

May 11/12, 2024

"Influences"

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SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2024 Challenge: Finding Jesus in the Old Testament

May: Read the story of David to see how situations and events point to Jesus

Day 1 2 Timothy 3 | Influences

"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it." 2 Timothy 3:14

The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, a young leader in the early church. Paul mentors Timothy in ministry and drafts this letter to help Timothy as he leads the church in Ephesus. This section of the letter reveals those who have positively influenced Timothy's spiritual growth, as well as other influences Paul warns Timothy to avoid. He encourages Timothy to stay away from destructive influences and remember the truths taught to him by Paul and Timothy's family.

This week we will look at both the people who influence us and the type of influence God desires us to be for others. We will ask ourselves some important questions: Who do we want to be? Who are we becoming? How are we influencing those around us? As we do, we will see that Paul has incredible words of encouragement and challenge for us. Whether we realize it or not, we are both influenced by others *and* influencing others.

TODAY: As you begin this week, pray for openness. Ask God to reveal who is influencing you. Ask him for discernment about whether they are pointing you toward or away from Christ. Finally, ask him to help you see how you influence others. End your prayer by thanking him for his grace despite your shortcomings, and ask him to help you to grow.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read 1 Samuel 26-27. Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider the mercy David shows his enemy and his lack of retaliation.

Day 2 2 Timothy 3:1-5 | Destructive Influence

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. 2 Timothy 3:2-4

Paul describes how people will live in the "last days." Paul means the time between Jesus's life on earth and his future return. He says that in these last days, "People will be lovers of themselves." He roots a series of negative character traits in this one characteristic—loving oneself. Paul warns Timothy to be careful about such people and not to be influenced by them.

Paul's words to Timothy are important for us today, too. We may see ourselves somewhere in Paul's list in 2 Timothy 3:2-4. If we live for ourselves, we will become a destructive influence on those around us. Some of us might be more concerned about climbing the social or corporate ladder than being a good friend or treating our coworkers well. For others, we may be more concerned about pursuing our desires than being faithful to the

people and places God called us to. Instead, Paul encourages us to be people who love God and to avoid becoming like those who are lovers of themselves.

TODAY: Reflect on the list in 2 Timothy 3:2-4. Do you see yourself within it? Or, are there people in your life whose self-focus could be destructive to your spiritual growth? How can you exercise caution around them? Invite God to help you identify opportunities for growth in your life and for wisdom about how to create healthy relationships with those whose influence could be destructive.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read 1 Samuel 28-29. Highlight anything that points to Jesus.

Day 3 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 | Gospel Influence

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17

Paul constantly preaches and writes about Jesus and the gospel. He teaches that all have sinned and are alienated from God. Yet, Jesus died in humanity's place to pay the penalty for sin. What's more, to all who trust in him, Jesus gives his righteousness before God. Paul wants his readers to understand this and root their lives in this new reality and identity. This new identity should change everything and empower them to live in a new way.

The same is true today. The gospel holds the power to completely transform everything about us. Only the gospel could transform us from chasing after our own desires and hurting others along the way into a flourishing influence that builds others up. God wants us to influence others by giving them a taste of God's grace, hope, peace and love as they interact with us. This kind of transformation does not happen by simply trying harder or doing more. It's about returning again and again to what Jesus has done for us and fundamentally being transformed by his love and sacrifice through the power of the Holy Spirit.

TODAY: Reflect on the role of the gospel in your life. Consider if there is a step you need to take to root yourself more in the gospel. If you have never accepted the gift of Christ's death on your behalf, reach out to us at btw@adabible.org. We would love to talk with you.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read 1 Samuel 30-31. Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider David's victories over his enemies.

Day 4 2 Timothy 3:10-11 | Paul, Timothy and Influence

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance. 2 Timothy 3:10

Paul and Timothy know each other well. They spent a lot of time ministering together and Paul mentors Timothy in his faith and ministry. Paul invests in, teaches and trusts Timothy with significant responsibilities. Timothy knows how the gospel transformed Paul and how sincerely he follows God. So, in this letter, Paul urges Timothy to follow his example. To remember what Paul went through, but to focus on the gospel and following God rather than pursuing his own desires.

Paul was a significant influence in Timothy's spiritual development. We can all use a Paul in our lives, a spiritual mentor who can help us to grow. Our mentors will not be perfect, but they have learned some things as they anchored themselves in the Gospel. We should also identify people who can be a Timothy in our lives. Someone we can invest in, encourage, and walk alongside. Not because we are perfect, but because we have learned a few things as we pursue a deep relationship with Jesus, and we can help them do the same.

TODAY: Pray about who could be a Paul in your life. Then consider whether there is someone in your small group, someone who has influenced you in the past, or someone whose spiritual life you would like to emulate and reach out to them to start a conversation. Then pray about a Timothy. Could you help someone take important steps of faith? Ask God to reveal what a good first step is for growing that relationship.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read 2 Samuel 1-2. Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider David's lament for the loss of his enemy.

Day 5 2 Timothy 3:14-15 | Family Influence

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:14-15

Paul reminds Timothy that he has been taught the Scriptures from his youth. Earlier in the letter, he even points out the sincere faith and influence of his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice (1 Timothy 1:5). Timothy's mother and grandmother laid a spiritual foundation in his life. Eventually, Timothy grew to become a strong leader in the church. It all started with his family and the foundation they laid for him.

Family members have an incredible opportunity for spiritual influence. Moms, dads, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins can have a major impact on the spiritual development of their families. The challenge for us is whether we will be intentional with the influence we have. While our actions are not a guarantee, our influence could help lay a foundation for future faith. God used Eunice and Lois in Timothy's life, and he can use us in the lives of our loved ones, too.

TODAY: Evaluate your influence on your family. What is one thing you could do to be more intentional in your spiritual influence? It might be with children in your home, adult children or other family members. Ask God to help you grow your spiritual influence.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read 2 Samuel 3-4. Highlight anything that points to Jesus.