



Small Groups

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Summer Reading Series – Part 1  
Influence – Secret of the Upside Down Kingdom  
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Sunday, June 24, 2018

**Main Idea** – Influence is the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something. As Christians, our influence functions in the opposite way of the world. The question we must ask ourselves is: “Are you an being an influencer, or being influenced?”

### Observations about Influence:

- Influence is a strange power that can be good or bad.
- As Americans we have rights; as members of the Kingdom of God we have a responsibility.
  - **1 Corinthians 15:33 – Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.” (NKJV)**
- The church must not be divided. An anemic and divided church cannot be an effective influencer. Instead, it will be improperly influenced by others. Scripture teaches where there is strife, there is all manner of sin.
  - **Proverbs 23:7 – For as he (*a man*) thinks in his heart, so is he. (NKJV)**
  - **Romans 7:8 – But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. (NKJV)**
- Our words have influence; it is important to measure the words we speak and share. In this age of social media, all of us must pray and think about the words we use.
- As part of the Kingdom, we (the church) are called to be healers and to have influence.

### Facts about Influence – three components *(from a Harvard Study)*

- Positional Power – usually thought to be people in high positions (e.g., kings, queens, presidents, CEOs, parents, star athletes, etc.)
- Emotion – individuals whose use of word is meant to have an effect and influence actions (e.g., a leader who gives emotionally charged speeches to drive/influence/elicit action)
- Expertise – striving to be the smartest person; the one with the most knowledge on a subject. As Christians, we should follow:
  - **2Timothy 2:15 – Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word**

of truth. (NKJV)

## The Upside Down Kingdom from a Biblical Perspective

### Positional Power

- Described in 2Kings 5:1-14 in the story about Naaman.
- The real influencer is a young, Israeli slave girl who was the servant for Naaman's wife.
- Although there were others (in higher positions): an Army Commander, Special Forces, the Kings of Israel and Syria, Elisha the prophet, and servants; God used the person who heard the story about healing, watched what happened, and said to Naaman's wife,  
    *"If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy."* (2Kings 5:2)
- How did the healing happen in this story? Ans: The influence of the least person. A person who, according to the societal norms of that day, had three strikes against her. She was a captured Israeli in a foreign country, a slave, and a woman. However, God used her to influence Naaman's wife - which brought about the healing.
- The girl is a type of modern day representation of the Church. We can, and should, expect to influence in a greater way.

### Emotion

- John the Baptist had the right of passage to be the next high priest of Israel. This was his Father's position; John would have been next in line.
- John was not interested in becoming the next High Priest because he saw what 400 years without God's presence had done; not to mention, the impact of an evil and dead system.
- John chose to teach repentance. He instead put himself in a position of no influence.
- John found his influence through his anointing and passion.

### Expertise

- While we may want to make excuses for not having influence, Moses, Joseph, Daniel and Paul are examples in the Bible that help us understand there are no excuses for not having influence.
- The pattern that is shown in the lives of these men reminds us not to make an excuse for not having influence.
  - Moses – Israeli, raised by Pharaoh, killed an Egyptian, ran from doing so, and spent 40 years in the wilderness. But, God raised him up and made him a leader.

- Joseph – was hated by his brothers, sold twice (by his brothers and the Midianites), anointed, lied on, and a dreamer. But, in one day, he went from the pit to the palace to become 2<sup>nd</sup> in command to the King.
- Daniel – taken into slavery, refused to bow, thrown in a lion’s den, and interpreted dreams. But, was raised to a high position by God, made ruler over the entire province of Babylon, and placed in charge of all the men.
- Paul – highly educated. But, touched by God on the road to Damascus, preached, was arrested, placed in shackles, put on trial, and freed through a mistrial. Then, he was sent to Rome where he made disciples of all Caesar’s family.

## **Reflective Questions about Influence**

1. Influence can be for good or bad. As you look at your life, do you consider yourself an influencer or someone being influenced? What type of influence would you say you are having?
2. Using these four examples (Moses, Joseph, Daniel and Paul), what excuses might you be making to not have influence? What role is it that God has for your life that these excuses are keeping you from?
3. Read the story of Naaman and ask yourself these questions: “Seeing that God used someone who seemed to be the least important person in the story, do you see yourself as someone perfectly positioned to have influence? If so, with what individual or group of people?”

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