

Influence 2022 Pt. 4

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, May 22 and 29, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us! Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream, you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you desire. We have much to cover in a short space of time.

SUMMATIONS

In recent weeks we have identified three levels of influential relationship that should be present in our lives...

1) Mentee Relationship – Relationships in which we allow other people to pour into and influence our lives. Connections in which we serve as students or proteges in relation to worthy mentor figures. In this context, we are the influenced.

2) Mentor Relationship – Relationships in which we are allowed to pour into and/or influence others. Connections in which we serve as the mentor to proteges, wherein we serve as figures of impact. In this context, we are the influencer.

3) Mutual Relationship – Peers for the journey characterized by interdependent connection. In this scenario, there is a mutual degree of influence.

Q1. To what degree are these levels of relationship present in your life?

Q2. In what area are you the strongest? In what area are you the weakest?

KEY 1 – This morning I would like hone in on the MENTEE relationship in particular...

KEY 2 – A relationship in which we are mentored by trusted and worthy voices of influence.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MENTORS PT. 1

Mentors are critical in our development. We require cultivation by more experienced individuals. For instance: a) children learn from their parents; b) students learn from teachers and professors; c) athletes are developed by their coaches; d) workers are trained by supervisors; and e) young Christians glean from the wisdom, example and investment of more established believers. In fact...

KEY – You will need a mentor(s) if you are to become the fully-formed man or woman God has called you to be.

ILL. – This is also something you will never outgrow. Consider Nick Fatato with the amazing George McDonald!

Heeding godly voices of influence can set you on a trajectory unto spiritual growth, vibrancy and vitality. However, entertaining ungodly influences in life can prove catastrophic. In fact, do you realize that every problem humanity has ever known (e.g., disease, war, fracture, etc.) and the problem of sin itself is directly tied to an incident wherein two people regarded the wrong voice of influence? Consider the following...

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MENTORS PT. 2

Genesis 3:1–7 (NIV, The Idyllic Eden w/ One Condition)

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

NOTE 1 – It is interesting how the serpent (i.e., inspired by Satan) presents itself as a voice of influence herein. Consider it was he who initiated the dialogue (1b). Consider how he sought to establish himself as a credible voice of influence by casting doubt on the word and character of God (1c, 4–5).

NOTE 2 – Tragically, both Adam and Eve entertained this voice of satanic influence. Eve considered his remarks, accepted them as truth and responded in kind (i.e., submitting to his instruction and authority). Adam also caved to the sinister operation of this influence by joining Eve in eating the forbidden fruit.

Q1. What should have happened?

A. Rejection of the ungodly voice and a pitchfork through its head!

Q2. What ultimately happened?

A. Humanity became a rebel race subject to the power and penalty of sin.

KEY – Consider the voices of influence you entertain. Not everyone is a suitable mentor-figure in life and living.

KEY QUESTIONS

This raises some key questions...

Q1. What should I look for in a mentor figure?

Q2. What qualities should be present in allowed V.O.I.?

Q3. To whom should I offer myself as a relational “mentee”?

KEY – Born of Scripture and personal experience, allow me to put forth the following A’s...

CRITERION #1

To begin, the first thing you should look for in a potential mentor is a proven and consistent Christian lifestyle. If you are going to permit someone to speak into your life, it is essential that they exemplify a pattern of living that makes them worthy of that role.

NOTE 1 – The Bible is clear that we are not to judge (Matt. 7:1). However, we have permission to assess fruit....

Matthew 7:15–20

15 “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”

NOTE 2 – This is why the NT is clear re: what type of person should be given influence over the local church.....

1 Timothy 3:1–7

1 Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. 2 Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. 7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.

Q. What type of fruit should we be looking for in the lives of potential mentor-figures?

Galatians 5:22–23a (Emphasis Mine)

22 . . . the **fruit** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.

NOTE 3 – Of course, this does not mean you should only regard perfect individuals. Such an attitude would have led to the disqualification of Paul himself in the mentoring of Timothy and Titus! After all, Paul claimed that he had not fully “arrived” in his walk with the Lord (cf. Phil. 3:12a). However, you should look for a Christian life worthy of emulation (i.e., a man or woman who could sincerely share the following with you)...

Philippians 4:9a

9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice.

1 Corinthians 11:1

1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

KEY – Your mentor cannot lead you to something they do not possess. If they are not obedient unto the Lord, they will not instill faith-filled obedience in you! Be wary and watchful of any aspirational example and consider that the manner of their life reflects, radiates and demonstrates Christ Jesus.

CRITERION #2

Secondly, let us address matters of motivation. If I am going to allow someone to serve as a voice of influence, I need to be concerned with their intentions. Men and women are motivated by a great many things: good, bad and ugly!

NOTE 1 – We often think of the Apostolic Church as the Golden Age of Christianity and rightly so (cf. Acts). However, the Early Church had its fair share of issues (e.g., doctrinal disagreement, divisions and divides, racial enmity and ethnic clash, etc.). Thus said...

NOTE 2 – One of the most rampant problems in the Early Church was the presence of false teachers motivated by impure motives! I do not have the time to fully evidence this reality, but note that much of the NT was penned to counter the sinister influence of such figures.

NOTE 3 – Figures like Paul, Peter, John and Jude all address them...

Q. What motivated these false teachers?

1) PRIDE – Some within the Early Church sought title, rank and station to satisfy their own ego (i.e., pride)...

1 Timothy 1:1–7 (Emphasis Mine)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

2 To Timothy my true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer 4 or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. 5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. 7 **They want to be teachers of the law**, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

2) GREED – Some within the Early Church sought a position of power for the purpose of material gain...

2 Peter 2:1–3, 13–14 (Emphasis Mine)

1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. 2 Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. 3 In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. . . . 13 They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. 14 With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in **greed**—an accursed brood!

KEY 1 – There will always be leaders in the Church motivated by pride or dishonest gain...

KEY 2 – However, there will also always be saintly people who are altruistic in their intentions...

- 1) Those Who Seek to Invest Born of Love for God
- 2) Those who Seek to Invest Born of Concern for You
- 3) Those Who Seek to Invest Born of Comm. to the G.C.

KEY 3 – Treasure and regard those who seek your well-being in Christ Jesus. Consider the following...

1 Thessalonians 5:12–13

12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

CRITERION #3

Thirdly, look for mentor-figures who are willing to share their lives with you.

NOTE 1 – I put forth that the apostle Paul operated as among greatest mentor-figures to ever walk the earth. Consider the degree to which Paul was willing to share life...

1 Thessalonians 2:1–8 (Emphasis Mine)

1 You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. 2 We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. 3 For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. 4 On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. 5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. 6 We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. 7 Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, 8 so we cared for you. **Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.**

NOTE 2 – I would put forth that Christ operated as the greatest mentor to ever walk the planet. Though He had many followers at the peak of His ministry (i.e., the masses, etc.), He maintained an intimate band of immediate followers: the Twelve; the Three...

NOTE 3 – Consider the degree to which these men were invited to share life with Jesus: **a)** He invited them to consider the intimate interpretation(s) of public parables (cf. Matt. 13); **b)** He invited them to see the operation of His power when others were put out (cf. Mark 5); **c)** He allowed them to see His glory at the Transfiguration (cf. Luke 9); **d)** He even let them see Him in the moments of His deepest distress (cf. Luke 22). Such access proved pivotal in their spiritual formation!

KEY – Look for those who will share their lives with you (i.e., giving you access, time and investment).

CRITERION #4

Fourthly, look for a mentor who will offer necessary challenge and correction.

NOTE 1 – It is easy to gravitate to voices of influence that will only ever coddle you. However, such figures do you no favors by blowing smoke and celebrating your greatness! In fact, they are doing you a great disservice. Rather, you need men and women who will challenge, correct and rebuke when necessary! Consider...

Proverbs 27:6

6 Wounds from a friend can be trusted,
but an enemy multiplies kisses.

NOTE 2 – Let us consider a few selections from the Gospel of Matthew...

1) Matthew 16 Pt. 1

Matthew 16:13–17 (Discomforting Queries)

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

2) Matthew 16 Pt. 2

Matthew 16:21–26 (Necessary & Public Rebuke)

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” 23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

KEY – We need mentors like Jesus who will call us out when we are amiss.

CRITERION #5

Finally, look for a mentor-figure who sees the potential resident within you...

NOTE 1 – Consider the following selection from the life of a key figure named Simon...

John 1:35–42 (In the Midst of JTB’s Ministry & Post-Baptism of Christ)

35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” 37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?”

They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

39 “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

40 Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter [i.e., rock or stone]).

NOTE 1 – I like to preach that Jesus could see the Peter through the Simon. Despite significant character flaws that would become exceedingly evident with time, Jesus Christ could see the finished product within Simon (i.e., and worked to bring it out in kind)!

NOTE 2 – Michelangelo was once asked how he was able to craft such beautiful marble sculptures. His reply was profound: “The sculpture is already complete within the marble block, before I start my work. It is already there, I just have to chisel away the superfluous material.”

NOTE 3 – A genuine mentor sees the finished work of God in you long before you do! They function in the Lord to help remove the superfluous material through the work of the Spirit. Christ could see the “Peter” in Simon! Who sees your potential? Who has God given insight re: your life and living? Who can speak to your potential and strategically work to bring out the best in you through Christ Jesus?

SUMMATIONS

Q1. What should I look for in a mentor figure?

- A1.** Those with a Proven Lifestyle
- A2.** Those with Godly Motivation(s)
- A3.** Those Willing to Share their Lives
- A4.** Those Who Correct and Challenge
- A5.** Those Who See Resident Potential

Q2. Where can such figures be found? Where do I even begin to look?

- A.** They are likely already present in your life. Family or Church Community.

CONCLUSION

NOTE 1 – Those who wish to give online may do so at www.NewLifeBarre.org. Those who wish to give in person can utilize the offering boxes located throughout the church facility. Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting this local work of Christ.

NOTE 2 – Please check out the website for the calendar of upcoming events and more.

NOTE 3 – Also, congratulations to our High School Graduates! May the Lord bless you as your ‘journey’ begins!

NOTE 4 – I would like to invite you to attend the Memorial Day observances in Barre (or in your hometown). Join us as we take the time to commemorate those who have given their lives in service to this nation, starting at 9am tomorrow morning quite literally across the street in front of the apartment complex!