

Influences

My thoughts this week are turning towards Mother's Day, or Mothering Sunday as some people like to call it. Although for many it is a good day and a time for celebrating with flowers, special gifts and having family time together, for others it is not such a good day. It can be a day filled with mixed emotions for various reasons.

I am very fortunate in that my sister and I have a lovely mum who has always been there for us.

She has had a tremendous influence on our lives, bringing us up in a loving home, and setting us a wonderful example of loving Christ Jesus and serving God.

I feel very blessed in having been brought up to go to Sunday School every week in my childhood years. Also, a big influence on my life, was attending an annual Christian Convention at the Butlins holiday camp, in Filey. It was at one of these holidays that I committed my life to the Lord Jesus. Even though I had been brought up in a Christian home, did not mean I was a Christian. I had to make that choice, and decision, myself.



I am reminded of a young boy who we read about in the New Testament. His name was Timothy, which means 'the one who honours God'. His grandmother was Lois and his mother called Eunice. She chose his name as she believed the most important thing for anyone to do in their life, was to honour God.

Eunice came from Palestine but Timothy's father was from Greece and so he taught his son to read and speak Greek. The family lived in the town of Lystra where there were people from Rome, so Timothy also learnt to speak Latin.

The young boy wasn't a strong child and was often ill and was very shy. His father had great plans and hopes for Timothy to become someone important one day. However, his mother just hoped he would love and honour God.

Eunice had a strong faith in the one true God and had learned a lot from her mother Lois. She in turn now retold the bible stories to her little boy, Timothy. Stories about the people of God in the desert, the ten commandments and the best ways to live, and the Temple, were all important to her.

As Timothy grew he enjoyed the stories but was never quite sure if they were for him. He was after all half Greek and therefore not a 'proper' Jew.

When Timothy was a teenager, a preacher came to the town. His name was Paul and he told everyone about Jesus. Jesus had been born as a King, but not like the way everyone had expected. He had lived a life doing wonderful things and telling everyone about the love of God. He had died and then he had come back to life again.

Paul invited people to turn to Jesus and to believe in him. Through Jesus they could be forgiven and come into a right and new relationship with God.

Timothy was very impressed with this preacher and listened intensely to what he was saying. Through the words he heard, Timothy felt very close to God. He knew God was saying he was much loved and God had special work for him to do.

After hearing Paul, Timothy became a follower of Jesus, and wanted to honour God with his life.

It was sometime later that Paul visited the town of Lystra again. Paul was on a missionary journey and he asked Timothy to travel with him. Having young Timothy with him would be a help to Paul, as he could speak and write so many languages.

Paul became like a second father to Timothy, and together they travelled to Athens, Corinth and Ephesus. Once Timothy travelled to Jerusalem with Paul, taking some money they had collected in Greece to help the people in Jerusalem who were suffering from the famine. When Paul went to Jerusalem for the last time, he put Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus. He went on to become its leader and help them grow in their Christian faith.

When Paul was put in prison in Rome, he wrote a letter to Timothy advising him to be a good leader. Paul called Timothy his true child of faith. He reminded him of how God had given him special work to do, and that he must never forget his mother and grandmother, and how they had helped him to understand God's story in the Bible and how they had passed on the faith to him.

By this time Lois and Eunice had died. How proud they would have been of Timothy, who had grown up to honour God.

Perhaps our mothers have had a positive influence on our lives, like Lois and Eunice had on Timothy, if so, we should give thanks to God.

Whether we are a mother or not, we can have a huge influence on other people, and especially children. Why not think who we can influence, in a positive way, this weekend?

God bless

Eileen

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