Series: Influence

September 30, 2018

Message 1:

**The Greatest Example**

Matthew 4:19

*Guests - Handout designed with you in mind - Info and notes especially for you - won’t call or visit -*

*Next Steps*

*Generosity*

*Notes on Handout and in YouVersion App*

**Intro:** Hudson Taylor was a great missionary to China - a number of years ago the communist government in China commissioned an author to write a biography of Hudson Taylor that would distort the facts and present the missionary in a very bad light. Their goal was to discredit his work and further discourage people from converting to Christianity.

As the author was doing his research, he became more and more impressed with the life of Hudson Taylor - so much so that he gave up his commission at the risk of his life and converted to Christianity!

That’s the power of influence! Whether you realize it or not - you have influence! Every person here knows other people - we have relationships with one another - we have relationships in our family - in our work places - in our neighborhood - in our schools - in our community -

Every relationship has the potential of influence. Are you always looking for the opportunity to influence other people for good? Our love for Jesus and our desire to be like Him should motivate us to influence people for good!

As we move through the fall - and move toward the holiday season - there are powerful opportunities to influence others. People who don’t normally think of church and faith start thinking about it. Look for those conversations - look for opportunities to influence. We want to help you with that so -

We are beginning a series of 8 messages that we are simply calling, “Influence.” I want to help every person here have a positive influence in the lives of everyone you know!

Jesus is the greatest person of influence the world has ever known. When we look at Jesus, we see a pattern of influence that cannot be exceeded.

Matthew 4:19 - Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”

**Big Idea: If you want to influence others in a positive way, Jesus is your greatest example!**

**T.S.:** 10 ways Jesus influenced - we can do the same -

**> Jesus led by serving.**

Mark 10:45 - For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

John 13:3-5 - Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

Luke 22:24-27 - Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them. Jesus told them, “In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called ‘friends of the people.’ But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves.

Jesus did not care for titles, He took up a towel to wash feet. Jesus did not have to prove His importance by trying to impress others. He was not inferior to others because He served them. He was completely comfortable with who He was, and what He was as a person of influence. Taking a towel and serving them did not diminish that at all! Serving others never diminishes your influence! On the contrary, it will enhance the power of your influence!

 “The secure are into towels …

 The insecure are into titles.

 The secure are people conscious …

 The insecure are position conscious.

 The secure want to add value to others …

 The insecure want to receive value from others.”

**> Jesus’ purpose determined His priorities.**

I was in a meeting this week for a ministry Sharon and I are going to be part of next month - the leader spoke, gave some of her life story, what God has brought her through, and said, “My purpose is now His purpose - and His purpose is to seek and to save the lost!”

What is your purpose? Once you determine that, you know your priorities and everything else falls into place. If you’re not sure of your purpose, here’s a clue -

Matthew 6:33 - Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

John 5:19 - So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.”

Jesus only followed the desires of God the Father. That’s an example for us! We should never act without knowing the God’s will. Jesus focused on pleasing His Father. Even when He was hungry from fasting and the devil came to tempt Him to turn a stone into bread, the reason Jesus gave for refusing was the need to rely on the Word of God.

Matthew 4:4 - People do not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

This is why being here is important - Small Group study is important - knowing God’s word informs us of God’s purpose - that sets our priorities - that empowers us to influence others!

> Learn God’s Word

 > Know God’s Purpose

 > Set Your Priorities

 > Result: Influence

***Because Jesus’ purpose determined His priorities -***

 - He was able to deal with distractions - The Jewish leaders would try to get Him to focus on other things.

When you know what your purpose is - you stay focused on God’s priorities - you are able to brush off distractions the way you would a fly on your face!

Our church’s purpose - Know God - Find Freedom - Discover Purpose - Make a Difference

We will help you discover your Purpose in God’s Big Plan through our Next Steps ….

 - He could handle personal rejection

Some of those who followed Him stopped following Him. When you know your purpose is, you know you’re going to influence people, but some won’t stay with you. Keep moving in your purpose and you will influence those whom God is also working with.

 - He was willing to suffer pain

Hebrews 12:2 - …keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne.

Life gets hard. Stepping out to influence others may lead to rejection and opposition - Jesus looked past that to the win beyond the pain. He is our example.

If we’re going to be influencers - we determine our purpose - then that determines our priorities -

**> Jesus lived what He taught.**

You don’t have to teach with words to be an influencer. Jesus taught with His life - and so can you. Influence is not so much TEACHING as it is BEING. You can only teach what you are, not what you want others to be.

Jesus lived such a life of integrity that even His enemies could not find something with which to accuse Him.

His personal life was blameless and He lived to serve others.

Jesus did not beg people to believe in Him. People had to see the integrity of His life for themselves—and they did! He didn’t spend a lot of time fighting the critics. He was often able to brush them off with the wisdom of His answers. He focused on His purpose for being here.

Jesus did not have to try to appear good. He simply was good. He did not have to focus on staying truthful. He is the truth! He did not have to work to maintain a good reputation. He was a man of character.

If you just live a life of integrity and character, you will be a positive influence on others!

**> Jesus spent time with those He influenced.**

Mark 3:14 NIV - He appointed twelve that they might be with him…

John 10:3 - …the sheep recognize his voice and come to him…

This comes from spending time together!

Jesus spent time in the markets with the people, in their fishing boats, on the shore, in the synagogues and He was welcomed into their homes. Jesus was the ultimate people person!

If we are going to influence others for the Kingdom of God, we must be willing to spend time with people!

**> Jesus knew how to rest.**

You can’t be an influencer if you don’t know how to occasionally pull back and take a break! You can’t be a positive influencer if you are not having personal devotions!

Jesus would often go off by Himself for personal prayer. If He needed that, how much more do we?

Someone said, “Faith walks out when fatigue walks in.” We need to rest our bodies, our minds and our spirits. When we do we are able to think, reflect, renew and gain perspective. That is going to give you greater influence in other people’s lives.

**> Jesus called for great commitment.**

Jesus did not hide the fact that there exists the cost of commitment if we are going to influence other people.

He told them they would be persecuted. He challenged them to make sacrifices and urged them to count the cost.

When we influence others the rewards are great - but they don’t come easily. God has called us to influence, and we must be committed to fulfilling that call no matters what happens to us in the process and no matter what it takes!

**> Jesus handled tough issues.**

* When the disciples got a bad attitude, Jesus corrected them
* He openly rebuked sin and hypocrisy
* He was not above breaking social customs and traditions in order to give people His Good News of forgiveness
* He refused to be manipulated by others for their purposes
* He never took the easy way out

If we are going to influence people, we will face tough issues. We need to expect it and be prepared for it! Let Jesus be our example!

Problems don’t kill us! They cause us to grow! Dealing with problems and handling them wisely rather than avoiding them causes us to grow in the eyes of those we influence.

In the last hours of Jesus’ life, when everyone around Him was falling apart, Jesus remained calm and resolute. He dealt with the issue in prayer with His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Don’t let problems simmer— they only grow. Deal with conflicts while they are still small.

**> Jesus looked for potential in people.**

- Jesus saw potential in a demon-possessed man to evangelize his hometown …

- Jesus saw potential in a woman who had been married 5 times and was currently living in an immoral relationship to reach her whole city with the Good News of salvation…

- Jesus saw potential in a crooked, dishonest tax collector to use his money and influence for the Kingdom of God—…

- Jesus saw potential in an uneducated fisherman to become a great preacher, the leader of the first church and bring thousands to Christ…

Great leaders and effective leaders see potential in people and help them develop it for God’s great purposes!

Are you seeing potential in the people around you - so that you can influence them - make a difference in their lives - then they will make a difference in other lives?

**> Jesus built a strong team.**

While He retreated and spent time alone, Jesus was not a loner. He built and worked with a great team. He chose the core players on the team after much prayer with the Father. He chose the key people from among the larger number who were already following Him.

He chose them.

He loved them.

He taught them.

He ministered to them.

He ministered with them.

He empowered them to minister.

He sent them out to minister.

What a great example! As you seek to influence others - who are you doing it with? What group are you a part of? Who are you leading?

**> Jesus delegated.**

This is a huge key to widening your influence larger and larger —and it was modeled by Jesus! He did not do all the work of the ministry Himself! He involved His disciples in the work, He gave them confidence, He gave them gifts, He allowed them to make mistakes while developing their skills. And He taught, corrected and encouraged them all along the way.

When there were 5,000 men who were hungry and needed food, Jesus prayed for 5 loaves and 2 fish, then gave it to the disciples and they handed it out. It multiplied and all were fed! They were a part of the ministry of this great miracle!

The disciples found out what they had to work with.

The disciples organized the people into groups.

The disciples distributed the food to the people.

The disciples picked up what was left over.

If you are influencing, you are empowering others - you’re not doing it all yourself!

**Concl:**  Jesus walked slowly through the crowd. He was not in a hurry to get away from people. He took time to look into their eyes, into their souls and find out about their deep hurts and needs. He drew upon the power of His Father to meet those needs. He is a great example to us of influencing others, caring for others, and He has made His same power available to us to minister to others as He did!

We can all do this!

Listen to people. Touch people. Strive to meet their needs. Care about their hurts and concerns. Be sensitive to those whom God has put you in relationship with and influence them as Jesus influenced those who were followers, then co-workers, then ministers!

**Invitation -**

**Remember Connection Card - video**

**Blessing -**

**Remember Next Steps - Remember to Give …**

*These 10 points are taken from Leadership 301, 2nd Edition, Bethany World Prayer Center, Baker, Louisiana, Pastor Larry Stockstill. Additional thoughts have been taken from Free Market Small Group Leadership material from New Life Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado & Lakeview Christian Center, Indianapolis, Indiana.*