner while they were still "leaven" and to seek to affect change in their status regarding sin. The question we need to consider is whether we are influencing or being influenced. As children of God we have no recourse but to be the ones influencing those around us. And if we are not, perhaps we need to evaluate what type of relationship we have with God.