

Title: **Critical Characteristics of a Christian Influencer (Part 3)**

Text: **Acts 20:28-32**

Date: **February 8, 2026**

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Big Idea

In our text, Paul gathers the Ephesian elders to say goodbye and encourage them one last time. As we overhear their conversation, we learn what it looks like to be a healthy disciple of Jesus making healthy disciples of Jesus. We see the critical characteristics of a Christian influencer. This morning we see that Christian influencers “watch themselves.”

1. That We Should Do It

Look at what Paul says there in the first part of v. 28: “Pay careful attention to yourselves” Stay alert. Be on your guard. Watch yourselves. This is the same sort of thing Paul is getting at later when he writes to Timothy in 1 Tim. 4:16: “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching [your life and your doctrine (NIV)]. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.” The call isn’t: focus on yourself merely for yourself. The call is: focus on yourself ultimately for others.

2. Why We Should Do It

The Immediate Context:

Reason #1: The Threat from Outside (v. 29)—There are others who are going to come in and they’re going to be wolves. They’re not looking to feed the sheep. They’re looking to feed on the sheep.

Reason #2: The Threat from Inside (v. 30)—These men who are supposed to be the shepherds are some of them going to be the wolves!

The Broader Context:

Layer #1: The Heart Is Deceptive—There’s this irony situated at the center of the Christian faith: Those who think they are healthy in themselves are truly sick (their hearts are all off). And those who finally admit they are sick and need a Savior are starting to get truly healthy.

Layer #2: Sin Is Deceptive—It pleases you, as it pierces you. It delights you, as it destroys you. It kisses you, as it kills you.

Layer #3: Satan Is Deceptive—“Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). That means he’s often going to work with half-truths rather than whole lies; with half-goods rather than whole evils; with Trojan Horses rather than battering rams.

3. How We Should Do It

Suggestion #1: Get in the Word

Jesus says the Word of God is like a seed implanted that should take root in your heart and bear fruit up in the branches of your life. It should get in and change you (Luke 8:11-15). James says the Word of God is like a mirror revealing things about ourselves and we must respond appropriately—“be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving [ourselves]” (James 1:22; cf. v. 23). The author of Hebrews says it’s like a two-edged sword, “piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Get in God’s Word and let God’s Word get in you. Read your Bible and let your Bible read you!

Suggestion #2: Run with Others

“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:12-13).

Suggestion #3: Entrust Yourself to God

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (v. 32). You’re not alone in this—not just because you have the church, but because you have the Christ, the Chief Shepherd of the sheep—caring for you, keeping you, watching you.

Reflection Questions

- Which of the three suggestions listed above would you say you need to most grow in and why? What steps can you take to pursue it even this week?

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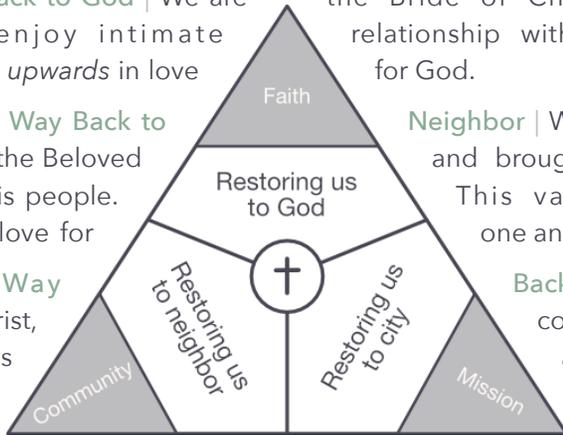
Our Mission & Values

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.

FAITH: The Way Back to God | We are the Bride of Christ, created and redeemed to enjoy intimate relationship with him. This value presses our church *upwards* in love for God.

COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. This value presses our church *inwards* in love for Neighbor | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal relationship with his people. This value presses our one another.

MISSION: The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his ambassadors. This value presses our church *outwards* in love for the Back to City | We are commissioned by the ambassadors. This church *outwards* unbelieving.



Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



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Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.
We are so glad you've joined us today!

Announcement Spotlight

Nicaragua Short-Term Missions Trip - Applications Due ASAP!

Applications for our Nicaragua short-term missions trip in partnership with Arms of Love this summer are due ASAP! The tentative trip date will be ~6/3 - 6/11 (exact dates will be confirmed soon!). This is a great opportunity to grow in Faith, Community and Mission as we go and serve the staff and children with Arms of Love.

Scan the QR code below to find a link for the application.

Please reach out Joey at joey@mercyhillchurch.org with any questions.

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