

Social Influencers: Testing the Spirit



by Steve Barwick

Colossians 2:8 *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

One of the newest pop culture buzz phrases is the term “social influencers,” meaning people who spend their time, online, attempting to influence the multitudes of this world.

An influencer might be advocating for any number of causes or policies, philosophies or even products.

For example, one social influencer might advocate for right-wing politics. Another, left-wing politics. Another “racial justice.” Another might be most interested in influencing you to believe a certain way about environmentalism ... religion... public health ... immigration policy...philosophy...and many other vital topics.

There are even social influencers for more-or-less frivolous topics, such as makeup techniques...beauty products...dog grooming... becoming an actor or actress...etc.

The point is that social influencers spend their online time *trying to influence their audiences*

into believing something, acting on something, buying something, or doing something a certain way. For the most part, they're promoting a secular world view to their audiences – not a Godly one.

In reality, most social influencers are just modern-day propagandists, for pay. Yes, they get *paid* to influence you to do, or to believe, whatever *their paymasters* want you to do, or believe.

“Present-Day False Prophets”

Dr. Rex M. Rogers of *Christian News* lumps social influencers in among what he calls “present-day false prophets.” He states:

“Some Bible scholars use the terms false prophets to refer only to religious leaders engaged in heresy.

But most Bible scholars embrace a broader view, using the term false prophets to describe anyone—religious or irreligious—**who leads the Church or culture astray with false, idolatrous ideas, narratives, or worldviews.**

What matters is not so much the word "prophet," as Scripture's warning: "***See to it no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of the world rather than on Christ***" (Col. 2:8).

Dr. Rogers goes on to say:

Some false prophets are "online influencers," operating lucrative websites, video channels, or social media sites, marketing lies, especially to young people.

False prophets can also be intellectuals/professors, politicians, protestors, activists, or celebrities.

...Every day, present-day ‘false prophets’ intentionally and effectively attack the core beliefs and values of the Christian Church and American culture.

This is a growing existential threat, for Judeo-Christian values no longer provide a ‘sacred canopy’ over American culture. These historic, foundational values are no longer ascendant or respected or even referenced by a vast cross-section of society.

So modern-day false prophets now practice their craft with seemingly little resistance.”

Who Are Your Social Influencers?

The other day I came across an article titled “The Top 50 Social Influencers.” That triggered my curiosity. **Just how many social influencers are there?**

After more research, I was surprised to find out there are something like **1.5 million** social influencers in the U.S., alone, and between **3.2 million and 37.8 million** social influencers in the world.

Wow. That's a crap ton of people working day and night to influence you to...well...*change your mind about things*.

Who are some of *your* favorite social media influencers?

- Joe Rogan
- Jordan Peterson
- Candace Owens
- Ann Coulter
- Matt Batzel
- Joy Reid
- Russel Brand
- Jimmy Dore
- Noam Chomsky
- Cornel West
- Khaby Lame
- Sommer Ray
- Any multitudes of others

These folks, and untold numbers like them, have *tens of millions* of followers worldwide that hang onto every word that slides out of their mouths.

On social media, these influencers are treated, and feted, as if they were little “gods,” imparting knowledge and wisdom from on High to those wise enough to listen to them.

Yes, they're the modern-day (but largely *secular*) version of the prophets of old. And, just as there were *true* prophets of God in times of old, there were also *false* prophets. Indeed, most of the time, the false prophets outnumbered the true, by leaps and bounds.

And, of course, the world tells us we *definitely* need to be listening to these modern-day “social influencers,” or we might get left behind. We might miss out on something new and different. We might be too late to the party. We might not know what everyone else gets to know. We might get left out of the loop.

So...we succumb to the hype and start listening to the social ‘gods’ so we can stay in-the-loop. With the “in-crowd.”

But the key question is this: Is that particular social influencer taking his crowd on the road to heaven, or straight to hell?

“Well, Steve,” you might say, “I happen to *like* listening to such-and-so social influencer.” Okay. No problem.

But have you *tested the spirit*?

That's the question we'll deal with in the remainder of this short study.

Only 2 Social Influencers

If truth be told, there are really *only two* social influencers operating in this world today.

One is the Holy Spirit of Christ.

One is the iniquitous and worldly spirit of antichrist.

And every social influencer out there – *every single one of them* – is either being influenced by the spirit of Christ, or by the spirit of the antichrist, which is the spirit of this world.

And while you're in this flesh world, you get to *choose* which one of these two spirits you want to *allow* to influence you, by who you choose to listen to.

Indeed, thanks to the internet, you're able to access the supposed knowledge and wisdom of *thousands* of these influencers. Maybe tens of thousands of them.

But *every single one of them*, no matter what, is either being led by the Holy Spirit of Christ, or the iniquitous and worldly spirit of the antichrist.

Again, there are *only two* spirits operating in this world, today. God's Holy Spirit, and Satan's spirit of iniquity, which is the underlying spirit of this world. And there's a *battle between the two of those spirits* for the hearts, minds and...yes, *souls*...of God's children.

So, if you've just *got* to listen to social influencers, fine. Your job, then, particularly as a *Christian*, is to determine whether the influencer you're considering listening to (or, are already listening to) is empowered by the Holy Spirit, or by the deceptive and worldly spirit of antichrist.

Try the Spirits

But *how* do you discern such a thing? Well, let's go straight to the Bible, and find out:

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

You see, just as there's a *spirit* behind every individual who sets himself (or herself) up as a prophet, so there's a spirit behind every "social influencer." It's either the Holy Spirit of God, or the worldly spirit of the antichrist. Again, those are the only two.

St. John is saying that because you can see so many false prophets operating in the world today, you need to grasp the fact that not everyone vying for your attention is going to be someone you can trust, or should listen to. Too many of them are false, and have ulterior motives ultimately designed to draw you away from God and His Word, and pull you back into the world.

1Jn 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

If the social influencer confesses that the Messiah of God has already come to this earth, in the flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ, then he's most likely a Christian operating under the power

and influence of the Holy Spirit, and therefore should be safe to listen to and absorb knowledge, understanding and wisdom from...with discernment on your part, of course.

1Jn 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now **already is it in the world.**

The spirit of antichrist has been operating in this world for a l-o-o-o-ng time.

You might think of it as the spirit that draws your attention away from Jesus Christ, cleverly placing it on worldly things that, of course, cannot save you.

In other words, the job of the spirit of antichrist is to *estrangle you from your heavenly Father. To get you looking away from Him and His Word, and toward something else, instead. Anything else.*

Remember: in New Testament Greek, the term “antichrist” literally means “instead of Christ.” Yes, the job of an antichrist is to lead you to something “instead of Christ.” To draw you, and your attention, away from the Lord, and back to the worldly.

You see, if you’ve been cleverly led away from Him by “influencers” who operate under the worldly spirit of the antichrist, then your salvation has become in dire jeopardy.

Our heavenly Father has nothing to do with those whose faith doesn’t last past the first inning, so to speak. We, as Christians, are supposed to *overcome* the spirit of the antichrist, not *succumb* to it.

As it’s written:

1Jn 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, **and have overcome them:** because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

When you’ve got the Holy Spirit of God operating in you and around you, it becomes easier to overcome the modern-day false prophets and “social influencers” who operate under the spirit of the antichrist.

And that’s because God’s Holy Spirit is far greater than the spirit of the antichrist that now roams this world looking to divide and conquer, at Satan’s behest.

1Jn 4:5 They are of the world: therefore **speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.**

The “they” and “them” in the verse above refers to the false prophets who operate under the spirit of the antichrist. They are of the world. And the world hears them. Think about that. Their influencing reach is, quite literally...*worldwide*.

Oh, boy, does the world hear them! Millions upon millions of broadcasts, podcasts, emails, video teachings, substack articles and more, each and every day, 365 days of the year. (All begging you to “hit that like button,” or “be sure to share this link with others.”)

But on the other side of the coin:

1Jn 4:6 We are of God: **he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.**

Here, St. John reveals another way to test the spirit behind any individual – including social influencers -- is to see if that person can “hear” and accept the Gospel truth.

If they’re of God, *they’ll hear you* when you talk to them about the Lord and His Word. If they’re of the spirit of antichrist, they will *not*. Corresponding with them about Jesus will be like talking to a brick wall. And, in such a case, anything coming out of their mouths should be marked in your mind as potentially carrying the spirit of error – yes, the worldly spirit of antichrist.

Let’s jump to 1 John chapter 2 for a moment, and see what more we can learn about the influencers:

1Jn 2:18 Little children, **it is the last time**: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, **even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.**

According to St. John, once Christ was crucified and rose from the dead, the period of time known as the “last time” or “end times,” started.

And even back then, Christians like St. John knew this was true by the sheer number of folks pouring onto the scene, who were operating under the spirit of the antichrist – the spirit that subtly turns folks away from Jesus, and back to the world and its false religions and philosophies.

You see, when St. John wrote that warning about the “many antichrists” he was witnessing, it was at the very *beginning* of Christianity. In other words, the devil poured his spirit of iniquity – his spirit of antichrist -- into as many people as would accept it, and sent them out to *influence* others, in a vain attempt to staunch the rising tide of Christianity.

Today, however, we live in the very *final* days of this flesh earth age – the generation of the fig tree -- and just as the Scripture warned us, Christianity is under growing attack, worldwide, in anticipation of the arrival of THE antichrist.

And, once again, our old adversary is filling the world with false prophets – including millions of folks who call themselves “social influencers.”

Yes, in these final days there are “many antichrists” looking to draw you away from your heavenly Father and His Word. And I sincerely believe that a rather large number of them are among the so-called “social influencers.”

You see, just as the Holy Spirit can operate in the hearts and minds of *millions of Christians worldwide*, so the deceptive spirit of antichrist can, and *does*, operate in the hearts and minds of *millions of others, worldwide.*

And that deceptive spirit works *through those millions* to influence you back into the world and away from your heavenly Father and His Word.

1Jn 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Apparently, in John's time, some of those who joined the Body of Christ later changed their minds, and left the body, likely returning to Judaism or some other false religion.

In other words, after having accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, they were *influenced* to turn away from Him. And then, they began *influencing others* to do the same. That's how it works.

Here, John is saying that because they didn't continue with the Body of Christ, but instead left, *they had never really been Christian in the first place*. They were nothing more than hangers-on who left as soon as the pressure became too much for them, or the "next new thing" came about, and they trotted off after it.

1Jn 2:20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

There's the difference between a true Christian, and a hanger-on.

The true Christian has "an unction [i.e., special endowment of knowledge] from the Holy One," and, as he or she studies the Scripture, the mysteries of the Kingdom begin to become apparent.

Bible topics that are confusing for many, become enlightening and uplifting for those who truly love and seek after God and His Word. And that's because God's Holy Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding teaches them the deeper truths, as they study God's Word.

1Jn 2:21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

Remember, the "lie" is this: Jesus did not come in the flesh; the Messiah of God has not yet arrived to this earth.

1Jn 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? **He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.**

Again, St. John is trying to let us know that if an "influencer" denies Christ or otherwise claims He was not the one and *only* Messiah of God, Who came to this world in the flesh, **you can't trust a word out of that person's mouth, from that point forward.**

1Jn 2:23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

If an influencer denies the Son, that influencer has no place with the Father -- at all -- regardless of how much they might use the word "God" in their talks, or how much they act as if they serve Him.

You need to grasp that.

If they don't acknowledge the Son, and therefore don't have the Father, either, why in the world are you still seeking to them for wisdom, advice and understanding? (Just curious...asking for a friend. 😊)

The Bottom Line

The bottom line, once again, is this: Though there are quite literally *tens of millions* of social influencers operating in the world today, in reality, there are only *two* spirits behind those influencers.

One is the Holy Spirit of Christ. One is the worldly and iniquitous spirit of the antichrist. **You choose which one of these two spirits you want to allow to influence you, by who you choose to listen to.**

I've often stated that Eve's greatest sin was *not* in her partaking of the forbidden fruit. No.

It was in *listening* to the serpent (Satan), in the first place. Indeed, the minute he opened his mouth, and began contradicting God with his very first sentence, she should have turned abruptly, and left the scene. In the New Testament, it's called "shaking the dust off your feet."

Instead, she hung around and allowed that old serpent, the devil (Rev. 12:9) to *influence* her. And in the end, it cost her dearly, for she lost her status with God, and was thrown out of the Garden.

My advice to fellow Christians is the same as St. Paul's advice in II Corinthians chapter 11: Don't be like Eve. Be *far more* careful than you currently are, in regards to which social influencers and other modern-day "prophets" you allow to influence *you*.

Test the spirit. If the influencer openly loves Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and admits He came in the flesh to give His life for the sins of mankind, fine. Listen, *with discernment*. Compare what they say, to what god's Word says, and *make sure it's a match*.

But if they don't have the love of Christ in them...if they simply don't believe Jesus Christ was the Messiah of God who came in the flesh to give His life for our sins, I must ask once more:

What in the world are you doing *listening* to them?

Why are you allowing yourself to be *influenced* by unbelievers who have set themselves up as founts of wisdom, but in reality are modern-day antichrists?

-- End --

If you'd like to submit a comment on this study, please use [this link](#), and scroll down to the comment box, or email Steve at steve@HaveYeNotRead.com

You can sign up to receive Steve’s periodic “News & Current Events from a Bible Perspective” email commentaries, and gain instant access to Steve’s other in-depth Bible studies, at www.HaveYeNotRead.com

© Copyright 2023. Steve Barwick. Have Ye Not Read? is an independent Christian Bible study ministry unaffiliated with any church or denomination. If you’d like to tithe or make offerings to this ministry, please instead simply share links to the studies with others. Giving the gift of God’s Word is the best “tithe” you’ll ever make. And yes, God will bless you for it.