

October 19/20, 2024

"Influence"

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

2024 Challenge: Finding Jesus in the Old Testament

October: Read Daniel, Hosea, Joel and Amos to see how people, situations and events point to Jesus

Day 1 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 | Influence

The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it. 1 Thessalonians 1:8

The Apostle Paul successfully starts a church in Thessalonica. Even though his time there is short and he is driven from the town, a group of Jesus followers is established. It appears it is not long before news of this church spreads across a wide region. Even though they didn't have much experience with Jesus, word spread about their deep faith in Jesus. It spreads in a world with no TikTok, no internet and only primitive forms of communication (mostly word of mouth). All through the region, people know about the Thessalonians' faith in Jesus and how they placed their faith and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins.

The truth is, we will all be known for something. The only question is, "What do you want to be known for?" Whether we realize it or not, we influence those around us. People see us, hear us and ultimately imitate us. This is true for both extroverts and introverts. Because people imitate us, we have opportunities to point people to Jesus. This week, we'll discover practices that increase our spiritual influence and can lead people to Christ.

TODAY: Think seriously about the question, "Who am I influencing?" Think about areas where you have influence—family, work and community. Identify one relationship and one step you can take this week to be more intentional about spiritually influencing this relationship. Write that step in your journal and ask God to help you take action this week.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Hosea 9-10](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Note how Israel is described as a fruitful but rebellious vine. Consider how Jesus is the true and faithful vine and grows good fruit in his people ([John 15:1-5](#)).

Day 2 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 | Evidence of Faith

We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

The church Paul started in Thessalonica is known for their work, labor and endurance. This evidence of their faith grew from their faith in the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit. They were not trying to earn their salvation but demonstrate it. Paul writes about this same thing to the church in Philippi: "...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" ([Philippians 2:12-13](#)). Faith is not just intellectual belief but changes in behavior. Their faith in Jesus impacts how they live.

The same is true for us. Our faith and trust in Jesus should change how we live. Our lives will look different when we partner with the Holy Spirit, who is at work in us. People should see our faith in Jesus. We will no longer hang out with the "gang" to go out drinking. We will no longer live in anger but grow in patience, kindness and forgiveness. In these areas and many more, our faith can be a powerful spiritual influence as it leads to action that is seen by others. When it is, others can see Jesus and discover what it means to follow him.

TODAY: Ask God to help you "work out" your salvation and for growing evidence in your life of your faith in Jesus. Memorize [Philippians 2:12-13](#) to help you take your next steps.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Hosea 11-12](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider how God loves Israel and calls them his son despite their rebellion. Consider how Jesus is God's beloved Son who is entirely faithful ([Matthew 3:16-17](#)).

Day 3 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8 | Suffering Joyfully

You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

From the moment Paul and his team start the church in Thessalonica, the Thessalonians pay a heavy price for their faith. Jealous Jews recruit some "bad characters," form a mob and begin a riot. Not finding Paul or Silas, this mob drags a man named Jason and other believers before local officials, where they eventually have to post bail to be released ([Acts 17:1-9](#)). Paul describes what they received as "severe suffering" ([1 Thessalonians 1:6](#)). But the amazing thing about this suffering is that they received it with joy, through the power of the Holy Spirit. By doing so, they become a model to other believers.

This joy doesn't come from the power of our gritted teeth and mustered endurance. Joy in suffering comes through the Holy Spirit. We have a choice in our suffering. We can grow bitter, angry or disillusioned. Or, we can turn to God and, through the power of the Spirit, receive his joy in suffering. How we endure suffering affects others. No matter what we face, we have the option to repeatedly turn to God. When we choose the joy the Holy Spirit offers, it impacts other believers and provides opportunities for those who don't know Jesus to ask us questions.

TODAY: Where are you struggling and need God's joy in suffering? Bring this to God. Pray, "Father, I am suffering with _____. I need your joy in this area today. Help me to be joyful when _____. Thank you."

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Hosea 13-14](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Observe the promise of restoration and blessing. Reflect on how Jesus brings ultimate restoration ([Revelation 21:5](#)).

Day 4 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10 | Turn from Idols

For they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. 1 Thessalonians 1:9

For the new believers in Thessalonica, turning to God also means turning away from something. In most cases, it means turning away from idols. In the ancient world, nearly everyone worshipped the Greek and Roman gods. Their society revolved around the temples of these gods: the sacrifices, festivals and rituals. People believe the gods are the ones who protect and bless them. When people come to faith in Jesus, they turn from gods like Apollo (god of youth, beauty and health), Asclepius (god of medicine and healing) and Poseidon (god of sea and rivers). They place trust in God for their salvation and daily needs.

When we turn to Jesus for rescue and salvation, we also turn from idols. Our idols are not made of marble and wood. But they are things we think can rescue us, save us, fill us and give ultimate meaning. We might idolize success or wealth and think they provide security. We might idolize power and believe it can save and protect us. We might idolize love and relationships thinking they bring meaning. Our idols can be anything we look to fill our emptiness, find security or fulfill us. Turning from idols is something we do every day as we follow Jesus and put our trust in him alone.

TODAY: Thank Jesus for rescuing you from the idols you used to follow. Join the Ada Bible worship team as they sing "[What a Beautiful Name](#)." Use the lyrics to form the basis for your prayer, "You have no rival, you have no equal." Thank God that Jesus alone can save you and give your life purpose and meaning.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Joel 1](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus.

Day 5 Acts 1:8 | Testimony

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

Moments before Jesus leaves earth and ascends to heaven, he gives his disciples a final charge. Jesus tells his followers they will be witnesses to what they experienced with him. They are to go into the entire world and share what Jesus has done for them. Being a witness means they testified to the truth. They gave a testimony, a story, that tells the truth of Jesus.

We are also witnesses for Jesus with a story about his work in our lives. Our testimonies have incredible potential for spiritual influence. We know this because other people's stories affect us deeply. Our small group members' faith can deepen as they hear how we turned to trust Jesus, not our achievements. Our friends may choose Jesus for themselves when they hear how he rescued us from a deep struggle or heartache. Our kids may make faith in Jesus their own as they hear our stories of growing to trust him in challenges and everyday life. Our faith stories are our most powerful tool for spiritual influence. God calls us to testify to Jesus's saving work in our lives.

TODAY: You can tell your story in three simple parts: before Jesus, how Jesus rescued you, and your life with Jesus now. Not every story includes dramatic rescue. We all have been saved by Jesus, who died on the cross for us. Ask God for opportunities to share your story. One opportunity will be with the church. You can share your story with us at adabible.org/stories.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Joel 2](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Note the promise of the Spirit. Think about how Jesus fulfills this promise at Pentecost ([Acts 2:16-21](#)).