

## How Can We Become Influencers? (Part II)

**Hebrews 12:3:** *For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*



In Part I of our two-part conversation about influence, we began to uncover just how broadly and how deeply the power of influence runs. In our world today, influence has taken on a new, and in some ways even more significant meaning than ever before. Now because we have social media, we have created a space for influencers to arise within our midst. Sometimes these individuals appear on the scene from unlikely backgrounds. The vast majority of the most popular of these influencers have been given our attention because they are famous. Curiously, much of their influence is not based on the expertise that was required to master their craft. Because influence happens all of the time at all different levels, our big question now is, how can we become more effective influencers in our everyday lives?

recap  
recap  
of Part I

**Influence: Merriam Webster Online Dictionary**

1: the power or capacity of causing an effect in indirect or intangible ways: to sway

**Influence: Our working definition**

The ability to affect, alter or change the heart, thinking or action of others.

**The idea of influencers is certainly not new. The Apostle Paul was very outspoken about influence:**

**1 Corinthians 11:1:** (KJV) *Be ye followers <3402> of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

**Followers/imitators:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3402 *mimetes*; an imitator

**In Part I, we looked at what the world seeks in its influencers. There are some common characteristics:**

### ☐ **THOSE WHO APPEAR SUCCESSFUL.**

**They want the life of success, however that's defined, and want to see others living the life they want.**

### ☐ **THOSE WHO ARE POPULAR AND HAVE THE APPEARANCE OF KNOWLEDGE.**

**The world likes to follow people who are popular because they want to be part of that group. They want to follow those who sound like they know what they are talking about.**

### ☐ **THOSE WHO ARE SELF-SERVING.**

**This is one of the ways to achieve success; serve yourself and get ahead.**

☐ **THOSE WHO ARE AGENDA DRIVEN.**

People look for agendas that fit with their own comfort level.

☐ **THOSE WITH A SELF-APPOINTED OPPORTUNITY.**

Everyone is an expert in this day and age. Just turn the camera on and start talking.

☐ **THOSE WHO ARE OBSESSED.**

People are drawn to obsessions. We love to watch people at the top of their game.

**Influencer Observations from Part I:**

Those with influence truly do have power. This power can and will ultimately be implemented in accordance with the influencer's most important objectives.

Though Jesus was and is the greatest influencer the world will ever see, Satan's influence cannot be overlooked. Interestingly, in all of what the world looks for in an influencer, Satan's character fits those descriptions.

Many of our present-day influencers follow Satan's pattern of ego-driven influence. On the contrary, the pattern of influence Jesus set has higher and nobler results but is much harder to follow.

We looked at the Apostle Paul, first while he was Saul of Tarsus and had a powerful negative influence due to his misguided agenda to destroy Christianity. Then, immediately after Jesus called him to follow, as Paul, he turned around to become an influence for all that is good and godly.

As Saul, he was an influence for darkness with very little integrity. He bent and stretched the Law and tried to manipulate people to blaspheme so they could be prosecuted.

Great influencers for good have POWERFUL INTEGRITY as a basis for their influence.

The Apostle Peter is a good example of learning how to be a powerful influencer. Some of his experiences before being given God's spirit at Pentecost revealed a good heart with good intentions inadvertently leading others down the wrong path. Through misinterpreting Scripture, Peter led the early church to try to elect a twelfth apostle to replace Judas. It was not his time or place in God's will to do that.

Sometimes we can influence others incorrectly even though we are well-meaning. We must realize that great influencers are driven by godly truth, godly principles and godly influence.

Thus far, our influence lessons have opened up the depth of power influence can have, be it for good or for bad. Next, we want to focus on ourselves as average people. Let's face it, the vast majority of us will never be in a position of major public influence on that level. However, we can ALL be influencers for good at other levels.

*Naaman*  
The influence of a word  
from an unlikely source

Naaman wasn't an Israelite; he was a Pagan army captain. In **2 Kings 5:1-14**, there are two instances of great influence by people in his life who held lowly positions of servitude.

**Here is the first influence from a most unlikely source:**

**2 Kings 5:1-5:** *1 Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram (the Hebrew word for "Syria"), was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, but he was a leper.*

*Valiant warrior, sometimes translated mighty man of valor* doesn't appear often in the Bible. It was used to describe men like Gideon and David. Naaman is the only Gentile with this description. God favored him. However, he had leprosy, one of the most feared diseases with no cure at that time and a great deal of suffering before death.

*2 Now the Arameans had gone out in bands and had taken captive a little girl from the land of Israel; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her mistress, I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria (part of Israel)! Then he would cure him of his leprosy.*

This mighty, valiant warrior's wife had a little girl as her servant who is observing Naaman and his difficulty. She tells Naaman's wife, *I wish that he was with the prophet from Israel because the prophet could make my master all better.*

This is a little sentence from a little person. This word *little* in the Brown-Driver-Briggs' Hebrew Lexicon means "young, small, insignificant, unimportant." She's a nobody. We don't even know her name.

This is revealing! Not only did she want to help and could freely and boldly speak to "Mrs. Naaman" even though she was a servant, but she's a young girl, maybe 9- or 10-years old. This tells us something of her household. How did she know of a prophet of the Lord who she is certain had the power to cure? Who were the influencers behind this tiny influencer? Most likely her parents or whoever raised her to have faith in the God of Israel. Children repeat what they hear.

Not only did she have faith in the God of Israel, she had a boldness in that faith to say something. She was a kid, yet she spoke up.

*4 Naaman went in and told his master, saying, Thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel. 5 Then the king of Aram said, Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. He departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold and ten changes of clothes.*

This shows how valuable and important Naaman was to the king. This was a well-financed trip! Think about the belief behind this little girl's recommendation to send such riches as payment for the healing.

Good influence does not always come from those with the broadest platform. Sometimes it comes from the least of us, those who are not known. This little girl was such a person. Her courage and wisdom created this opportunity.

**We ALL can be such an unlikely influence. How? By simply having our minds in the right place:**

**2 Timothy 4:1-2:** *1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.*

(Source: Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers) *In season, out of season*—In other words, "For thy work, set apart no definite and fixed hours, no appointed times. Thy work must be done at all hours, at all times. Thy work has to be done not only when thou art in church, not merely in times of security and peace, but it must be carried on, in the midst of dangers, even if thou art a prisoner and in chains, even if death threaten thee."



**Rick, sometimes counseling others in your role as minister is not always convenient for you and yet you seem to be available for those who need you 24 hours a day. How do you do that?**

**Rick**

You do that simply by following what the Apostle Paul said: be ready in season and out of season. One of the great blessings God has given me is the blessing of availability. That is one of the reasons I never, ever turn off my cell phone. It has rung at inconvenient times, but somehow or other, the Lord always opens the door to deal with, manage or approach that which needs to be done.

It may not always be convenient, but it is always appropriate. In season and out of season, we look to just be able to be a positive, spiritual and godly influence.



### **Illuminating the power of influence:**

Those in positions of power, greatness and influence are not generally tuned to listening to those who are perceived as less knowledgeable. What made Naaman listen? Desperation. His leprosy was ruining his life, and that desperation opened his ears and heart to what his wife told him a young servant girl had said.

### **Influence question: ?**

How willing am I to speak up with hope even when I have no expectation of anyone truly listening?

He was ready to listen because what she said gave him a ray of hope where there was none. Are we ready to speak up even if people might ignore our words? The little girl did not know if the wife would even tell Naaman what she said. The girl simply exclaimed what she knew to be true. What a great lesson for us!

Words of godly hope are never wasted. At the very least, they confirm our own hope and who knows, maybe they can change someone's life!

**This young servant girl began a process that could change Naaman's life. Who were his next unnamed influencers?**

Naaman's path to his eventual healing was not a glorious account of excitement and celebration. On the contrary, it was a difficult road. Why? Sometimes, when we have a sense of the path we are to take, we build expectations as to what it will look like. As we shall see, Naaman's greatness provoked a set of expectations that would not be met and it is here that the power of influence saved him.

Let's first talk about modern-day influencers.



Having a voice and a platform is a lot of responsibility and can absolutely be a good thing. In Part I, we talked a lot about the "why" – the reason behind why influencers do what they do, and often it is self-serving. But social media can be used to promote great causes and charity.

Cristina Goettsch Mittermeier (known as "mitty") is a wildlife photographer, conservationist, marine biologist and author. She has 1.6 million Instagram followers and promotes ending animal cruelty and encourages women to participate in ocean conservation efforts.

Celebrities are also charitable. For example, actor Leonardo DiCaprio uses his fame and nearly 60 million followers to promote conservation awareness and clean water initiatives.

The "why" that motivates a person can be wonderful when there is a good message this person wants to spread. It draws people to follow, and that message can make a difference.

Let's get back to Naaman. We looked at the power of a word. Now let's look at how the influence of a different perspective may come from those who are "less esteemed."

We left off with the king of Aram preparing a letter for delivery to the king of Israel, along with gifts of gold, silver and clothing. The king obviously valued Naaman, wanting him to be cured of this terminal illness. Naaman leaves with the gifts.

These were mighty preparations for the benefit of a mighty man! This promises to be an historic event between enemies.



**Naaman is now in Israel with his king's letter and gifts:**

**2 Kings 5:6–8:** *6 He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy. 7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me.*

The king of Israel thinks this is some sort of trick, being offered gifts for something he clearly can't do. He is sure they will be invaded again. The king tears his own clothes in grief from suspicion and fear.

The suspicion of Israel's king shows us the power of influence between those in authority. Israel and Aram are at odds. Israel's king is suspicious: *It can't be this simple! I can't even do what he is asking me.*

*8 It happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.*

Today someone in the palace might post the torn clothes on Facebook to get word out that there's an emergency at the palace. Here, someone amongst the servants recognized this was a big deal. *Hurry! Go get Elisha so God through him can help the king and all of us!*

Elisha's influence came from above—he is driven by godly power. He knew God would grant him the healing power, and he would use this influence as a testimony to the greatness of God. This was an opportunity to show there is one God, and He is above all. Elisha says, *Let him come to me.*

**This great man is to come to Elisha's house:**

**2 Kings 5:9–14:** *9 So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha.*

The impressiveness of Naaman's presentation could not be overlooked. He had arrived with glory and honor to meet with this prophet who would attend to this great man's great need.

*10 Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean.*

What just happened?! Elisha doesn't go out to personally meet him—he sends a messenger with simple instructions. Naaman would get exactly what he came for.

*11 But Naaman was furious and went away and said, Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. 12 Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.*

*This is ridiculous. Doesn't he know who I am? I am a mighty warrior! The Jordan River is small and dirty. We have better rivers! This is beneath me. Forget it!* He's going to walk away! This wasn't what he expected. His heart was full of pride, expecting honor and fanfare. Instead, he was given the solution. But he couldn't see the solution because he was blinded by the expectation. We can become like Naaman when we have an expectation, a preconceived notion of what something should be, when in fact, God's way is often very different.

Preconceived expectations can turn powerful influence for good into a cause for rage and rejection. It can take what is offered freely and then stomp all over it and say, *Forget it! I don't want it because I expected something different.* Thankfully, the story is not over.

*13 Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, Wash, and be clean?*

His servants were able to understand what Naaman in his glory was blinded to. They saw the opportunity for healing where Naaman saw insult. They are saying to their master, *If the prophet asked you to go stand on top of the mountain and raise your hands up in the sunlight and yell out, "God of Israel, heal me," you would have done that because it would have been dramatic and glorious like you are used to. Why not do this simple thing you have been told? He gave you a solution!*

Again, we are given a lesson from seemingly insignificant, unnamed people in the Bible who weren't blinded by conceit. We want to watch for opportunities when we can be like Naaman's servants to steer people towards the godly answer.

**Their courage to speak and the influence of their words set Naaman on the right path:**

*14 So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean.*

This doesn't just say Naaman was healed. *His flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child*—it was literally brand new. The leprosy wasn't just gone; it was replaced with brand new skin after washing in the dirty river Jordan. Naaman was cured because his servants convinced him to listen to what made sense. They were nobodies, but their influence was heard.

Think about the opportunities we might have to speak up. We should not underestimate the power of influence from those who see things differently.

**No matter what their station is in life, if they care and especially if they are disciples of Christ, we should embrace their efforts:**

**1 Corinthians 1:26–29:** *26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God.*

The message here is profound. *God has chosen the weak things, not the noble things. Why? Firstly, so that no man may boast before God. Secondly, so that God's power can be made evident in what happens. We don't boast in our own abilities; all we have is because of God.*

Many of our listeners have battles with anxiety, depression and things of that nature. Sometimes those feelings just do not go away no matter what we do. We might think it is impossible to be faithful under such circumstances. But consider this: God calls us because of our potential within the context of our natural wiring towards these things. Why? So that there is no boasting in our human strength. There is only the glory of the power of God helping us cope one day at a time.

We can be influencers when we come across someone who suffers from such struggles. We don't need to have a fancy title to reach out and encourage others to remember that it is with God's power we succeed, not our own. We can tell them they can be lifted up because God knew about our troubles and tendencies long before we did, and He still called us to follow Jesus. It is a beautiful lesson.



The early Christian church had to deal with MASSIVE issues regarding their own structure as they came from opposing backgrounds: some were from a Jewish background with a strong grounding in following the Law. Others were Gentiles whose background was worshipping pagan gods. **Acts 15** takes us to the Jerusalem Conference, also called the “Jerusalem Council.” It was a meeting to determine if the new Gentile Christians had to become Jews first, and whether they had to observe the Mosaic Law. A delegation led by Paul and his companion Barnabas was appointed to confer with the elders of the church in Jerusalem. The conference was led by Peter and James, the brother of Jesus.

(Source: Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible) The account which follows is a record of the first internal dissension which occurred in the Christian church. Hitherto they had been struggling against external foes. Violent persecutions had raged, and had fully occupied the attention of Christians. But now the churches were at peace. They enjoyed great external prosperity in Antioch. And the great enemy of souls (Satan) took occasion then, as he has often done in similar circumstances since, to excite contentions in the church itself; so that when external violence could not destroy it, an effort was made to secure the same object by internal dissension and strife. ...It...shows the manner in which such controversies were settled in apostolic times.



Accepting the influence of those perceived to be at lower levels of status is not easy. Just ask the Pharisees who converted to Christianity in the early church. They came into this meeting with a preconceived notion of their superiority. God had worked with them as the leaders in Israel all these generations and generations. Of course, they should be the ones listened to!

**We are dropping into the middle of the meeting:**

**Acts 15:5–11:** *5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses. 6 The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. 7 After there had been much debate...*

After they had been exposed firsthand to the various influences from their fellow followers of Jesus; after they had been able to speak *and* able to listen...

*Peter stood up and said to them, Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the holy spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11 But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.*

When Peter stood up, he explained to both sides that it was an undeniable fact the Gentiles were to be included in this new Christian movement:

- God knows the heart and gave the Gentiles His power and influence, the holy spirit, just like He did to the Jews at Pentecost.
- God makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile—it's all based on heart condition now.
- Don't force the Gentiles to live under the restrictions of the Law that couldn't bring mankind to salvation (*a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear*). Salvation is through Jesus, not the Law.

After Peter's summation, James wraps up the conference, and they all come to an agreement. Where did the influence come from? From those like Peter who were working directly with the Gentile Christians, who were presumably thought to have less authority than the Pharisees in the early Christian church. But the message was: the Gentile Christians are just like us, the Jewish Christians! God designed this equality.

Those with lower credentials had a powerful influence to change minds at this conference. It is powerful what we can do as average individuals with godly principles driving us.



### Illuminating the power of influence:

Influence can be hard to apply when we have a predetermined focus on what should happen and when the source of the influence is not one that we would naturally look up to. For a Christian, we need to weigh such influence, not by its source but by its content.

#### Influence question:



If I am that source of influence that is considered lowly, am I willing to speak up with godly and righteous direction? If I am on the receiving end of such influence, am I open to truly listening and considering?

Both sides take courage: to speak up takes courage and to listen takes courage. We need to be participants on both sides, learning the power of godly influence.

Godly influence can come in all shapes and sizes. At the end of the day, the question is, am I willing to give it as well as receive it?

**It is inspiring to see how God can use the lowly to be so encouraging to others!  
How else can God use those who are not well recognized?**

Our next exploration into the power of influence is to consider one who had little confidence and yet would be called upon to do very great things. The account of Moses being called to lead Israel out of slavery is a profound example of what can happen when we let God guide as He sees fit.



## i n f l u e n c e r s

BLOG

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POSTS

Influencers can be categorized by the content they produce: bloggers, YouTubers, podcasters and those who only create posts on social media. Christian Questions is an influencer in all four of these areas—we have a blog for every episode on our website, we post videos on YouTube, we podcast and have an engaged social media following. None of these even existed when Rick and Jonathan started Christian Questions as a weekly, local radio program 26 years ago.



**Rick, what do you think about the immense responsibility of a Christian influencer? And knowing how much time and effort this takes, would you have still done it?**

**Rick**

Literally, every day I struggle with that responsibility. It is huge. And I'm not saying that to get sympathy. I have the opportunity and the blessing to struggle with something way bigger than me. I look at that each day, and I thank God. I always say, I don't know why or how, but I am just going to do the next thing. I just have to do the next thing. The responsibility is truly immense, but it is appreciated because it is all from God's grace and goodness.

**If I knew then what I know now, would I have done this?** I would have run away, scared to death. Honestly and truly. If I had known at the beginning the amount of work and time, and the continuous, unrelenting dedication required, I would not have seen how it would fit into my life. But see, here is what God did for us. My heart was ready to serve; my mind had no idea how to do it. In God's overruling providence, and by His grace and patience, He stretched my ability to work, little by little, year by year. That's how it happens. It's all God's grace; that is all it is. It is that simple—and that profound.



Moses was called upon to set the Hebrews free and needed assurance of how this would happen. As we shall see, this assurance did not reassure, for in Moses' eyes the task was FAR beyond what he believed he could handle. We begin Moses' journey to influence when he is standing before God at the burning bush.

**Moses was directed to the burning bush when he saw the angel of the LORD within it. It was then God spoke to Moses:**

**Exodus 3:10–12:** *10 Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt. 11 But Moses said to God, Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?*

*Wait, what!/? How is this going to happen, as there are over 2 million of our people in Egypt!*

*12 And He said, Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.*

Moses is afraid and asks for assurance. He had never led men, women and children in such circumstances, and now he was expected to free slaves? The size of the task of freeing the Israelites and leading them through the wilderness to the Promised Land is unbelievable!

God gives him assurance, then God tells Moses His name, I AM THAT I AM. He tells him the details of what will happen and how He, God, will guide all of Moses' responses. He will tell Moses what to say to Pharaoh. But, Moses remains unsure!

God tells Moses about the Promised Land (currently inhabited with all their enemies!) and how Pharaoh isn't going to just let them go, but eventually he will after all kinds of miracles we now know as the plagues. God tells him the Egyptians will be so glad to see the Israelites leave that they will even give them clothing and treasures as they go. So much detail was provided, yet still Moses has no confidence.



**Influencing Lesson:** God's missions for those whom He chooses as influencers can (and likely will) be overwhelming! But that does not mean they cannot be done. It means we need to learn to grow into them.

**Exodus 4:1-5:** *1 Then Moses said, What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, The LORD has not appeared to you. 2 The LORD said to him, What is that in your hand? And he said, A staff. 3 Then He said, Throw it on the ground. So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 But the LORD said to Moses, Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail—so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— 5 that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.*

What a dramatic way for Moses to learn that what we already have can be used in the Lord's service. This shepherd's staff was probably a six-foot wooden rod with a curved hook on the top used to guide sheep.

Moses would be more than a shepherd of a flock of sheep; he would shepherd millions out of slavery and so he needed to see that with God, he was more than capable.

(Source: Life Application Study Bible) A shepherd's staff was commonly a three- to six-foot wooden rod with a curved hook at the top. The shepherd used it for walking, guiding his sheep, killing snakes, and many other tasks. God sometimes uses ordinary things for extraordinary purposes. What are the ordinary things in your life—your voice, a pen, a hammer, a broom, a musical instrument? While it is easy to assume God can use only special skills, you must not hinder His use of the everyday contributions you can make. Little did Moses imagine the power his simple staff would wield when it became the staff of God.

**Julie**

This passage is special to me. In 2009, I came to you and asked if I could volunteer with Christian Questions. What was your reply?

**Rick**

"Julie, what is that in your hand?"

**Julie**

I looked down and thought, *Well, he can see what I'm holding - a Bible, a pen, a cup of coffee...* And you said, "No, no, like with Moses and his staff. What is in your hand?" Oh! I can type fast! Maybe I can be on the team that types up the notes each week for the listeners! Well, that didn't exist, so we created it, and the CQ Rewind Show Notes were born. We provide detailed notes for every episode. They are free at [ChristianQuestions.com](http://ChristianQuestions.com) and from the Christian Questions app. Sometimes God uses our ordinary things for extraordinary purposes. And that is how we can become influencers.

*What is that in your hand?* Moses' staff would be the symbol of God working through Moses to accomplish God's will.



**Influencing Lesson:** To follow God's will is to be given the assurance that we will be equipped by God (not by ourselves) with the necessary tools that we will need to complete what He is sending us out to accomplish.

Often God sends us out with only what we need for right now. He won't equip us with everything we will need down the road. He is going to build our equipment based on our using what He gave us to begin with. Use what He gives us, then watch how He gives us whatever else we may need.

**In spite of the assurance and example of power, Moses is still unsure!**

**Exodus 4:10-13:** *10 Then Moses said to the LORD, Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue. 11 The LORD said to him, Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 12 Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say. 13 But he said, Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever You will.*

*Please. Anybody but me! I can't do this!* It was beyond his capacity to see. But Moses was the man for the job. God walked Moses through his insecurity and later to his great ability.

Just carry the staff, take the next right step and trust God will do the rest. Here God said, *I will be with your words and teach you what you are to say.* But even so, Moses was overwhelmed.



**Influencing Lesson:** When directed to being an influencer, doubts can overwhelm us, even when we are given assurance on top of other assurances. Even when it looks like everything is in order, we can still doubt because it is so big.



**Did Moses' objections mean he didn't have any faith? We all struggle with doubts and objections.**



It wasn't a lack of faith as much as an overload of responsibility. He had never talked to God before this, and God introduces Himself with, *I'm God; here is what you are going to do.* It was the largest task Moses had ever seen! Moses needed to grow into the task and his leadership role. God had this all planned out; Moses just needed to rely on Him.

**While God was not pleased with the resistance, He still finds a way to put the appropriate influence in place to accomplish His will:**

**Exodus 4:14-17:** *14 Then the anger of the LORD burned against Moses, and He said, Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. 16 Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him. 17 You shall take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs.*



*You will be as God to him*—Moses would direct Aaron in all ways. The word for “God” here is Elohim, is a plural word. God is telling Moses that he, Moses, will direct Aaron’s thinking, his words, his actions, his direction. Moses would be directing Aaron just as God was directing Moses. God wanted Moses to be the influencer. He gave Moses what he needed so he could be that influencer and be able to do things nobody else could have done.




**Influencing Lesson: God WILL provide a way for His influence to be delivered, in spite of our weakness.**

If God wants it done, He gets it done! He will provide whatever we need. It’s important we have faith to say, *Lord, just show me the next step*. We don’t need to see the whole road; we just need to take the next step. A good example of this is the Apostle Paul.

**Paul teaches us where our reliance should be when we are called upon to influence:**


**1 Corinthians 2:1–5:** *1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.*

The Apostle Paul came to the Corinthians in such a way that they were able to see his message came from God Almighty and not Paul. Whenever we are called upon to influencer others, let us do it through the power of God’s spirit working in us, as that is what is supposed to do the influencing. We must get out of the way and let God’s word speak for itself.



**Illuminating the power of influence:**

God never calls anyone to do His work based upon their confidence or even their track record. He calls individuals to be influencers for Him based upon their hearts and potential, knowing He can and will supply everything they will need.

**Influence question:** 

Am I open to answering the call, be it a large or small opportunity, to be an influencer for godliness?

Are we open to answering even a small opportunity? We do not wait only for the big things; we work on the next thing and be ready for when the Lord opens the next door.

Moses is such a dramatic example of what God can do with our insecurities if we would only submit to His will and His direction.

**Moses became a great influencer in spite of his lack of confidence.**

**Do we have an example of an influencer who was the opposite?**

We do, and his name is Nehemiah. Nehemiah was just the cupbearer for King Artaxerxes, and yet when the opportunity presented itself, he became an influencer and a great leader. In many ways, he is a template for influence, as he had a heart for God and for God's city, Jerusalem. This heart led him to prayerfully prepare the details for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem even when no opportunity existed.

We recommend listening to our detailed studies of Nehemiah in Episodes 997 and 998: "How Do You Change Your World?" One of the biggest lessons was to "be" a Nehemiah. And if you aren't a Nehemiah, find one and walk and work with that Nehemiah.



When preparation meets opportunity, influence can be born. Once born, what do we do with it?

**Nehemiah's beginnings as an influencer meant his heart and mind were driven by God's Law:**

**Nehemiah 1:1-4:** *1 The words of Nehemiah... Now it happened in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year... 2 that... some men from Judah came; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped and had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem.*

The month of Chislev equates to sometime in our November to December. Hanukkah is in this month.

*3 They said to me, The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire. 4 When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.*

He hears the news, and it breaks his heart—he fasts and prays. He is completely consumed by the brokenness of Jerusalem, and he is laying it before God Almighty. Remember, Nehemiah is a terrific template for us to learn about appropriate influencing.



**Influencing Lesson:** The things of God we are deeply passionate about should rightly be put before God in prayer. That is where they belong—before Him in prayer. We do not make arbitrary decisions; we put our concerns before God.

## Nehemiah his PRAYER

Nehemiah's humility was a sound foundation on which to build a powerful request.

**He starts with sincere praise and then honestly acknowledges they were not worthy of God's honor or blessing:**

**Nehemiah 1:5–6, 11:** *5 I said, I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, 6 let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my father's house have sinned.*

Through the next several verses, Nehemiah keeps going over the fact that they have sinned, and he knows it. He is not saying, *Those guys did it*. He is saying, *I did it. We did it. We have let You down*. He is putting things before God Almighty in this very honest, humble way, seeking God's favor once again.

*11 O Lord, I beseech You, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and make Your servant successful today and grant him compassion before this man. Now I was the cupbearer to the king.*

Nehemiah was asking for God to be with him and bless him in his desire for God's people, God's land and God's purposes. Nehemiah wanted to do more and asked for the opportunity in this humble prayer to help and to show his faithfulness.

*Make Your servant successful today and grant him compassion before this man—he refers to the king as this man, in contrast to God, his true king. Grant me success before this man because I want to represent to him Your city and Your will.*



**Influencing Lesson:** Nehemiah's passion provoked him to pray to become an influencer. He prayed for the opportunity to go before the king, as God's will was more important than anything else.

## Nehemiah his OPPORTUNITY

**God's answer came, and the opportunity to be a God-honoring influencer was born!**

**Nehemiah 2:1–3:** *1 And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. 2 So the king said to me, Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart. Then I was very much afraid. 3 I said to the king, Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?*



There is a religious and a secular Jewish calendar. In the religious reckoning, Nisan is the first month and Chislev is the ninth. He has prayed about this for four months.

Nehemiah is sad because he is bearing the weight of the destruction of Jerusalem. Now his opportunity comes and he recognizes it immediately! He says, *Let the king live forever*, and then he explains, *Why shouldn't I be sad when Jerusalem is in such a desolated situation?*



**Influencing Lesson:** Four months after hearing of the issue, Nehemiah was given opportunity. He is a mere servant to the king, and yet he takes the first outward steps to becoming a great influencer for God Almighty.

There are so many wonderful details we are skipping over for time. During these long, sad four months, Nehemiah was preparing and calculating what would be needed so that IF the king would allow him to leave, he would be ready to go. The king gave him everything he needed to move forward with the project, including time off from his duties, construction materials and approval letters signed by the king, to allow him safe passage.

Nehemiah's character allowed the king to have complete confidence in him. When he showed the king his notes and preparation—not only laying out the problem but the solution—the king trusted him.

Nehemiah organized, led and inspired this rebuilding effort against great odds. He guided the people to work together on a seemingly impossible task and never relented. This is influence!

But it was noticed by enemies of Israel. This brings us to the next point of Nehemiah being our template as an influencer, because opposition and mockery developed. Nehemiah's response was to stand fast without wavering for even a moment.

**Here's our first hint of the danger and difficulty he would encounter with this work:**

**Nehemiah 6:2–9:** *2 Then Sanballat and Geshem sent a message to me, saying, Come, let us meet together at Chephirim in the plain of Ono. But they were planning to harm me. 3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you? 4 They sent messages to me four times in this manner, and I answered them in the same way.*

Nehemiah answers them, *“Oh, no! I'm not going to meet you in the plain of Ono because I am doing something much more important. I am doing God's work. I don't have time for you. I have a mission and I need to accomplish it!”*

**Next, those who stood against Israel would resort to the threat of “fake news”:**

*5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me in the same manner a fifth time with an open letter in his hand. 6 In it was written, It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu says, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel; therefore you are rebuilding the wall. And you are to be their king, according to these reports. 7 You have also appointed prophets to proclaim in Jerusalem concerning you, A king is in Judah! And now it will be reported to the king according to these reports. So come now, let us take counsel together.*

In other words, *If you don't stop the work and talk to us, this is what we're going to tell everybody—you are proclaiming yourself king in Judah.* They were desperate because they saw this individual inspire the people to devote themselves to this project, and they were threatened by it. So, they made up stories to bribe Nehemiah to come down from his work to stop the construction of the wall.

**Not even fake news could slow down the work:**

*8 Then I sent a message to him saying, Such things as you are saying have not been done, but you are inventing them in your own mind. 9 For all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking, They will become discouraged with the work and it will not be done. But now, O God, strengthen my hands.*

He was even more determined! Another trap was set by Nehemiah's enemies in **Nehemiah 6:10-14**. Through all adversity, Nehemiah would not let fear of any kind stop the work. He was uncompromising. He kept praying, leading and working. Praying, leading and working. The wall was completed in only 52 days!

**Nehemiah 6:16:** *When all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations surrounding us saw it, they lost their confidence; for they recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.*



**Influencing Lesson:** The focus of the influencer drives the focus of those who follow! When the influencer is so godly and so driven, there can only be wonderful results. Godly influence blesses those who are influenced.

*Nehemiah*  
the VICTORY

The work was done and everyone gathered together in the town square (**Nehemiah 8:1**).

**Ezra, the priest and scribe, brought out the book of the Law and read from it:**

**Nehemiah 8:9-10:** *9 Then Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep. For all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law.*

The people wept out loud hearing the Law because they realized how far off they had been. Ezra explained that today was a day of praise not of weeping.

*10 Then he said to them, Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*


Nehemiah and Ezra the prophet are working together to bring Jerusalem back to a habitable state. The people follow because their influence is so dramatic, powerful, godly and unrelenting. There was no compromise.





**Influencing Lesson:** Great influencers have the ability to give others a life-changing direction.

We all can't be a Nehemiah, but we can all apply the lessons of Nehemiah: his thoughtfulness, prayerfulness, his waiting for and seizing an opportunity and working through adversity in whatever the Lord would have us to do. We can all be influencers for God.



### Illuminating the power of influence:

While most of us may never have Nehemiah's kind of opportunities, we still need to follow the path he took. Our influence may not be seen in the world today, but it will be seen by our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus. We're not doing this to impress anybody; we're doing this to fulfill God's will in our lives.

### Influence question:

Are we studied, prepared, prayerful and ready to live godly influence in our daily experiences?

It doesn't matter who notices or how big or small the work is; it is what we do with what we are given. We all have the power of influence.

What is that in YOUR hand?

It may be something small and seemingly insignificant, but it may be a life-changing event. Maybe it can lift someone else up or can change things. By God's grace and God's spirit, God's will and God's providence, if we follow, we can influence for His glory—and that is the only thing worth influencing for!

**So, how can we become influencers?**  
**For Rick, Jonathan, Julie and Christian Questions...**  
**...Think about it!**

*All scriptures cited are from the NASB1995 translation unless otherwise noted.*



## Next episode

Episode 1330:  
Do the Covenants of God All Last Forever?



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### Bonus Material and Study Questions

#### Recommended additional study:

**Ep.1315: Is My Christian Judgment Tainted by Bias? (Part I)**

*Flushing out the many ways personal bias undermines our faith*

<https://christianquestions.com/society/1315-bias/>

**Ep.1293: Am I Playing the Social Status Game?**

*Understanding and rooting out the compulsive need for social status and position*

<https://christianquestions.com/society/1293-social-status/>

**Ep.997 and 998: How Do You Change Your World? (Parts I and II)**

*Principles from Nehemiah's story for effecting massive change*

<https://christianquestions.com/inspiration/997-change-world-part/>

<https://christianquestions.com/inspiration/998-change-world-part-ii/>



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- Who was Nehemiah?  
<https://christianquestions.com/cq-videos/videos-cq-kids/who-was-nehemiah/>

# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep.1329: How Can We Become Influencers? (Part II)

See:



<https://christianquestions.com/character/1329-influencer/>

1. What are some common characteristics the world seeks in its influencers? How is power implemented by an influencer? Contrast the patterns Jesus and Satan exhibit as powerful influencers. In what ways did the Apostles Paul and Peter influence others negatively and positively?
2. Who was Naaman? Why was it unusual for this little girl to want to help him? How was she an influencer? How can we be influencers for our brethren? How can we have confidence to speak up with hope even when you do not expect anyone to listen to you? (2 Kings 5:1-5, 2 Timothy 4:1-2)
3. Describe the rest of the story. How did Naaman feel about going to Israel and Elisha to be healed? What was his reaction to Elisha's way of handling his healing? Why did this change? What preconceived expectation of your own might keep you from accepting advice? What is a way we can help those who are struggling with anxiety or depression? (2 Kings 5:6-14, 1 Corinthians 1:26-29)
4. What was the Jerusalem conference? What were the arguments Peter used at the conference? What was the result? How will you speak up with godly and righteous direction even if you think you are not the best person to do this? How will you be sure to listen to others who earnestly offer their influence to you and consider their viewpoints? (Acts 15:5-11)
5. How did Moses respond to God's plan for him to rescue the Israelites? (Exodus 3:10-12, 4:1-5, 10-17)
  - a. How can we handle a mission as a godly influencer if it seems overwhelming?
  - b. *What is that in your hand?* This phrase assures us of what? (Exodus 4:1-5)
  - c. How would Moses *be as God* to Aaron? (Exodus 4:14-17)
  - d. If we are weak, what should our approach be? (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)
  - e. What opportunities can you look for, be it large or small, to be an influencer for godliness and use your talents for God?
6. What news did Nehemiah get that made him sad? How long did it take before his prayer yielded results? How did Nehemiah approach God? How did God answer Nehemiah's request to effectively approach Artaxerxes? How did Nehemiah prepare for this meeting? (Nehemiah 1:1-11, 2:1-3)
7. How did those who stood against Israel try to trick Nehemiah? What did they use to threaten him? How did Nehemiah respond? In what different ways was Nehemiah an influencer? (Nehemiah 6:2-16)
8. Why did the people weep after the wall had been finished? How were Ezra and Nehemiah influencers in this story? Why were they able to be influencers? How can we apply the lessons of Nehemiah? (Nehemiah 8:9-10)
9. Personally, what has to change in your life to prepare you to be a godly influencer? *What is that in your hand?*