

Influence for Significance

Isaiah 9:6

Have you ever thought about the fact that we tend to trust those who trust us? We've all had that person, or perhaps those few people, in our lives whose belief in us gave us the confidence and perseverance to accomplish things we never thought possible. It would be encouraging for you to recall those special individuals in your life and to picture in your mind where you would be without their belief in you. It would be encouraging to consider how much you value that person today.

Apart from my parents, the first person who comes to my mind is my high school football coach. In his own firm yet gentle way he always appeared to know something about me that I didn't know. He seemed to have a confidence and belief in what I could do that not only created trust in him but produced in me a relentless drive to exceed his expectations. *I would have done anything for coach.* The next person who comes to mind is my wife. Her belief in me was especially encouraging during the nine grueling years of seminary and doctorate study. It was her constant vision and sense of the purpose God had for us as a couple and individually that helped remove any possibility of throwing in the towel and not fulfilling God's desire for us. *She is my life,* and I would be helplessly handicapped without her. Then of course there are Dr. Pentecost and Dr. Reed who were saturated with the confidence of God's grace and power to accomplish His purpose in the life of any student willing to simply trust His faithfulness. They embodied the marriage of theology and life itself in such a way that it could not be resisted. *I will always hold them in the highest esteem.*

You have those who have had similar influences in your life, who have played a major role in making you who you are today, don't you? It might be rewarding both for them and for you to let them know how they have influenced you and what they mean to you because they believed in you.

Last week we said that it's possible this New Year will be the most significant year of our lives. It is probable that we will encounter challenges that far surpass our natural ability. The question is who will believe in you in such a way that confidence and conviction will be built into you so that you will excel in the purpose God has for you?

Today we will consider that Person. We are going to look at four identifying qualities—we could even call them attributes—that are guaranteed to influence us in a way that will cause us to anticipate the significance God has for us this New Year. However, the **real** significance lies not in what we do but in how we feel about the One who influences us—so much so that we would *do anything for Him*, that *He becomes our life*, and that *we will continually hold Him in the highest esteem* as we come to trust the One who believed in us. And yes, it might be good to thank Him for believing in you and the influence He has had on your life.

LIFE RESPONSE

1. This week, MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on Philippians 3:7-8, "*But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ. . . .*"
 - a. What are the two the major contrasts in this passage, and what influence does each have on your life?
 - b. What relationship does the "value of knowing Christ" have to the value we place on "those things"?
2. List each of the four attributes. Beside each one write down what you believe to be the degree of influence

