

Becky Combee Ministries, Inc.



You Can Make A Difference!

I guess most people raise their voice in anger from time to time, some more than others. And some stomp their feet, and some slam doors, and some curse. My, I hope you don't curse. We used to have an angry neighbor with questionable vocabulary. One day I couldn't see what was happening because there is a tall fence around his property, but I could hear him "hollering" at his children. Whew! I thought, "Wow!"

I have never heard my father curse. I have never heard my husband or my children curse. In fact, if you visited with any member of our family group, you wouldn't hear any foul language. There aren't any "cursers". But I know that if one parent curses, the children will probably curse and then the grandchildren may curse. What you and I do makes a tremendous difference. If we "holler" and slap our children, when they are grown, they might slap their children. They learned that from us. What we did established a pattern.

Often in very simple ways, we transmit our ideas to others. In our household, there is a minor dilemma with beets. We jokingly say we eat beets

around the world, but we don't eat American beets. As we travel, we believe in eating what is set before us. But at home, it is sometimes different. I still remember a time when our son, Joel, was young, and I was feeding him beets. Wayne was standing on the other side of the room frowning. I said, "You can't do that. If you frown at these beets, Joel will know that beets are not good." He graciously left the room and Joel ate his beets. There is truth in the German proverb "The apple does not fall too far from the foot of the tree."

Last year a young lady we know lost her Bible. She was frantic. She looked everywhere, but couldn't find it. She said, "Do you know what I had to do last night?"

I said, "No".

She said, "I only had this piece of paper with a scripture printed on it. I had to take that piece of paper and read it before God and say, 'I'm sorry, God. It's the only scripture I have because I can't find my Bible.'"

She reads her bible every day. I know she is following her heart, but she is also following the pattern that has been established in her home. Her mother gets up early in the morning, sometimes as

early as 5:00 o'clock, to read her Bible before she goes to work. Her father is a student of the word and a daily Bible reader. Their commitment to God has made a difference in her life.

Our influence over the people around us is great. We must be an example. The old saying, "Don't do what I do, just do what I say" will not work. Our words are insufficient. We must "take heed to [ourselves] and keep [our] soul diligently."

¹ The scripture declares, "Bad company ruins good manners." ² It further states, "It takes only one wrong person among you to infect all the others." ³ It opens our eyes saying, "The way of the wicked causes them (the neighbor) to err." ⁴ It emphasizes our choice of friends reporting, "The companion of fools shall become corrupted." ⁵

But, here is the good news. "[He that walks] with wise men shall be wise." ⁶ "The righteous is a guide to his neighbor." ⁷ "As iron sharpens iron, so people can improve each other." ⁸ These verses declare the influence of God's people. Wise, righteous men, men who walk with God, can make a difference. Every believer can impact the lives of others. And they are watching. They see us. They know us. If our God reigns in our homes, in our schools, and at our offices, we can affect their lives. Indeed, we can make a difference – a tremendous difference!

¹ Deuteronomy 4:9

² I Corinthians 15:33, The Message

³ Galatians 5:9, NLT

⁴ Proverbs 12:26, ASV

⁵ Proverbs 13:20, Sprl

⁶ Proverbs 13:20, Sprl

⁷ Proverbs 12:26, NASB

Hymn Stories

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believ'd!*

*Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.*

Anglican Priest John Newton wrote the hymn, "Amazing Grace" as a testament to the power of God's conversion in his life.

John Newton was born in Wapping, England, in 1725. Beginning at age 11, he worked as a sailor, first sailing with his father, and then as a midshipman aboard a slave ship. After a failed attempt at desertion, he was severely flogged in front of the crew and demoted. Following frequent thoughts of suicide, he sailed again on a ship to West Africa. Here he was held and abused by a slave trader. Later he described himself during this time as "an infidel and libertine, a

servant of slaves in Africa."

In 1748, his father through a ship captain located and rescued him. While on the trip home, a violent storm arose and the ship almost sank. It was then that Newton first cried out to God. John Newton would forever mark this trip as the moment of his conversion and celebrated the date

*My grand point in preaching is to break
the hard heart, and to heal the broken
one. – John Newton*

March 21, 1748, as its anniversary for the remainder of his life. Afterward he vowed to avoid profanity, gambling, and drinking. Later in his life he would speak out strongly against slavery.

In 1764, after reading a series of letters John Newton had written about his conversion, it was recommended he become the acting curate at Olney in England. This was despite his lack of the expected education. He served here for 16 years and was so popular that the church had to add a gallery to seat the many people who came to hear him speak.

* Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Newton; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazing_grace