

Big Idea: Your influence comes from who you are, not just what you do.

Primary Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8

Supporting Scripture: Galatians 5:22-23; James 1:22

CAPTURE (Why should students pay attention to and care about your message?)

- Have you ever noticed how some people just seem to have influence without even trying?
 - Maybe it's that friend who doesn't have the biggest Instagram following, but when they recommend a song, suddenly everyone's playing it. Or that teammate who isn't the captain, but when they show up to practice, everyone else decides to actually try.
 - Maybe it's that person in your friend group who says, "We should get Chipotle!" and thirty seconds later, everyone's in the car heading to Chipotle... even though five minutes ago someone else suggested pizza and got completely ignored.
 - It's like they have this quiet power that doesn't come from being the loudest, the most popular, or even the most talented. It comes from something deeper.
 - And honestly... if you're the one who suggested pizza, you're probably wondering what just happened.
- When most people hear the word "influencer," they picture someone with a massive online presence. Someone with millions of followers, perfectly curated content, and a ring light that costs more than your car. Someone whose morning routine involves seventeen skincare products and a full camera crew.
 - What if real influence has nothing to do with any of that?
- Last week, we kicked off our ***Influencer*** series talking about where real influence begins. We discovered that before you can really lead anyone else, you have to know who you are in Christ.
- When you belong to Jesus, you become a *new person*... and that new identity is a gift, given to you by God, that allows you to move beyond the mistakes of your past.
- But once you know who you are in Christ, the next question becomes, what kind of *influencer* do you want to be?
- The question isn't whether or not you'll be an influencer. **You already are one.** The question is what kind of influence will you have?
- Influence isn't just about what you do... it's about who you are.

- The most powerful kind of influence comes from who you are... even when no one's watching.
- The Bible has a lot to say about the kind of influence that changes lives because it flows from **genuine character**.

SCRIPTURE (What does God's Word say?)

- Timothy was a young pastor, leading a church full of people who were older than him, and probably wondering if anyone would take him seriously.
- Maybe you've felt like you're too young for people to take you seriously. Like you don't have enough experience yet. Like maybe you should just wait until you're older to try to make a difference.
- The Apostle Paul didn't tell Timothy to just wait until he was older to be influential.

¹² Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. (1 Timothy 4:12 – NLT)

- Paul challenged Timothy to lead by example and to let his life do the talking.
- Age isn't the barrier to influence... character is.
- If you want people to follow you, don't focus on getting their attention.

Focus on being someone worth following.

⁷ And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. ⁸ Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us. (Titus 2:7-8 – NLT)

- It's not enough to just say the right things. Your life has to back it up.
- Paul was telling them to live in a way that even their critics couldn't find fault with. That's a high bar.

INSIGHTS (What might this Scripture mean?)

1. You can lead right now.

- Have you ever felt like people don't take you seriously because of your age? Maybe you've been told, "When you're older," or "You're just a kid," or "You're not ready yet."
- David was a teen when he defeated Goliath. Mary was likely a teenager when she carried and gave birth to Jesus. Most of the disciples were only teenagers when Jesus first called them to follow Him.

- In the Old Testament, we find the story of Josiah, who was only eight years old when he became king and helped turn an entire nation back to God.
- God doesn't need you to be more experienced or more confident. He just wants you to be faithful.
- Leadership doesn't start someday. **It starts today.**

2. Your life is your message.

- We become more like Jesus when our words, our actions, and our hearts match His.
- The Book of Acts tells us that Paul actually spent much of his life trying to keep the Church from spreading throughout the world, even going so far as to hunt down people who followed Jesus so that he could either arrest them or have them executed.
- After encountering Jesus, Paul's life changed dramatically because of what the Holy Spirit was doing in him.

²² *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! (Galatians 5:22-23 – NLT)*

- The Holy Spirit who **produces** this fruit. It's not something you can manufacture through willpower or effort.
- It's evidence that God is working in you.
- When the Spirit is shaping your character, your life *becomes* the message.

3. Lasting influence is built on integrity.

- Integrity means your *life* matches your *words*. It's being the same person in *private* as you are in *public*.

²² *But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. (James 1:22 – NLT)*

- When our lives don't match our words, people notice.
- When someone consistently lives with humility, integrity, and kindness, that kind of life draws people in.

ACTION (How could we live this out?)

1. Let your life match your words.

- This week, be brutally honest with yourself by asking one simple (but difficult to answer) question... "Where is my life not matching my words?"
- If you can admit there's an area where your life doesn't match your words, the next step is to bring it to God and commit to doing something about it.

- That might mean that you're going to have to make some tough decisions.
 - Have the tough conversation. Let go of the grudge. Delete the app. Ask someone you trust to hold you accountable. Change your routine. **Whatever it takes.**
- Real growth starts when we stop pretending and start dealing with what's actually going on.

2. Do the right thing... even when no one is watching.

- This week, do one act of kindness that no one will ever know about.
- Clean up a mess you didn't make. Leave an encouraging note for someone to find. Pay for someone's coffee or lunch. Help out around the house without being asked.
- Integrity isn't just about who you are when people are watching. It's **also** about who you are when they're not.
- Over time, you'll notice the person you are in those hidden moments is who's going to start showing up when people are watching. And that's the person they'll want to follow.