

NO MORE EXCUSES

WEEK 8

IDENTIFYING KEY INFLUENCERS

START

Last session, you were asked about how to implement small steps of discipleship into your daily rhythms. Let's talk about this for a minute.

As you considered ways to expand your spiritual influence, what incremental steps did you take?

During last session's personal studies, you were challenged to begin identifying where to spend your influence to build the kingdom. This session, we will look more intently at how to identify key influencers.

What would happen to someone who consistently made unwise decisions?

Decisions matter. Choices matter. God has given each of us the opportunity to live with what is known as "free will." Free will simply means that have the ability to choose between potential courses of action without obstruction, yet inherent in each choice is an outcome.

For example, if you choose to walk down the middle of a busy road, you may get hit by a car. However, what we forget to teach others through discipleship is the importance of personal responsibility. Bad outcomes come through bad choices, and choices are made as we exercise free will.

Rising up as a kingdom man means making the connection between our choices and outcomes and showing others the importance of this critical truth. Understanding this principle is essential in identifying potential influencers of the future.

WATCH

Use this space to take notes during the video teaching.

MAN UP

How do our choices demonstrate that we are serious about influencing others?

On the other hand, how does making poor choices limit our influence?

Have you ever noticed that when one player on a sports team starts playing at a higher level, others rise with him? His standard of expertise and commitment rubs off on those around him and, as a result, the rest of the team has the opportunity to play better as well. Life as a kingdom man rising takes the same posture.

To be a kingdom man is to be an influencer. Life is no longer about yourself, but how you can bring along others also. For a kingdom man to leave a spiritual heritage, he has to identify key influencers.

Read Romans 14:19 together and answer the following questions.

*So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
Romans 14:19*

What does it look like for men to “build up one another?”

Why is pursuing peace an important part of strengthening others in their walk with the Lord?

How does being contentious hinder our influence with others?

Sometimes we can confuse the bravado men seek to exude with actual strength. But bravado in and of itself often lacks true strength. Anytime contention, bravado, or selfishness show up as a dominant force in our lives, division is the natural result.

In order to be an influencer who impacts others for good, a kingdom man must first control his own character and align it under God’s rule of love. Feeding a man’s need to be on top or have his ego puffed up is one of Satan’s number one strategies for limiting the potential positive impact of influence that man can have in the lives of others.

Besides leading us to be contentious, what are some ways men can outmaneuver Satan in his attempts to keep men from rising as kingdom influencers?

How do accountability relationships and authentic conversations serve to keep men grounded in humility and truth?

Are you willing to have those difficult conversations with other men, or allow them to have them with you when things have gotten off track? Why are these essential? Why are these conversations not opposed to being peaceful?

Kingdom men are serious about extending their influence. Influence comes through a number of ways. It could be modeling. It could be through honest conversations. It might be through being willing to admit mistakes and correct them. Whatever the approach, keep in mind that influencing others for good involves making right choices yourself, as well as living with a spirit of biblical love. A leader not only tells the way, but he also shows the way through his own life, words, and behavior.

As this is our last session together, share one or two key truths you've learned through this study you hope to put into practice over the coming months.

What is one way the men in this group can be praying for you as you seek to influence others?

PRAYER

Father, help us to make right choices so that we can be better positioned to influence others for Your glory and the advancement of Your kingdom. Show us what we need to do in order to help others understand Your will for their lives and rise to become influencers themselves. In Christ's name, amen.

HIT THE STREETS

Three Qualities of a Kingdom Influencer

Many qualities make up a man of influence, but there are three key traits that can help you either spot a future influencer, or help develop one by focusing on these areas. These are character, competence, and commitment. When a man is solid in all three of these areas, he will lead well by example and influence those around him.

1. A man of character

In order to be a kingdom influencer, a man must have personal character. Take a moment to read Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. These verses speak to the character qualities of a deacon but, by default, a deacon was to be a man of influence. Thus, these qualities also transfer to kingdom men who seek to influence others. When you are discipling a man to become a key influencer, as he grows, be sure to examine the importance of having a solid character.

2. A man of competence

You may have heard it said that volunteers often have more heart than skill. They might mean well but wind up causing issues in whatever it is they are volunteering at due to a lack of competence in the role. Raising up a kingdom influencer isn't only about sharpening a man's character, but it is also about identifying ways he can develop a greater competence in all that he does. Psalm 78:72 gives us an example of both where it says of David:

*So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, And guided them with his skillful hands.
Psalm 78:72*

3. A man of commitment

Character and competence are only as good as the commitment behind them. If an NFL team were to draft a highly skilled player, only to have that player quit after a few weeks, they would be worse off than when they first grabbed him. Commitment is that quality which ensures that character and competence have the atmosphere to do their work. Commitment is lacking in our culture today—whether it is to a work role, family, church home, or small group, this lack of commitment negatively impacts everyone in its path. A kingdom influencer must merge character with competence and commitment if he is truly going to leave a lasting impact during his time on earth.

Which of these three qualities do you need to cultivate most in your life?

What are some steps you'll take to cultivate this over the next month?

BIBLE STUDY 1

Influencing Influencers

You can measure the destiny of a team—whether that be a family, work group, business, church, community, or even a nation—by its leadership. Unfortunately, today we face a crisis of leadership. People don't know who to follow anymore because this crisis has produced a plethora of poor models and mentors and an utter lack of great leaders.

Yet, God's kingdom program is designed around the process of transferring spiritual wisdom, known as discipleship, in order to produce future leaders. One of the primary roles of kingdom men is to lead others in the way they should go. The issue at hand is never whether or not a man is a leader. As a kingdom man, you are a leader by nature of your creation and calling. The issue is whether or not you will be a great leader or a poor one.

Read the following passages and write down how each passage describes biblically-based kingdom leadership.

Titus 1:7-9

1 Timothy 4:12

Hebrews 13:7

Matthew 10:42-45

Galatians 6:9

John 13:34-35

Steadfastness, kindness, love, faith, self-control, dignity, teachability, hospitality and a love for God's Word are some qualities that contribute to making a man a great leader. These are the same qualities

men can use to identify future key influencers as well as to help them cultivate these traits at a greater level.

What are some cultural and secular traits that men often look for in identifying future influencers?

In what ways do these differ from the biblical traits listed in the verses above

How do, or can, these differences contribute to a lack of solid male leadership in our society today?

One of the biggest mistakes we make in raising up future leaders is the assumption that great leadership is taught, not caught. Raising up a generation of key influencers is never to be done in a top-down way. It happens organically and authentically when men share their lives, experiences, and conversations. Developing key influencers who can solidly speak on biblical truths and navigate the storms of society requires guidance, practice, learning, listening, and so forth. Just like any marriage is dependent on two people contributing for it to be great, identifying and raising up a kingdom influencer requires both men to put forth the effort to learn, grow, listen, teach, discern, practice, model, and more.

What would need to change in your life to make room for more relationships with men in which you can grow as well as help others to grow too?

On a scale of 1-10, how important is it to you to increase this level of engagement?

Great leadership knows how to spot great leadership, and then turn it loose within the boundaries of their own guidance. Coaching trees in the NFL are a great example of this principle at work. The best coaches have multiple assistant coaches who go on to coach teams themselves. You can judge a coach, at least in part, by their coaching tree. In the spiritual realm, kingdom men carry the same capacity to influence others and raise up men who will make a difference in the culture for Christ.

What are some critical elements that make a coaching tree successful at developing future great coaches?

How can we as kingdom men apply some of these elements to our relationships and systems so that we can have a greater collective impact on our society?

Let's be clear. You are not here just for you. You are here for others. You have been crafted and created by God as an instrument of influence for the furthering of His kingdom agenda on earth. Satan has done a great job of getting men to focus on the areas of life which do not lead to generational transfer of kingdom values. But it is time that we rise up as men to take our stand against the enemy's schemes. Paul gives us wisdom for how to accomplish this purpose in 2 Corinthians.

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
2 Corinthians 10:3-5*

How can we as men do a better job at collectively “destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God”?

Have you ever blindly trusted a friend only to later discover he led you down the wrong path? Describe the role of discernment when it comes to identifying and maintaining accountability and growth-based relationships.

Where do you think our culture could wind up if an army of kingdom men were to rise up for righteousness, justice and the furtherance of God's Word?

Satan tries to get us to forget that we do not wage the battle for influence and leadership in our culture with worldly weapons. We wage this battle through the power of the Spirit and by using weapons of spiritual warfare. One of the primary weapons is the wisdom needed to discern truth from Satan's lies. As we do that, we will see how important it is to help others to do the same. Satan uses deception as a primary tool in keeping men held back from living as the leaders they have been designed to be.

Pray about ways you can both better discern God's role and leading in your life and how you need to grow, as well as how you can live with greater kingdom influence on those around you. As God brings ideas to your mind, ask Him to open the doors and show you the way on how to pursue them. Let Him know you are willing to be used by Him to positively impact the lives He brings within your spheres of influence.

BIBLE STUDY 2

Kingdom Declaration

As we come to the close of our time together studying spiritual concepts of biblical manhood, I wanted to encourage everyone to consider taking part in the Kingdom Declaration located at the back of the book,

Kingdom Men Rising. Stating your declaration publicly will go far in helping you to carry out the principles you've learned in this study. For your reference, it is being placed in this study as well.

KINGDOM DECLARATION

Whereas God created the man to be primarily responsible for advancing His kingdom agenda.

Whereas God has positioned men as head of their families.

Whereas God holds men accountable and responsible for maintaining an intimate relationship with Him.

Whereas God requires men to love and lead their wives.

Whereas God has given men the primary responsibility for raising their children.

Whereas God has determined for men to oversee the spiritual leadership and direction of the church.

Whereas God holds men accountable for the spiritual condition of the culture.

Whereas God will hold men accountable at the judgment seat of Christ for how they fulfilled their divinely assigned role and responsibility.

I, _____, declare today that I commit the remainder of my life to fulfill my created calling to function as a kingdom disciple in my walk with God, leadership of my family, commitment to my church, and influencing of my community.

SIGNATURE

DATE

Take a moment to read through this declaration and write down your thoughts on where you need to improve and focus on the most.

What are some ways you can regularly remind yourself of the responsibilities of a kingdom man outlined in the Kingdom Declaration?

Without a doubt, we face a culture that wants to trick us, trip us up, and get us to make the wrong decisions in this life. But the answer to whether we will experience spiritual victory in our walk as men is in our own hands. Our future as families, churches, communities and even as a nation is in our own hands. Satan only appears to be winning this war on the world because kingdom men have not declared to rise up and resist him. It's not because Satan is more powerful. Satan is not more powerful than Christ.

If we, as kingdom men, collectively choose to follow Christ by cultivating a relationship with Him and submitting to His rule, we will defeat the enemy at every turn. Any other path we pursue will result in further destruction. The choice is ours to make. The time to make that choice is now.

It is high time we rise up as one voice and one example for each other, our families, our churches, our communities, and our land. It's time we take our positions on the field. Grab what you've got. Use it. Make your moves. Lead with love. Disciple those within your spheres of influence. Invest in your own spiritual growth and maturity.

Sure, the opposition we face in our world today as men is rearing its ugly head on every level. But you and I both know the One who knows how this story ends. We know the One who knows the end from the beginning. The One who crafted and created you has already determined that His purposes WILL be carried out.

How is living as a kingdom man influencing other men entirely dependent upon God's strength and work in our lives?

Read Isaiah 46:10 and answer the following questions:

*Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying,
'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'
Isaiah 46:10*

What are some things and outcomes which you believe would qualify as God's "good pleasure?"

In what ways can you participate more fully in pursuing the carrying out and accomplishing all of God's "good pleasure?"

Describe what you feel knowing that God's purposes will be established.

Take time to examine your life and choices based on what you have learned in this study. Identify where you are making the greatest impact and look for how you can improve your influence over others for God and for good. Then, take a moment to write out your own prayer to conclude this time of study together. Focus on what you are grateful for and what you would like to see improved in your own life, and in the lives of those you love—through your influence.

Dear God, _____