

HARVEST Lesson 5: Growing Your Influence



Q: Are you excited about your faith? Would people know it by hearing you talk? Be honest! What would you say to someone who isn't as excited about their faith as they should be? What should we do about the times we aren't overflowing with joy? We have every reason to be excited, but over time life can get us distracted from the joy that we are offered in Christ. Tragedy, sickness, life change, busyness, relational issues, and stress can rob us of that joy and when we share our faith with others, it probably shows. It's not that we're ungrateful, we're just focused on whatever is causing us grief. No one's life is perfect, so it's important for us to keep our hearts and minds focused on God and His amazing grace shown to us. We should pray without ceasing and regularly thank God for the blessings to keep our hearts in check. Someone who isn't excited about their faith needs to be reminded of what God has done! Read **1 John 3:1a**.

Q: What's your greatest hindrance to telling others (or showing them) about God's love? We don't want to feel uncomfortable by making people feel uncomfortable. We fear that we will be rejected. We fear not knowing what to say. We make up all kinds of excuses, but in reality if our motivation is love, sharing your faith is an exciting opportunity that really can be lots of fun and very rewarding! Read **Isaiah 6:8** together.

Q: What are some of the most effective ways to get a message out to the world? Consider **2 Timothy 4:2-4**. Though the most meaningful communication happens directly from one person to another, there are many options today for sharing the Good News. Text, phone, Facebook, messaging apps, email, snail mail, singing telegram... Or the message can come in the form of a gift, time, an act of service, a hug, or some words of affirmation. The most effective communication happens when it comes from one individual to another.

Q: If you could do really well at one thing that would help other people, what would that one thing be? How could you grow in that area to become more proficient? If you want to grow your influence, use the passions and abilities that God has given you to use. What have people pointed out that you excel at? What gets you excited? Use this as a platform to share your story and your love for God. Use this question to be more of a reflective question or an action point for people to take the next step. Have them write it down and be sure to pray for everyone who wants to take a step of growth to live more fully for the kingdom of God. Review **Colossians 3:23**.

Q: What is the difference between discipleship and evangelism? Which one is more important? Evangelism focuses on walking someone across the line of salvation, which is something that we've been talking a lot about in the last few weeks. Discipleship looks at a lifetime of sanctification or spiritual growth; the pursuit of becoming like Jesus. Both are important. Both are essential. We must keep in mind, however, that salvation is just the first step in a person's life of following Jesus. We cannot pray with them for their salvation and leave them; instead we should walk along side of them and grow together! Reflect on **2 Timothy 2:1-7**.

Q: Hopefully you have identified some ways that you can grow your influence in the lives of those who do not know God. What can we do to encourage and inspire those in the church to grow in their faith? How do we grow our influence with in the church? Leadership, evangelism, and discipleship are all about influence which means that we need to be in close proximity to other people. If we want to help others in the church, we will need to align our lives with theirs through Bible Study, personal connection, discipleship, accountability, and as we serve together in ministry and outreach. The kingdom of God is at work in the Church as well as in the world and God needs workers to serve wherever He is producing growth. (*1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25*)

Q: In what ways have you seen God growing your influence? Who has God brought into your life to minister to? As you go through life you will grow in knowledge, hopefully in wisdom, and by God's grace you will grow in influence. We grow in influence just by meeting new people, developing relationships, and making time for fellowship. It might be through work, our family, or perhaps someone at the church. If we have one or two close acquaintances, it would be good for us to make them a priority and make an intentional effort to build into them, to speak truth and life into them, and to enjoy the blessing of friendship by being a good friend. Look at **Proverbs 17:17** and **18:24**. We can minister to complete strangers, but why not make an effort to be a blessing to those we love?

Q: If sharing our faith doesn't change God's love for us, why is it important? Read **Titus 3:3-8**. We share our faith out of gratitude for the amazing gift that He has given to us. We don't deserve it, but He has been gracious and merciful. Sharing our faith is a reminder not only to those we speak to, but also to ourselves of what God has done. It strengthens our faith when we are faithful show God's love to others and spread the Good News to those around us.

Q: Our group assignment is to reach out to at least three people. In what ways have you attempted to reach out? How was it received? How can we pray for you and for those you are seeking to reach? Be gracious with those who haven't started and encourage those who have. Celebrate the connections and be sure to pray together that the Spirit would do a great work in the lives of those you are ministering to. Ask for wisdom and discernment on how to reach them, and pray for God to soften their hearts to the truth. Please challenge everyone to follow through as much as they are willing.

Group Assignment: Share your testimony with at least three people.

Memory Verse:

Luke 10:2 - *"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

PRAYER REQUESTS: