

GRACE TRANSFORMS

WEEK 3

INFLUENCE

*“In the same way, let your light shine before others,
so that they may see your good works and
give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”*

Matthew 5:16 (ESV)

SERMON NOTES – INFLUENCE :: 1

TOPIC _____

SPEAKER _____ DATE _____

TESTAMENT OLD NEW SONGS/HYMNS _____

MOOD 😄 😊 😐 😞 😓 😴 _____

TODAY I AM GRATEFUL FOR _____

KEY POINTS _____ SCRIPTURES _____

NOTES _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What stuck out to you as you read this weekend's Scripture passages?

Did these verses raise any questions as you read?

Where do we see Jesus Christ in these verses?

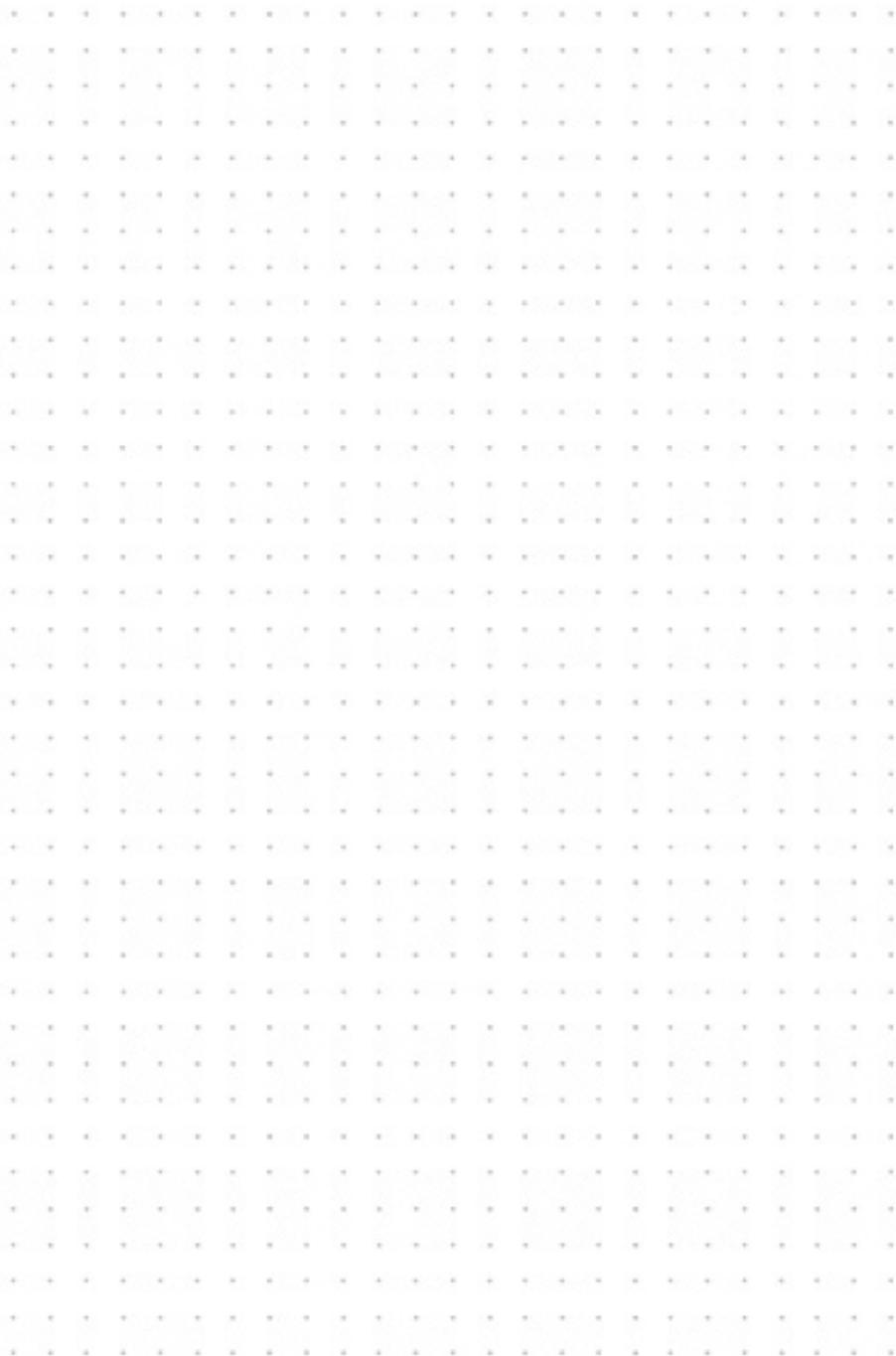
As you read this weekend's Scripture, ask yourself, "Are these verses...

1. teaching me something?"
2. telling me to stop doing something I am doing?"
3. correcting some wrong thinking or behavior?"
4. preparing me to live more effectively for him?"

Write down the name of someone who might benefit from hearing what you've seen in the Bible.

Why is this passage in this particular book of the Bible? What might the Bible lose if this passage was left out? What's the author's main point? *(Try to sum up your answer in one sentence.)*

JOURNAL



INTRODUCTION — INFLUENCE

Grace Transforms residents of earth into Citizens of Heaven who Influence for Jesus Christ.

The purpose of our church is to glorify God. The church is made up of people, which means the purpose of each of our lives is to glorify God. The Bible teaches that the residents of earth around us should be able to look at our lives as Citizens of Heaven and respond by glorifying God.

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
Matthew 5:13–16 (ESV)

We see this incredible life of influence happen by the power of the Holy Spirit working through a believer. During Paul’s ministry in Ephesus, we see clearly how after twelve Ephesians were transformed by the grace of God to believe in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit of God began to work powerfully through their lives to make them influencers for Jesus Christ.

“And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. There were about twelve men in all.” Acts 19:6-7 (ESV)

NEXT STEP :: *Are you living by the power of the Holy Spirit of God to be salt and light to those around you? Share your story of how grace is transforming you to influence for Jesus Christ.*

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 11 — INFLUENCE

Becoming More Like Jesus

Ephesians 5:1-21

After I had chosen to dedicate my life to Jesus, I had thought that I had stopped relying on the approval of my unsaved family.

After giving my life to Jesus, my family broke away from me, and some even began hating me. I felt the pain of their angry words and ugly judgments cut through my heart. Though I knew my family had no ground to stand on, I felt guilty and deserving of their behavior.

It wasn't until the next day when the Lord led me to Ephesians 5:1-21 that I began my journey.

I had a deep desire to change, becoming more like Jesus and less of me, by challenging myself to become the example of Christ's love for my family.

“Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children. And walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering in sacrifice to God.”

Finally, I began to realize I had to break away from my family due to their worldly perspective threatening my faith in Christ.

“Therefore do not become partners with them for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord...Look carefully then how you walk not as unwise but as wise making the best use of the time because the days are evil.”

After I finished reading my Bible, I headed to the church where I belonged.

NEXT STEP :: *Dear Lord, I give my all to You. Help guide me to become more like You.*

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 12 – INFLUENCE

Maintaining Your Personal Integrity

I Peter 2:11-12

As Christians, God calls us to live lives that are different than those that are of the world. Non-believers are watching us every day to see whether our faith truly makes a difference in how we conduct our lives. Early on, I realized that my own personal integrity was a reflection of my faith, and who I was in Christ.

I remember going to a store and purchasing some items. After I walked out, I realized that I had not been charged for one item. After some soul-searching (after all, who would know?), I decided that my integrity was not worth the cost of the item, so I returned and paid for it. I could tell from the cashier's expression that this does not happen very often, but I took the opportunity to tell him that my actions were because of my Christian faith.

During my 40-year career, I encountered many opportunities to compromise my reputation and personal integrity, including:

- Am I putting in a full 8 hours of productive work each day?
- Am I only claiming my actual expenses on my expense accounts?
- Does my language, speech and behavior reflect my faith?
- Am I honest in the use of company resources?
- Am I a man of my word by fulfilling my commitments and assignments?

Proverbs 22:1 tells us that “A good name is more desirable than great riches.” Make it your goal to glorify God through your personal integrity.

NEXT STEP :: *When tempted, ask yourself: “What is my personal integrity worth?” Realize that it takes a long time to build up your reputation, but only a moment to lose it. Look for opportunities to use your personal integrity as a witness to those around you. Lord, help me to live a life that is above reproach, and makes my faith attractive to others.*

Contributed by Gordon Ching

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 13 – INFLUENCE

Shining In The Darkness

Matthew 5:13-16

Imagine a world without salt and light! Have you ever served oatmeal or cornbread to your family without salt? Yuck! Have you ever had the electricity go out at your home at night and had to stumble about in darkness trying to find a flashlight or a candle? It's amazing the difference a little bit of salt can make when cooking; and even the smallest match when lit brings light to a room!

Those who listened to Jesus on this day were not the rich and famous. Those who listened were categorized by the religious rulers as "tax gatherers and sinners!" (Mark 2:15-17). This class of people would never have thought that their life might make a positive impact upon the world.

But Jesus changes that!

Salt when left in the shaker has no benefit until released. A flashlight produces no light in and of itself. The flashlight is useless until batteries are added and the switch is flipped, then suddenly light fills the room!

When one surrenders to Christ, and receives Him as their Lord and Savior, something new begins to happen. Christ's plan for us is that our good works, our lives, glorify our Heavenly Father (Matthew 5:16). When Christ is in us, and we surrender ourselves to Him in obedience, watch out! Even a cup of cold water, given in the name of Jesus, is useful in the hands of our Lord (Matthew 10:42). By doing so, we become salt and light to a needy and dark world.

NEXT STEP :: *Jesus calls us to live boldly for Him. Never underestimate the simple gesture of offering to pray for a coworker when you see they are in distress. Or the effect of a simple invitation to a visitor to sit with you in church or attend your small group social. Let's boldly let our joy in Christ be on display, glorifying our Father who is in heaven!*

Contributed by Lonnie Skiles, Pastor of Next Steps

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 14 — INFLUENCE

Influence Comes Out Of Overflow

Colossians 4:1-5

It is so incredible that God would choose to use us to share His truth and love with the world. We are chosen for His influence! In these verses, we are told how to act and speak... but we don't want to neglect the previous verses. In verse 2, we read, "devote yourselves to prayer." We must remember that to be an influence for Jesus, we first must spend time with Jesus. We need Jesus to spill out of our lives, in the way we act and the way we speak. But if we don't first fill up with Him—spending time with Him, talking with Him—we aren't really equipped to influence others for Him.

I also love how verse 4 says, "making the most of the time." Do you know that we are born here, now, in this time, on purpose! We must make the most of THE time—the time that we are given, however many days the Lord gives us! We must make the most of THE time—THIS age that we live in. We aren't here by mistake. There are people that Jesus loves, and He chose US to influence them, for Him, in this exact moment in time. Let's fill up with the Spirit, full to overflowing, and make the most of this time.

NEXT STEP :: *Lord, I ask for Your wisdom. Help me to know You deeper and deeper. Give me the eyes to see and ears to hear, so that I live out my days sharing Your amazing mercy and grace and love. Would You use me to influence someone in my life for Your glory today?*

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 15 — INFLUENCE

More Like Him

Philippians 1:6

I chose to become a prosecutor not for the money, but to help others, impact lives, and make the world a safer place. Eventually God called me to serve as a Justice Advisor in Afghanistan to establish Rule of Law. Upon my return, I joined a sports medicine company where my work focused mainly on making money for the company. I didn't have to work long hours, I was paid decently, and the work was not challenging. As I settled into a life of comfort and complacency, I knew deep down that God wanted something different for my life, but I wasn't looking for change. However, God doesn't call us to live an easy life.

An opportunity arose with the Christian Berets (a nonprofit organization for people with special needs) to become the Executive Director. I knew the job would challenge me in many ways and force me to step out of my comfort zone. After much prayer, I accepted the job. Each day God is growing my faith in me as I deal with different issues and overcome new challenges. I truly feel blessed to be in this role.

As Paul writes in Philippians, God's will is that each of us be transformed into the image and likeness of Christ, and we can only do this when we are walking in His will. As we submit to His leading, God uses those opportunities to shape and mold us as children of God and bring us closer to Him. We are a work in progress and are to carry out the work He has prepared for us to do for His glory, resulting in Christ living in us.

NEXT STEP :: *Is God calling you to step out of your comfort zone so He can continue the good works in you and draw you closer to Him? Dear Lord, thank You for loving and caring for me. Lead me where You want me to be and help me step out of my comfort zone so that You may complete the good work that You began.*

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____
