

This sheet is designed to be a stimulus to personal reflection, in preparation for Sermon 3.

As children of God, **seeking to honour him** with our lives, and **training to become more like Jesus**, we'll be wanting to ensure that the things which are shaping us are taking us in the right direction, not hampering us. Some activities influence us directly, but the amount of *time* devoted to something can also have an effect; for example, by limiting the time and energy available for other things which are part of God's plan for us. Sometimes it's more our *attitude* which is shaping us: for example, if we tend to go about our household chores or other work in a grudging spirit, rather than with the heart attitudes recommended by scripture (see Colossians 3:12-17), this will be shaping the people we're becoming in a particular way.

Much of the time, we're unaware that we're being shaped, so we don't get as far as deciding whether or not it's helpful. This exercise is designed to make us all more conscious of the influences and our attitudes, so that we can talk to God about them. The idea is to put this sheet (with the question showing) somewhere you'll see it frequently; for example, at the bottom of the stairs or on the fridge. Use the question, 'Who or what is shaping the way I think and live?' as a basis for an on-going conversation with God. Note down what he seems to be saying.

There will probably be some influences which he'd like you to welcome more fully, by giving them greater time and attention. There may be others which he'd like you to limit or to walk away from. You may become aware of a problem area (for example, disturbed sleep, causing you to feel tired and so affecting the whole of life) in which God is wanting to bring healing and a new freedom! Our God is a God who speaks today. Happy listening!

Circle those influences which you come to realise are shaping the way you think and live. If you become aware of others, please write them in.

Advertising
Alcohol
Bible reading
Books (general / Christian)
Children's needs / concerns
Computer use / games
Creative activities
Diet / Food
DVDs
Car driving habits
Educational activities
Energy (or lack of it)
Exercise (or lack of it)
Fashion
Family relationships
Family responsibilities
Fear
Finances
Following Jesus
Friends

Hospitality
House group
Household chores
Housing
Internet
Leisure time
Loneliness
Newspapers / Magazines
Marriage
Music / songs
Neighbours
Pace of life / 'Hurry sickness'
Pain (physical / emotional;
short-term / long-term)
Prayer (public / private)
Radio
Shopping
Sleep (problems / lack of)
Social life and contacts
Sport

Fun / jokes
Grandchildren's needs / concerns
Health
Helping others
Hobbies
Holy Spirit

Television
Tradition
Unfulfilled hopes and dreams
Work (lack of / pressure of)
Work relationships
Worship (public / private)

**Who or what
is shaping
the way
I think
and
live**

?