



JESUS ON... INFLUENCE

RMPP EVENT 39

SCHEDULE

Welcome and Zoom Etiquette

Opening Prayer

Speaker Introduction

Message: *Jesus On...Influence*

Q&A and Discussion

Breakout Rooms

Closing Prayer

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JESUS ON... INFLUENCE

SYNOPSIS

In today's society, many people strive for influence; some will do whatever it takes to achieve it. But as followers of Christ, you don't need to strive to be influential; instead, you are to steward well the influence you already have. Are you a good steward of your influence within your marriage, family, friendships, and work relationships?

| **Audio Link:** <https://bit.ly/3SPel4t>

| **Scripture Reflection**

In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. - Matthew 5:16 (NLT)

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. - Colossians 3:17 (NLT)

EVENT

39

| *Personal Reflection*

1. What thinking patterns do you need to change to steward better the influence you have?
2. What practical steps can you take, either on your own or with a close friend/confidant, to help you consistently steward your influence well?

| *Personal Application*

1. What current platforms do you have to influence others? List them on a piece of paper.
2. Now that you have your list write down specific ways you can influence each of those platforms in a way that reflects Philippians 4:8.

| *Recommended Reading*

Character Matters: *by Dr. Mark Rutland*

The Crucified Life: *by A.W. Tozer*

A WORD FROM...

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

I still remember the day when a friend of mine made the following comment, “Be a good steward of your influence because we all have it.” Those words hit me like a rock because it challenged the way I viewed myself. For many years, I would tell myself that I did not influence people because I don’t “have this” or “possess that.” I grew up thinking that influence resulted from success, and since I wasn’t successful in the world’s eyes, I didn’t have influence. This wrong thinking and perspective stayed with me in different capacities until my friend said what he said. That night, God used him to help me see that I (and you too!) have influence. The question we need to ask ourselves isn’t whether we have influence but whether we are good stewards of the influence we already possess.

Even today, I struggle occasionally to be a good steward of influence. I can often let my emotions and feelings get in the way of good stewardship, and I sometimes find it easy to revert to past thinking and behavior. But regardless of how the day goes or how we feel, we must remember that we have influence and that others are watching us - not sometimes, but all the

time. As the Bible says,

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. - Titus 2:7

Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world. - 1 Peter 2:12

Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did. - 1 John 2:6

With this event, we have the opportunity to learn about influence, how to wield it, guard it, and use it for God's good purposes. As men of God, let us be good stewards of the precious gift of influence that we have, and may the devotionals within this booklet encourage us and help us in doing so.

Christian Lent

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

DEVOTIONAL 1

The Bible tells us we have influence, but what does that mean exactly? Is it for some or all? And is it sometimes or all the time?

About 8 years ago, while I was walking up the stairs that led to the back of a ministry center my family and I helped to pioneer in Bangkok, Thailand, I was feeling pretty discouraged and frustrated because it felt like our team wasn't seeing visible results from our ministry to our neighbors. It seemed as if years of effort weren't really adding up to anything of significance. Then a quiet voice—maybe they were my own thoughts—but I really felt it was God himself speaking to me: “Iven, do you want to be significant?” I thought to myself, “YES!!” However, I was in a negative mood, so I right away complained that unfortunately, I was the opposite. The voice continued, “You already have significance. You will always be a most significant person in the lives of your children. It's not a matter of choosing whether or not you are significant. The only choice is whether it will be a positive significance or a negative significance.”

At that point, I knew immediately that I needed to repent and change my perspective about how I thought and how I lived. I was whining and fixating on whether or not the work I was doing amongst my neighbors was having lasting results so that I could look good and feel like I was doing something meaningful. However, during that time of my life, I was also genuinely neglecting to give attention to my growing family. Here I was, hoping to change the lives of others while being completely oblivious of the chance I was given to influence the lives of those closest to me. (Note: This same principle applies whether or not you have children. Are you giving your best to those whom God has already entrusted you with true influence, and not just like the short-term effect of a sound-bite?) Turns out that even in the midst of seeking to do good I had neglected what was mine to do.

What is ours to do, and what does that have to do with influence? Scripture is very clear that from the very first days of God's relationship with men and women (before sin entered the picture), He has given us meaningful work to do. We are to steward, tend to, care for and protect our immediate sphere of influence (Genesis 2:15). In time, this influence could be extended to the peoples and even nations around us.

The Lord chose a particular family to work through when he

told Abraham, “I will bless you... I will make your name great... all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:2,3). Later, God said that He had chosen Abraham so that he could “direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him (Gen 18:19).” What was Abraham chosen to do? To influence his most immediate circle in the ways of God by doing what was right and just. Many of us may have already heard that when Jesus was resurrected, He instructed His followers (including us) to teach everyone everywhere to obey all of His commands (Matthew 28:20). But do we obey these commands ourselves? What are some of these commands?

When God became one of us in order to show us exactly what His ways were, we saw some of Jesus’ closest students, the equivalent of his household, asking that they might have the most significant places of influence in the coming Kingdom of God. Jesus responded by saying, “Whoever would be first among you must be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:44, 45).” In addition, not long before he was crucified Jesus spoke some very sharp words concerning those who like to influence others but don’t have lives that match their words (see Matthew 23!).

And on the night that he was betrayed, Jesus, who had all authority in heaven and earth chose to wash the feet of his disciples, which was the job of the servant, not the job of a teacher or influencer. Moreover, he told them to do likewise, saying, “I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you (John 13:15).” Then at the same meal he continued: “Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples (John 13:34-35).” A little later in the conversation he said that if we love Him, we will obey His commands and that the only thing we have to do to bear much fruit is to stay intimately connected to Him. And when we obey His command to love one another, we are doing exactly that. (John 14 and 15).

There is a Thai phrase that says your life speaks louder than your words. Those who are closest to you know whether or not you are doing this. Will you love those around you, even when no one else can see you? Will you trust that by doing what is right and just and loving, you will be setting yourself up to bear much fruit?

Iven and his family were in Bangkok, Thailand, for many years but now live in the Pacific Northwest of the USA.

| **Discussion Questions**

1. Would you rather have a larger sphere of influence or would you prefer to just live in a world where “you do you” and don’t have to worry about how you are influencing those around you? Why?
2. Is it harder for you to imagine “teaching everyone everywhere to obey Jesus’ commands” or to practice obeying them yourself?
3. Are you seeking to love the neighbors who are farther from you while neglecting to love your closest neighbors, maybe your roommates or family members? What is one thing you could do today to demonstrate love to one who is closest to you?

| **Read**

Matthew 23:12

| **Reflect on This**

“The more you manifest a servant’s heart in all you do, the more of an impact you’ll have on people’s lives.” - *Jim George*

DO I ALREADY HAVE IT?

DEVOTIONAL 2

Is influence something you earn, dependent on your occupation, or an opportunity God gives you?

“All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned - put together - have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one, solitary life. . . (from the poem ‘One Solitary Life,’ attributed to James Allen Francis).”

Other than Jesus Christ, how influential is “one solitary life?” I’m sixty-nine years old. I’ve had fourteen unique job positions in four different career paths. I’ve been involved in various aspects of Christian ministry, and now I’m retired from working full-time. Do I have influence? Have I been influential to those around me?

Looking back over my professional career, I think most of those observing me knew I took pride in my work. But in the eternal scheme of things, I don’t think my influence left much

of a lasting impression. Probably because I wasn't very close with my co-workers, and didn't spend much time with them outside of work. My Christian friends knew me a little better, being able to observe my character to some extent, but there were still things I kept hidden behind a façade: "an outward appearance maintained to conceal a less pleasant reality."

It wasn't until I began to meet with men individually and in small groups, that I noticed others sharing openly about things in their lives they continued to struggle with. I also observed positive character traits I wished to emulate. I was being influenced in a positive way, desiring to be a man pleasing to God; to be a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). As I've gotten older and more mature in my faith, God has given me greater opportunity to positively influence those around me.

How can one ensure he is leaving behind an influence that is pleasing to God, that glorifies Him, and is in line with His purposes? Is influence something you can earn - obtaining it in exchange for something you do? Not really. It's like saying you want to be humbler! You can't choose to be humbler. Humility is a character trait observed by others - something that naturally "shines forth" from a character and lifestyle demonstrating that trait. Likewise, godly influence

will naturally “shine forth” from a character and lifestyle demonstrating godly character. Although influence is not specifically listed as a “fruit of the Spirit,” the characters listed in Galatians 5:22-23 enable one to influence others in a godly manner. As we grow in intimacy with God, His Word, and in obeying the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will naturally influence others in a godlier way.

Is your influence dependent upon your occupation? Not really. If you are living in obedience to Jesus, He places you where He wants you to be. And He surrounds you with those He wants you to influence! Only you can uniquely influence those individuals God has brought into your life - family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and anyone else you can think of. How you influence others, though, is dependent upon how you live your life.

Are you influencing others in a godly way? Ask them! You can also evaluate your impact on others by comparing your behavior and lifestyle with that described in God’s Word. Galatians 5:22-23 is a good place to start.

Is it too late to leave a positive impact? No! It’s never too late with Jesus. So how can you improve the quality of your influence on others? Begin by telling God this is what you desire. Try to spend time in God’s presence throughout the

day. Not just in reading His Word and prayer, but by keeping Him in your thoughts. As you become more intimate in your relationship with God, little-by-little His thoughts will become your thoughts, and His desires will become your desires. And you will become a man after God's own heart.

You'll be surprised when people come up to you and tell you you've been a positive impact on their lives. Not so much that they want to be like you, but that they want to be like Jesus. Actually, this shouldn't really surprise you, because this has been God's plan all along!

Roger and his wife are retired and living in Thailand. They are members of Evangelical Church of Bangkok. Greatly blessed by God, Roger desires to be used by Him to assist others in walking with Jesus. Roger's passion is Christian discipleship through understanding God's Word and applying it to everyday living.

| ***Discussion Questions***

1. Up to this point in your life, what do you think has been your impact on those around you?
2. How would you like your influence upon others to change?

| ***Read***

Matthew 5:14-16

| ***Reflect on This***

“The serene beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world next to the power of God.” - *Blaise Pascal*

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT IT?

DEVOTIONAL 3

Is influence something that you choose to accept or reject? What is the blessing of acceptance and the consequence of rejection?

In the world we live in today we are bombarded by influences from every angle. In fact, in 2023 alone, \$656 billion dollars was spent globally on advertising, with 64% of that being spent on digital ads. That's a hefty investment in order to influence you to buy their products or visit their stores. There's even a whole professional sector online called digital influencers which aims to influence audience behavior.

As Christians, we are meant to be influencers. Jesus calls us salt and light in Matthew 5:13-16, that we may glorify our Father in heaven. You don't need to have a degree or spend billions of dollars trying to be an influencer. In fact, you already have a ready audience at home and at your job. The only things needed are the Holy spirit and a desire to live a holy life.

When I was a new Christian back in 2009, I went to work and stayed with an uncle who was a born-again believer. Before he came to Christ, he was a rough and tough construction worker who drank, partied and lived a life that most would consider normal. As I worked and lived with him, it was amazing to see this man sincerely living the life of a Christian. He was so foreign to the man I used to know that I watched him intently to see how he was able to live this way. He had turned his old life around 180 degrees that he was unrecognizable to anyone who knew him previously. He held daily Bible studies with his buddies, prayed always, relied on the Holy Spirit to guide him, and searched the Scriptures so he always had an answer to anyone who asked about the hope that was in him. He was both a model and inspiration for me, a young man desiring to leave a life of sin. I saw firsthand someone who walked the walk and talked the talk.

I wish I could tell you that transformation came as easily as it did to my uncle. My life had been full of ups and downs and failure upon failure as I tried to change. Instead of being influenced by that godly man, I continued to be influenced by my own fleshly desires since I never really surrendered myself fully like my uncle had. Our ever-loving and patient God let me go my own way until I was finally broken enough and ready to fully submit to Him. I looked back and tried to remember the lessons I learned from my uncle. Later, I found a group of

men looking to live a pure life and we built ours on the solid foundation of prayer and Bible study. Fourteen years later, I still apply the lessons I learned from my uncle to my daily walk with God. I strive to be a godly influence on those around me. Whether you think you are an influencer or not, there are three groups that you already have access to:

- 1) Your inner circle, such as family and close friends.
- 2) Your intermediate circle, like coworkers or classmates.
- 3) And your outer circle, consisting of social media friends or acquaintances.

Every time we act or say something, we are pointing people towards Jesus Christ or to the world. Choose to stand for righteousness and influence all you can for Jesus. How do you do this? How do you live a spirit filled life where you can be an influencer? The Holy Spirit alone has the power to make the changes God wants to make in your life. We must be influenced by Him if we want to make an impact on others. Start by getting into God's word daily.

Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Think about the words you're about to speak. Do they glorify God and testify that you are his, as

written in Ephesians 4:29, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

When I’m at work I constantly have to remind myself of that verse along with many other wise words from the book of Proverbs. I have a coworker who calls me “Ned Flanders”, which I now take as a compliment. If you don’t know who Ned is, he is a character in a long running American cartoon who is portrayed as a nerdy, God-fearing Christian neighbor. It gives me a little spark of hope that if they see me that way, then I am being an influence for righteousness. If you want to be an influencer for God then know that you are different because the world thinks it strange you are not like them. 1 Peter 2:9-10 reminds us, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

Brian and his wife and son live in Detroit, Michigan. They have seen God work in their lives according to His faithful promises. This experience has strengthened their marriage and their walk with the Lord, leaving them with a burning desire to be ambassadors for Christ and share the gospel to all who will listen.

| ***Discussion Questions***

1. Who influences your life and are they worldly or Godly?
2. How can you use what you already have and where you already are to influence others?
3. How do you know if something is a good or bad influence in your life?

| ***Read***

Philippians 3:17

| ***Reflect on This***

“We are too much influenced by the world and too little controlled by the Spirit.” - *A.W. Tozer*

HOW DO I STEWARD IT?

DEVOTIONAL 4

If we see influence as a gift and opportunity, we can then understand the command to steward this precious gift well.

“Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.” The words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer ring in my ears as I write this. As the father of five children, I often wonder if my silence or lack of action at critical points in my children’s lives has somehow left them less of a person than they could have been if I’d have spoken up or been a better leader? On top of it, I spend countless hours on the phone or texting with men who are caught up in some type of addiction or turmoil in their life, trying to say something or convey godly wisdom to them in an attempt to get them closer to God. For all I know, my children may be dealing with their own battles, possibly with alcohol or sexual purity, or simply doubting their place in life.

In society, the measure of a man’s influence often becomes the

measure of the man himself. We become so entrenched in the idea that our words of wisdom must be spread like fine fertilizer over the fields of mankind, not caring whether the field itself is ready or even in need of what we have to say. To some, it may indeed be the life-giving influence that is necessary for that person to live better. All too often though, our words may simply be what fertilizer is, just manure. Sure, our influence is soaked in by all that hear it, but unless there is a need for the medicine, there is no need for the treatment. Instead of being so bent on making our wisdom known to all, we must carefully, intently and specifically know our crop of influence and what is needed. That means, first and foremost, narrowing our attention to those within our tightest, innermost circle: our families.

Our basis of influence on our families doesn't have to be some new and profound statement of wisdom every day. Sometimes it's simply being there, showing care and compassion from our hearts as our wives and children deal with life. It's being that spiritual leader that your wife longs for you to be. It's taking an interest in the things that interest your children. Life is not all about YOU. It's about being involved in the lives of those whom God has put in your care. It's about being the man of God that you were created to be and allowing God to have influence over

your life so that you may in turn influence others in a Godly way.

What or who influences you? Are you reading/listening to books/podcasts about spiritual matters or are you more influenced by whatever randomly pops into your social media feed? We must carefully tend and protect our minds and hearts with things that are truly from God. By doing so, we are being good stewards of the influence that God has given to us. If we allow things of the world to enter into our minds, our influence becomes tainted. By daily pointing ourselves to God and His influence, we become more like Him, thus making our influence purer. Matthew 5:13 tells us, “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet (ESV).” Has your salt lost its flavor? Or is it pure and undefiled, kept for those who need it most? It may be time to restore your salt.

Who are you focusing your influence on today? If you perceive that God is wanting you to refocus your attention on your family, or possibly a close friend or work relationship, take this as an opportunity to do just that. As we influence others closest to us, their influence in turn will be focused on those within their inner circles.

By living life with this perspective, you are certainly influencing a larger crop beyond what you have on your doorstep alone.

What effect do you hope to have with your influence?

Sometimes we get caught up with the idea that our influence will keep others from making the same mistakes we've made. However, if our focus is simply on leading others to a closer walk with Jesus, we are truly building a better Kingdom for Christ. Let Christ be the influencer, both for yourself and for others!

Shannon is a husband and father of 5, serving as an elder in his local church. He and his wife Karen have a heart for marriage ministry and are actively working towards starting a non-profit ministry with an emphasis on hosting marriage retreats to help couples focus their marriage not on themselves, but on how to be in ministry together and building a better Kingdom. Shannon lives in Western Colorado with his wife and two youngest children .

| **Discussion Questions**

1. What or who influences you?
2. Who are you focusing your influence on today?
3. What effect do you hope to have with your influence?

| **Read**

1 Timothy 4:12

| **Reflect on This**

“A thought occurs to me as I see some people marvel that they have thousands of friends and followers on social media as if numbers legitimize or diminish their ministry. They are sadly mistaken. We all have a ministry, whether it is to a handful of people or whether it be to millions. God doesn’t look at numbers, He looks at hearts we leave our imprint upon.” - *Katherine Walden*

HOW TO KEEP FROM LOSING IT?

DEVOTIONAL 5

Influence, like many things, can be lost. What causes someone to lose influence, and what can you do to ensure you don't?

As believers in our risen Lord, Jesus Christ, and having been born anew with the Holy Spirit, each and every one of us should be a person of influence. What makes us a person of influence? What makes us a source of influence to both believers and those who are lost? By living a Christ sanctified (set apart) life. And to agree with Paul when he writes, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1)

Ezekiel writes in Chapter 22:26, "Her priests do violence to my law and profane my holy things; they do not distinguish between the holy and the common." I love that distinction. Do you want to live a life of godly influence? If you want to live a holy life...be uncommon!

Do you value your influence? Do you want to secure it for eternity? Don't be common. Don't let these three areas of common worldly behavior rob you of influence:

1. Pride.

Christ tells us in Mark 7 that it's not what is outside of a person that defiles him, but what is inside, what is in the heart. Out of our hearts comes the sin of Pride.

A prideful person's "role" in a relationship is to know that they are "better than others." It exposes the lie in a person's life when they strive to be influential as it simply exposes the fact that they are being self-serving. Do you want to lose your influence? Then be a person whose life is controlled by pride, one who can't see past the lens of "self."

Reflect back on the last time you were trapped in a conversation with an arrogant prideful person. I bet they influenced you, but not in a positive way.

Henri Nouwen in his profound book, "In the Name of Jesus," writes: "The Christian leader (Influencer) of the future is called to be completely irrelevant and to stand in this world with nothing to offer but his or her own vulnerable self. The great message that we have to carry, as ministers (Influencers) of God's Word and followers of Jesus, is that God loves us not because of what we do or accomplish, but because God has created and redeemed us in love and has chosen us to proclaim that love as the true source of all human life."

In Matthew chapter five, Christ stated it more succinctly. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the world."

Meekness describes a person who is not overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, but instead one who is gentle, humble, and considerate. Please allow me to translate the verse by saying, "Blessed are the meek, for they will influence the world."

Influence is a fruit that comes from the tree of a life when one follows Jesus and walks humbly.

2. Trash your witness.

At the end of 1 Timothy 4, Paul writes, "Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

William J. Toms captured the same thought when he said, "Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some person ever reads." The surest way of losing your influence is to trash your own witness. To do something that will expose you as a hypocrite. To be a person who pretends to have virtues and moral or religious beliefs that they do not actually possess. To be a person whose daily life contradicts what they say they believe.

3. Drop Out.

I retired last year from a lifelong career in agriculture and from the daily routine of going to work and spending my days

with customers and fellow employees. I realize that I have found myself being quite content with my own company. Spending a large part of my days with whatever it may bring—but alone. To be influential, we have to be in a position to have someone to influence. To be in a relationship with others.

In these times of excess busyness, being all that you can be, following the world's model of living for self. It's easy to insert your ear buds, or Bluetooth into the powerful capabilities of a cell phone and isolate yourself into your own bubble. This will ensure that you check out of relationships. Want to lose your influence? Drop out of relationships; stop being involved in others' lives. Remove yourself from settings of influence. In other words, stop serving the body of Christ in preference to serving yourself.

Stop and think. In reality, is that really an option for you, a man of God? Of course not, so go! Be a man of influence in all of your relationships.

Larry is a father of three beautiful souls and the grandfather of six. A fallen man rescued by the blood of Christ in 1983. An elder and teacher of many years. Owner of "Cropworx", a company that supplies the agricultural needs of Western Colorado. A man living with 2 Corinthians 4:16–18 in focus.

| **Discussion Questions**

1. Where does your sinful pride raise its head? Is it so subtle that you don't recognize it?
2. How can you expose the areas of hypocrisy in your life?
3. What means do you employ to avoid others? Ask yourself why and determine to change.

| **Read**

2 Thessalonians 3:9

| **Reflect on This**

“We spend so much time chasing big things that we're not faithful in small things, or what we consider small things. Challenge yourself to invest in the areas of influence you've already been given!” - *Christine Caine*

IT CAN GO EITHER WAY

DEVOTIONAL 6

Not only can influence be for good and godly things, but it can also be used and directed to those things that are improper, impure, and unholy. How are you using your influence?

The dictionary defines the verb, “to influence” as follows:

“The capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something.”

Many of us strive for influence in different spheres of life, often forgetting that we all have an in-built capacity to influence others and to be agents of change, especially when we have Christ in us. Some of us seek to influence for personal gain and will do whatever it takes to attain it. Others strive to influence for the more noble goal of positively impacting those around them. Still others have a negative influence on the young or the immature, through their behavior. You see, brothers, influence can go either way. Pause and think: how are you using it in your family, at your workplace, among your close friends, and in your community? It

was Nicky Gumble of the Alpha Course fame who said that, *“Even the shyest person can influence ten thousand people in their life.”*

Jesus used influence in a positive way by opening people’s spiritual eyes and changing their hearts and minds. He still does so today, through His Word and through His presence in our hearts, using us as an extension of His hand. He enables us to make a difference wherever we are. We live in a world where people are still seeking answers to life’s questions, such as, “What is the meaning of life?”, or “Is there more to life than this (than my successful career, or my wonderful family, or even my exciting social life)?” What I am saying is that the opportunities for influencing others are enormous. You could easily be quippy and respond to the above questions by saying that “Life is for the living,” or that “You only live twice,” meaning that you don’t take life seriously. When you adopt such an attitude in the presence of people who are easily influenced, you are not helping them build the kind of values that can help them lead Christlike lives.

My mum went to be with Jesus not too long ago and one of the observations we have made as her children since her death was that we had not realized just how much of an influence or impact she had on the community around her.

The stories of how she positively impacted people - either by discipling them or providing for them, or even just being there for them, kept coming! As we prepare for her final send-off, we have become more aware of the opportunities God is providing us, in turn, to continue her legacy. That is easier said than done of course, because as we all know, during times of bereavement our guard tends to be down, so the fruit of the Holy Spirit can be hard to exhibit. That is why we so desperately need to lean on the Holy Spirit. He is the One helping us make good use of the numerous opportunities there are to pray with folk and to share about how God used Mum in different circumstances to bring light and help in challenging or dark situations. Judging from the responses we got, Mum's influence continues to grow!

In John 8:12, Jesus tells us, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." No one has ever had nor will ever have such an influence on mankind like our Lord Jesus Christ. The light He radiates shows us the way to go and helps us become more like Him daily. We need no other influence in our lives. As Christ followers, we don't need to endeavor to be influential, but rather strive to be good stewards of the influence we have already been given. Let your behavior speak volumes about your faith, but don't

forget to follow it up with the Word of God which is “the power of God for salvation.”

Whether we like it or not, our lives will have an impact on someone or some people in our sphere of influence. For instance, take your child who has put you on a pedestal. The way you speak to your spouse, or talk about your neighbor, is exactly the same way your child will speak, even before they grow up. If attending church is a boring routine for you and you clearly show it, you can be sure that your children will have the same negative attitude. Some years ago, I went to a restaurant with some friends but noted, to my consternation, that most of them were treating the waitress with disdain when making their order. So, I decided to go out of my way to be particularly polite and pleasant to her. Lo and behold, they all began to treat her differently. It doesn't take much to turn the tide and cause others to follow your footsteps! The choice is entirely yours, but honestly, who would you rather be: Christ's ambassador or an envoy of the kingdom of darkness?

May the Lord grant us the grace to be good stewards of the influence He has endowed us with, wherever He places us.

Steve was on the pastoral team at the Evangelical Church of Bangkok until June 2023. He has now returned to Kenya where he and his wife Liz continue to serve the Lord.

| ***Discussion Questions***

1. How do you respond to the idea that you were created to be an agent of change?
2. Describe a time when you were negatively influenced by someone else.
3. How are you using your influence in your family?

| ***Read***

Matthew 5:13

| ***Reflect on This***

“Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don’t really matter.” - *Francis Chan*

LOOKING BACK...

DEVOTIONALS 1-6

During this connect group cycle, we pray that you have been challenged, encouraged, and inspired as you pursue greater sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity in your life. We want to encourage you to now take some time to reflect on the last six devotionals and see how you can consistently apply the many truths that have been shared and that you have learned in your life.

Devotional 1

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life?

Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 2

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life?

Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 3

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life?

Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 4

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life?

Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 5

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life?

Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

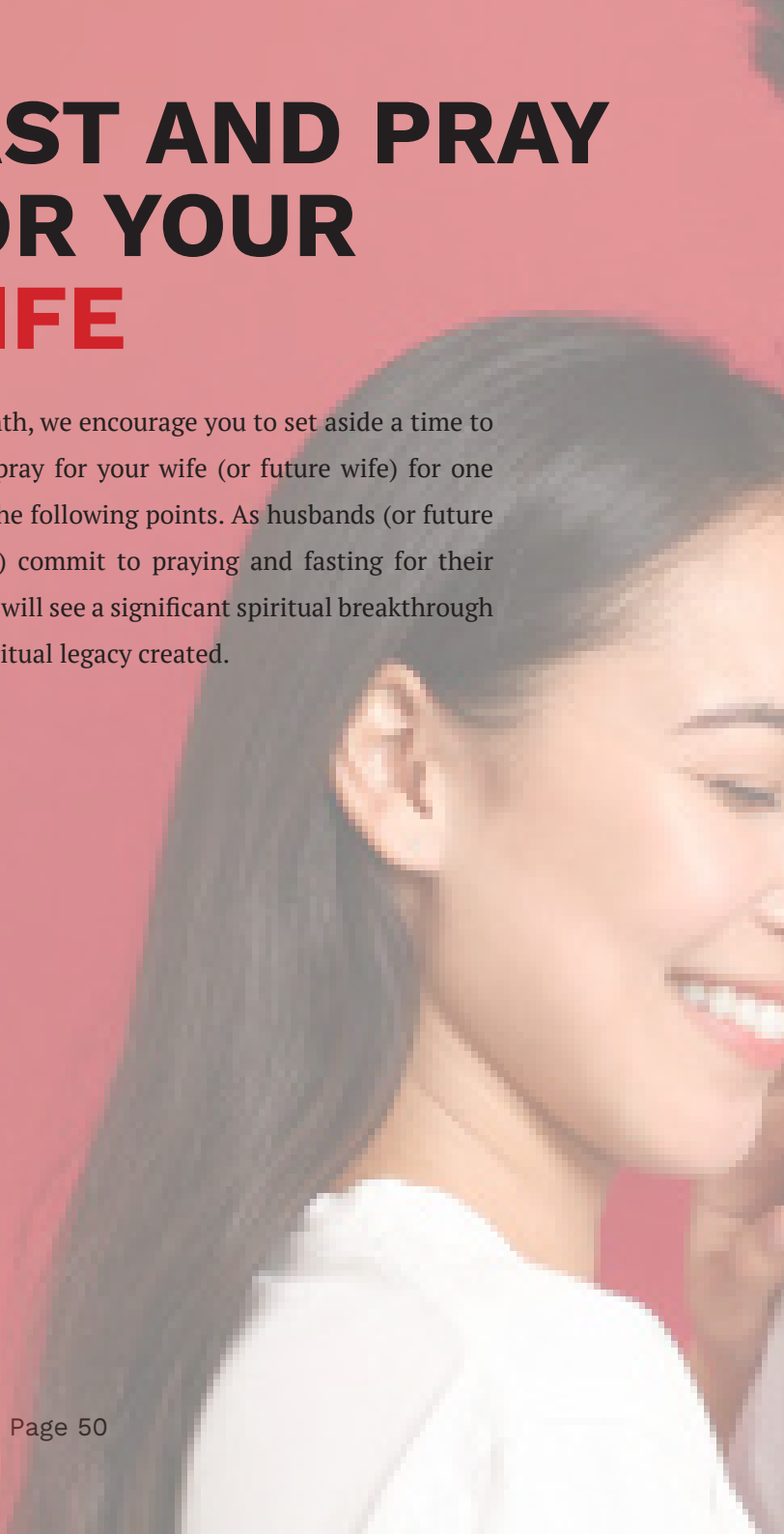
Devotional 6


What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life?

Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

FAST AND PRAY FOR YOUR WIFE

Each month, we encourage you to set aside a time to fast and pray for your wife (or future wife) for one or all of the following points. As husbands (or future husbands) commit to praying and fasting for their wives, we will see a significant spiritual breakthrough and a spiritual legacy created.





Serve Her

My wife is not a project I need to work on or change; instead, I want to serve her better as her husband, lover, and friend.

Love Her

I want to love and support my wife better so that our marriage reflects Christ's love for the Church.

Honor Her

I want to honor my wife's emotions better by being a safe place where she can freely share her feelings without my trying to solve every problem.

Respect Her

I want to respect my wife better by learning to appreciate the unique talents, gifts, and perspectives she has. Couples should complement one another and not compete with each other.

Listen to Her

I want to be a better listener. I want to listen to my wife with my heart and not just my ears.

INTRODUCING RMPP

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

| *What Is RMPP?*

Real Men Pursuing Purity (RMPP) is a community of men who are committed to growing in integrity, purity and wholeness through relevant teachings, accountability, mentoring and honest dialogue. You might not be sure that you really need to be part of a community like this because you don't struggle with compulsive addictions or sexual sin. While it is very important for many men to focus primarily on resisting sexual temptation and sin, we want to inspire and challenge you to pursue more. Although growing in purity is a big part of the vision for RMPP, it's much more than that. It's also learning about deep-rooted insecurities, developing proper work boundaries, embracing our identity in Christ, confronting fears and anxiety, expressing ourselves emotionally in a healthy way, and pursuing holiness in a safe environment with like-minded brothers. We believe that when we invite Him into these areas, He will extend His healing hand and bring about wholeness. Max Lucado says this very well.

EST. 2014

“Our Savior kneels down and gazes upon the darkest acts of our lives. But rather than recoil in horror, he reaches out in kindness and says, “I can clean that if you want.”

We are men who are not willing to settle for a life of spiritual mediocrity. We choose to relentlessly pursue greater depths of purity and wholeness for ourselves and for our families. Welcome to the RMPP community.

| How does RMPP support the local church?

RMPP does not intend to replace or represent a church; it only creates a safe place for men who want to stay active in their own church community. When a man joins the RMPP community he joins other like-minded men who desire to pursue greater spiritual growth and Christ-likeness. He is choosing to walk out in greater honesty and vulnerability. He is choosing to pursue purity in all aspects of his life. Aspects such as deep-rooted insecurities, developing proper work

boundaries, embracing our identity in Christ, confronting fears and anxiety, expressing ourselves emotionally in a healthy way, and pursuing holiness in a safe environment.

We then pray that as these men grow in greater maturity that they would influence their families. That they would impact their communities and their work places, and that they would be an example for other men in their home church. We believe that as men take hold of the awesome and holy call to live lives that reflect Christ, that the church will be inspired and the world will take notice.

| *What happens next?*

If you have ever attended a men's retreat, you probably remember being deeply impacted by worship, challenged by teaching, and being in community with many men who shared your excitement and enthusiasm for growth and change. A few weeks or months down the road, the gathering became a distant memory as you settled back into the routines of daily life. We don't want to create just another mountain top experience. We are committed to creating a long-term mentoring relationship for everyone who attends an event. That is why you are holding this devotional book in your hands. As you flip through these pages you will see that there devotionals with corresponding

questions. Each devotional is meant to solidify the teaching of the event by encouraging and challenging you, as well as helping to stimulate discussion through thought provoking questions, verses and quotes.

| *Who writes the devotionals?*

Christian men from around the world have written these devotionals and have overcome real issues in their life through God's grace, goodness, mercy and love. We hope and pray that their testimonies and stories inspire, challenge and point you to Christ.

| *What are RMPP connect groups?*

RMPP connect groups are a safe place for men to pursue both purity and wholeness within an environment of peer support and encouragement. The journey to greater purity and wholeness is a journey that involves inviting other men to walk alongside of you. It is a place where you can share your prayer requests, victories, and struggles and where you can be heard, prayed for and challenged to grow in all areas of life. A connect group is designed to be a support system for you for as long as you want.

During your time in a connect group you will be:

Challenged: You will be challenged to grow in your love for Biblical truth. The men in your group will challenge you to grow in your knowledge and application of God's Word thereby enabling you to stand firm in the midst of life's trials.

Encouraged: You will be encouraged to persevere when life, work, and numerous responsibilities may seem overwhelming. The men in your group will support you through prayer, encouragement and a listening ear.

Inspired: You will be inspired to pursue greater spiritual growth and Christ-likeness. While pursuing Christ-likeness may not always be easy, it will also be worth it. The men in your group will be there to inspire you on that journey.

Accountable: The men in your group, as well as your group leader, will support you and hold you accountable as you pursue greater freedom and victory. Be assured that whatever you share in your group will be strictly confidential.

| ***When are the events held?***

RMPP events are held online 4x a year in February, May, August, and November.

| ***Who can attend?***

RMPP events are open to all men worldwide.

| ***What about privacy?***

Because of the sensitive nature of RMPP events, video or audio recording by participants is not allowed. Also, details of personal testimonies are not to be published via email, social media, or in any other form. Thank you for contributing to a safe and secure environment that helps build honesty and vulnerability.

| ***Who started RMPP?***

Real Men Pursuing Purity was founded in 2014. RMPP is a joint initiative of The MST Project and New Counseling Service.

MEET THE TEAM

THE MST GLOBAL BOARD

Christian Lenty is the founder and director of The MST Project, a ministry that seeks to mentor men into a pursuit of sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity. Christian has lived in Thailand for over 21 years and resides in Bangkok with his wife.

Rex DeKoning is the 60-year old husband and father of a large family. A former nurse and pastor, he now works in Thailand with New Counseling Service as a counselor. Rex has experienced great healing of addictive behaviors after he confessed everything and began to live an accountable life. Rex is highly motivated to inspire other men to seek out a mentor, as it has helped him to walk freely, build honesty and vulnerability.

Nick Chilver is married and is part of a blended family containing 6 children. He is grateful for the people God has brought into his life and across his path. And as he continues to learn to better reflect Him, it is his prayer that God will grant

him the privilege of helping others on the path to freedom and into the Light. He resides in Thailand with his wife.

Roger Mitiska and his wife are retired and living in Thailand. They are members of Evangelical Church of Bangkok. Greatly blessed by God, Roger desires to be used by Him to assist others in walking with Jesus. Roger's passion is Christian discipleship through understanding God's Word and applying it to everyday living.

Mike B. Wood is married to his wonderful wife of 28 years. He is a Pastoral Counselor in the area of sexual recovery therapy. He is a man in process, passionate about bringing men together to share life together. This is where we study God's Word together and share the challenges we face. This inspires us to accept what God has freely given us: His love, mercy, grace and acceptance. He and his wife have lived in Thailand for 18 years.

RESOURCES

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

| *New Counseling Service*

New Counseling Service provides counseling and therapy for individuals and families in Bangkok. NCS provides services for expatriates as well as for locals.

W: ncsbkk.com

E: newcounselingservice@gmail.com

| *Pathway To Purity*

The book, Pathway to Purity, is meant to transform your way of thinking about purity, taking you through an initial 16 sessions of encouraging, challenging and application of the material. Pathway to Purity will transform the way you think and live, putting you on a lifetime path of purity and wholeness leading to consistent victory.

W: themstproject.com/pathway-to-purity

E: hello@themstproject.com

THANK YOU

| *With Gratitude*

We would like say thank you to the following for their contribution to RMPP.

Financial Donors

Thank you for generously providing funding that allows for RMPP events, seminars, and translation of materials.

Devotional Authors

Thank you for writing devotionals that inspire, encourage and challenge each of us to pursue greater sexual purity, spiritual wholeness and Christlike maturity.

| *Scriptural Oversight Team*

RMPP has a Scriptural Oversight Team consisting of several pastors from local churches that review all devotionals for theological integrity.

CONNECT GROUPS

RMPP connect groups are a safe place for men to pursue sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity within an environment of peer support, encouragement, and accountability.

Connect groups are held worldwide on a weekly basis. To inquire about joining a group or to find out more information please email hello@themstproject.com.

If you are interested in starting an RMPP connect group at your church, men's ministry, Bible study, college group, etc., please contact us. We'd love to support you and have the resources to help you.



**JOIN ONE
TODAY!**

NOVEMBER 2023