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Daily Devotional

“Our Biggest Influence” – John Cartwright

ANNCR: June 17th, “Our Biggest Influence.” Who has had the greatest effect on your life? Was it your mom, grandma, uncle, dad...teacher? Whoever this person was, they helped determine who you wanted to be and how you wanted to live. It could have been their charisma, wisdom, or the care they always showed you. Whatever it was, something stood out, and that helped shape the person you are today. See, role models and influencers, they affect our outlook on life. But this effect can be good or bad. It can either cloud our judgment or clear a path to it. Today we’ll hear from John Cartwright, a man who learned early on the need to have one ultimate primary influence in his life. Who was it? Well, I’ll let him tell you. He’s here to share with us his true story on this Unshackled Daily Devotional.

JOHN: It wasn’t my dad — although he influenced me profoundly, taking us to church and coaching my brothers and me constantly in sports. I earned ten varsity letters in high school football, basketball and baseball.

And it wasn't Thelma who changed my life, although I fell in love with her in high school. On what would have been our last date – because I wasn't saved – we went to an evangelism crusade where I received Christ as my Savior. It was Jesus Who changed my life. Thirty major colleges offered me scholarships, but I accepted an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy.

At the academy I had a Christian roommate, and we started a Bible study that God blessed. My success in sports led to interviews where I gave my testimony and lost my fear of public speaking. My last year at the academy we beat Army, and I was named "Back of the Week" by the press because of my successful passing. God was always my strong right arm.

Thelma and I married after graduation, and I spent six months as the assistant plebe football coach before fulfilling my sea duty in Vietnam. After several years, God called me to the ministry. I've been a pastor now for more than twenty years, and leading someone to Christ is better than any victory on the sports field.

ANNCR: The apostle Paul writes in Romans chapter 12, verse 2, "***And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect,***

will of God.” Friend, once we receive Jesus as our Savior, the influences in our life must make a shift. Only then, if we are listening to Him above all else, will we be transformed and able to discern the will of God. John was guided in unexpected ways, but with each step, God’s purpose was revealed. He followed the direction of the most important person in his life. And in so doing, he discovered the incredible blessings God had for him. So, why not ask yourself today, Is God your greatest influence?

CREDITS: Unshackled Daily Devotionals are produced by Pacific Garden Mission along with our Unshackled Audio Dramas. To find even more true stories of God’s saving, transforming power, visit our website, unshackled.org.

This episode was written by Kennetha Gaebler and Elizabeth Kupferschmid and narrated by Tim Gregory and Rick Plastina.

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