

Am I Leading My Kid Brother Astray?

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Leading a brother is a timely subject on which to write because it has not been discussed to any great detail at the present time and because it should be in the minds of all Christians much of the time, especially in the presence of others.

From this subject arise several questions which, after I have answered them, will show why one must think about this subject. The questions can be arranged and answered in the following form: Why can one lead his brother, how can he lead his brother astray, why is he responsible for leading his brother, and how can he lead his brother aright?

This subject does not, however, have to be held strictly to a person with a younger brother, but can be discussed as a Christian young man with a companion, a brother in the faith. For my purposes, however, I shall deal with a nineteen-year-old boy and his kid brother of fifteen.

A boy of fifteen years is greatly susceptible to his surroundings or his environment and is usually looking about him for opinions, ideas, and guidance. I believe that a boy of fifteen is easily influenced by his environment.

Take for example, a young man lives in a fine neighborhood and goes to a Christian school and a Christian church. This young man associates with other Christian teenagers and grows to be a Christian gentleman. But on the other hand, Henry lives in the slums of New York City. Being a member of a club or gang, he plays with a wicked group of boys. After stealing small articles when a boy, he becomes a wanted criminal when a man. You see then that a teenager, as a rule, is easily drawn by his environment.

Due to the fact that the boy is at the influence of his surroundings, he can be drawn one way or the other by his nineteen-year-old brother Frank who is a very close, strong part of his life. Frank can definitely lead his brother astray.

Don, the fifteen-year-old, can become either a good or bad mature man by his brother's influence. What Don becomes depends on what Frank is. If Frank is a good Christian young man, a safe driver, a boy of high morals and ideals, Don, as a rule, will be the same, but if Frank is a weak Christian, a reckless driver, a boy with poor morals, and he does much swearing and drinking, Don will be a weak Christian with poor character also.

For example, Frank goes for a ride in his car, and he takes Don along. While riding, he squeals the tires on almost all corners, he speeds, he makes fast turns, and he has several "close calls". At first, Don is frightened; he flinches and becomes rigid, but as he continues to ride with Frank, he relaxes. Then he encourages Frank to be rash, to drive recklessly, and finally, when he obtains his license, he is a reckless driver. This would hardly have happened if Frank were a good, safe driver.

It is similar with moral standards, opinions, and ideals. Don "doubled" with Frank when he was on his first date. Frank, who was going "steady", was completely at ease and took advantage of the parking place they had in a desolate spot. When the night was over, Frank and Don went on their way home. Don had been watching Frank the entire evening, wanting to know a few things because of his inexperience. Frank boasted of the great fun he had had and Don "funneled" it all in. On succeeding dates, Don remembered the first night and followed his brother's footsteps to immorality.

By having an upright brother as a guide, Don would grow to be a fine young man. If he would ride with Frank on a Saturday afternoon and feel completely at ease because Frank drove more slowly around curves, more cautiously at corners, and would have no near accidents, he would see how his guide drives and would drive likewise. If Don would go with Frank on a few dates and would see that Frank has clean pleasure while with a girl, Don will also have a clean, wholesome time.

Therefore, what Don does depends a great deal upon what Frank did before him. Frank is responsible for the way in which he leads Don.

We as Christian young people must watch ourselves and our brothers, leading our “Dons” in the right path, not becoming rash by asking the question of Cain – “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

In Matthew 23:15 Christ pronounces woe upon the “scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” for making a proselyte and making “him twofold more the child of hell than” themselves. Woe is put upon them for leading another astray. If woe is placed upon one for leading astray another, then naturally one is responsible for leading him and guiding him. One is also responsible to lead his brother in the correct way. Since one is responsible for how he guides his brother as a strong part of his environment, he must guide in the best way possible; that is, he must be a good driver, live a clean life without drinking, swearing, and attending the theater, have high morals, ideals, and opinions; and most of all, have the best possible Christian religion.

When one then goes for a ride and has his brother along, he should drive carefully, show his brother the correct technique for safe driving, and why he uses such methods. One should tell his brother why safe driving is the best driving. As one does with driving so he must do with his religion. He should show his brother the truth and the best religion, as well as how to act as a true Christian.

As I said previously, leading a brother does not necessarily mean strictly a brother of blood relationship, but can also mean a brother in the faith. One can lead a brother or sister in the faith as easily as one can his own relatives. It is here that the greatest point lies – the guiding of a brother in the faith. One carries a great responsibility in the leading of a person in religion. If you will take a closer look at Matthew 23:15, you will see that Christ condemns the scribes and Pharisees for misleading another person in their religion. One must be especially careful when leading another in his religion, for many people have become much more wicked led by someone than before they had contacted the person who led him astray.

Because we are sinful and leading a brother astray is very easily done, we will have to admit that we have done things many times which have misled others. Even while trying to advise and help others, we err. In the future we must guard against our misleading a brother, and pray to our Heavenly Father for aid to lead our brethren not astray from, but in and to the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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