

Title: **Critical Characteristics of a Christian Influencer (Part 5)**
Text: **Acts 20:33-35**
Date: **February 22, 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 “don’t fleece the sheep.”

1. A Craving to Get (from others)

Why do we do this? What do we stand to gain? What do we sometimes use ministry and leadership and influence to get? When we fleece people, what’s the “wool” we’re after?

Wool #1: Pennies

This is what had Judas, is it not? He’s following along with the disciples, walking with Jesus, but his heart is set on money (John 12:6; Matt. 26:15). This is what had the Pharisees as well. As Luke tells us in Luke 16:14: even though they were outwardly religious, truly “they were lovers of money . . .”

Wool #2: Praise

There are a lot of ways you can go about trying to get the praise of man. We think of things like achievement in sports, or music, or film, or in the university, or in the home, or in the office. But don’t forget we can try to use the church, use Jesus, for the same sort of thing as well (Matt. 6:1-16).

Wool #3: Power

We see this with James and John, when they’re asking Jesus if they can sit at his right and left hand in glory (Mark 10:37). It’s a position of power. And when the other disciples hear about it, they’re indignant—not because they think James and John shouldn’t have asked for such a thing, but because they want to sit there. They want the power. They want to be the greatest. It’s a problem.

2. A Call to Give (to others)

Do you see how, for Paul, everything is moving in precisely the opposite direction? Instead of fleecing those under his care for their gold and silver . . . he’s giving his gold and silver away. Instead of trying to fleece the sheep for their praise and admiration, to be seen and adored . . . he’s caring for forgotten people in forgotten places. Instead of trying to fleece the sheep for power and an intoxicating sense of control . . . he’s serving, he’s working, he’s pouring his life out. He’s not high on some throne domineering over. He’s down in the dirt.

Where in the world does this come from? How do you go from exploiting, manipulating, looking out for your own gain . . . to this? Answer: Jesus. He’s the one who gets this turning in the heart of a man or a woman. He’s the one who blazed the trail—ahead of Paul, ahead of us. He’s the one who could have come fleecing for pennies and praise and power—he’s the only one really worthy of all of it, with the divine prerogative to demand as such—but instead he chose to pour himself out in love for us, to death, on that cross (2 Cor. 8:9; Rom. 5:6; Phil. 2:6-8). The love of God for us in Jesus is what breaks our hearts free from the “love of money” or anything else. This is what snaps the cord of covetousness (Luke 12:32-34). We don’t need the pennies, the praise, or the power. We have him.

3. A Blessing in Disguise

We were created for God, for relationship with him, and therefore the greater happiness, the greater blessing is found wherever he is found. And our God is the God of the cross. He’s found in the dirt—serving, giving, pouring out his life in love for others. As we follow him in that we experience more of him. And as we experience more of him we get more blessing, more joy—both now and forever!

Reflection Questions

- Which of the three types of “wool” identified in today’s sermon would you say you can be most tempted by?
- What inspires you most from Paul’s example in vv. 33-35? Can you see how he “learned” this from Jesus? What would it look like for you to follow Jesus in this as well?

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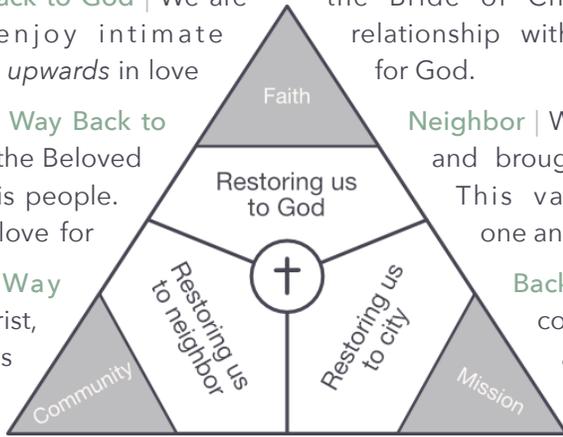
Our Mission & Values

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

Sunday Prayer Walk - Today!

We will be gathering after service today at 1:00pm to do a prayer walk in the local neighborhood! So grab lunch after the service, and consider joining us to pray for our neighboring community, as we hope to have the opportunity to share the gospel with those who are open and ready to engage. We'll have a brief time before the prayer walk to discuss what to pray for, so we invite anyone regardless of experience to join and learn.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Chris Keener at cmkeener2@gmail.com.

All Church Hangout - Next Week!

Members Meeting - Sunday, March 8!

All Church Campout - June 26-28

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