

- **Main Passage:** 2 Timothy 4:6-8
 - **Purpose:** To be a man of influence, you must be a man that has pointed your life in God's direction and remain committed to it. A man can never truly know how to live if you don't know how to die. In this session, we will walk through what it means to be a man of eternal influence.
 - **Session Snapshot:** The world's judgment of your influence is not going to matter much when your life ends, or the Lord comes back. What's going to matter is if that influence has been used to impact the Kingdom of God. Will you be a man committed to fighting the good fight, finishing your race, and keeping the faith?
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GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together by reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, remind your group that you're near the beginning of your five-session video series on influence. Remind your group that it's part of a larger study on what it means to pursue a masculinity that is centered in Christ.

As this is the second session with your group, make it a point to ask your group if they had any new thoughts after last week's session, or if they had any observations in the past week about what God is currently teaching them. If there are any newcomers, consider introducing yourself, if necessary, and having the men in your group introduce themselves. If you have any other housekeeping items, this is the time to share them.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, spend a moment in prayer, asking God to work through His Word to continue transforming the men in your group, working to make them more like Christ. Then, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, if necessary, remind the group of the basic structure of your time together. Explain that you will watch a video that is usually about 1.5 minutes long, followed by a short discussion of the video. Then, you'll spend a few minutes in Bible study, followed by an opportunity to accept the challenge to be more intentional about how compassion is lived out in our lives. Consider encouraging men to take notes as they watch the video.

THEN, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

When the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **In your own words, how would you define the word "influence"?**
- **Is there a man that personally influenced you the most to follow after Jesus? What is his name?**
- **What are some of the attributes you can name about him that made him a man of influence in your life?**
- **What were your first thoughts when Rick said, "You can never truly know how to live if you don't know how to die"?**
- **What tension did you feel when Rick began to compare the Apostle Paul, Paul Bear Bryant, and his grandma?**
- **Why does that tension feel personal?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **As we study 2 Timothy 4:6-8, let's be truthful to ourselves on how we are doing in leveraging our influence in every instance, location, and situation in our lives. We all have multiple opportunities to influence others each day. As we open the word together, let's consider those moments as our backdrop.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at 2 Timothy 4:6-8. Rick stated in the video, "So many men don't have the proper influence because they aren't willing to fight for it." That statement should cause us to pause, evaluate, and push us to dig into what we are fighting for with our influence.

Before jumping in, make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** Though in the last 200 years or so, there have been efforts by some scholars to shed doubt on Paul's authorship of both 1 and 2 Timothy, their arguments aren't very compelling.
- **Time frame:** Most scholars believe Paul wrote these letters to Timothy, his apprentice in ministry, between Paul's first and second imprisonment in Rome. However, some scholars believe that Paul penned 2 Timothy while in his final imprisonment before he was executed. By most accounts, this would place the writing of 1 and 2 Timothy sometime around 64–65 AD, though 2 Timothy could be as late as 67 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul tells Timothy in the first epistle to continue to combat false teachings. In addition, Paul gives Timothy specific instructions on how to protect against such teaching, including how to install faithful leadership in the church at Ephesus. 2 Timothy, we see Paul passing along his final words to Timothy. 2 Timothy can be thought of as a personal note from an old man awaiting his death to a young, son-like figure. It's personal, tender at times, encouraging, and practical.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read 2 Timothy 4:6-7. Lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **In verse 7, Paul says, "I have fought the good fight . . ." What is the "good fight" that Paul is speaking of, and why do you think he calls it a "fight"?**
 - Answer: The "good fight" is contending for the faith of the Gospel to be told to all humankind. Paul calls this a fight because the enemy - Satan and his demons - hate that you follow Jesus and are committed to being an influence for Him. We are in a constant spiritual battle, and we have a responsibility to fight for faith in every way.
- **Thinking still of verse 7, Paul is clear that we are in a fight. Rick said in the video, "So many men don't have the proper influence because they aren't willing to fight for it." In what ways are you fighting the "good fight" and in what areas do you struggle?**
 - Answers will vary based on experiences. Lead the men to think of each area of their lives. Challenge them to consider if they are utilizing each aspect of their lives as an influence for the Kingdom of God.
- **Paul continues in verse 7 saying, "I have finished the race." This is such a bold declaration! When you think of your influence over time, how does this part of verse 7 challenge you to finish? Rick asked the question that we all need to answer, "What makes you think you are the one that will finish?"**
 - Answers will vary based on experiences. You may want to give the men some time and space to consider the second question here. Have them write down why they think they will finish and what they could see in their lives as stumbling blocks they can already see. Spend time praying over them and that they would not stumble but trust the Lord in every step.
- **As we finish with verse 7, Paul says, "I have kept the faith." If there is anything in**

the world that is worth fighting for, it is faith. The audacity and boldness in fighting to keep the faith will create a larger Kingdom influence through you than you could have ever imagined. Are you willing to admit any areas in your life where you are wasting your influence?

- o Answers will vary by person. Challenge the men to consider what's in them right now that is not of God and is causing them to waste parts of their lives. Examples would include materialism, egotism, laziness, etc.

Before transitioning to the next question, say something like:

- **According to 2 Timothy 4:8, Paul knows exactly what is going to happen when he dies. He tells us the crown of righteousness awaits him. He is dying with no regrets because he fought the fight, finished his race, and kept the faith. He knows the Lord sees him and will honor him with a "well done."**

NEXT, ask the following questions:

- **How is Paul's influence still felt today?**
 - o Answer: We are still studying the words he said and the letters he wrote. He was bold enough, committed enough, and willing to fight so that the world, including you, would come to know Jesus as Savior.
- **Do you believe God can and wants to use you to influence the world around you? Why?**
 - o Answers will vary by person.
- **Read 1 Timothy 4:14-16. What are some words that stand out to you that also are tools for influence over time for you to fight your fight, run your race, and keep the faith?**
 - o Words or phrases that should stand out are, "Do not neglect the gift you have,"; "practice these things,"; "immerse yourself,"; "keep a close watch on yourself," and "by doing so will save both yourself and your hearers." Each of these phrases gives us tools to work with, accountable responsibility that results in Kingdom influence.

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on one main takeaway from this session. Say something like:

- **Even if we accomplish a lot of "things" that the world applauds and celebrates, the real challenge is, do you have the applause of the audience of one? As we wrap up our time here, there are a few different questions we can ask ourselves to challenge ourselves to be men of influence. Choose one to focus on applying to your life this week.**
 1. So many men don't have the proper influence because they aren't willing to fight for it. What needs to change in you for you to pursue fighting the "good fight"?
 2. Are you willing to do what it takes to become a man of God, committed to running the race the Lord has placed before you?
 3. Rick gave us examples of the Apostle Paul and Paul Bear Bryant. One gives us the challenge to utilize our lives for Kingdom purposes and the other for self-interest gains. One has a decaying statue built of him, and the other has made eternal influence to whole generations of people. Which one do you see yourself

modeling your life after? Are you will to ask for forgiveness and begin to do whatever it takes to keep the faith so that your life, at the end of your days, you have no regrets?

Give the group the space to consider where they find themselves on this spectrum of evaluation. If it feels appropriate, allow there to be some discussion about the kind of evaluation they find themselves considering.

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them, and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.