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Leading God's People God's Way

Lesson Four: The Law of Influence

Introduction

This is Lesson 4 in our course called *Leading God's People God's Way*. We are in the process of learning how to grow in our leadership ability as we study the laws of leadership. In this lesson we will learn about the Law of Influence.

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In the last lesson we were introduced to two very important questions that we must ask ourselves about leadership. They are:

1. Why is it important to grow as a leader?
2. What is the true nature of leadership?

We answered the first question in the last lesson when we learned that it is imperative that we grow as leaders if we want to be effective in the purpose that God has called us to in our lives. It is important to grow as a leader because by leadership ability will determine how effective I will be.

Now, we need to answer the second question: What is the true nature of leadership? If we don't know what true leadership is, we may try to grow in a way that actually has nothing to do with leadership. By the end of this lesson you should be able to answer the second question, What is the true nature of leadership?

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One of the main reasons that people do not grow in their leadership ability is because they do not understand what true leadership is. In the world today there are many misunderstandings about what makes a leader. So this is a very important lesson because it will help us to define what true leadership is. Remember, we are talking about leadership from God's perspective, so we need to find out what he thinks about leadership, and how we should lead his people.

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The Law of Influence says this: **The true measure of leadership is influence. Nothing more, nothing less.** The key verse for this law is 1 Corinthians 11:1 where the apostle Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

Notice in this verse that the apostle Paul encourages believers, including you and me, to follow him as he followed Christ. In other words, he is saying that he is leading by example. He is walking out his relationship with Christ in a way that other believers can follow and model their own lives. Paul did not use his God-given position of

authority to lord it over others. He did not use power to force others to do what he wanted them to do. He did not use force to control and manipulate others.

Paul's goal was to lead others by influencing them in a positive way. He wanted to live his life in such a way that it would be an example for others to follow. He did not force them to follow, but he did encourage and influence them to follow. His life was attractive. It was a life that others could observe and say to themselves, "That is how I want to live my life."

Why don't you take a moment to pause the DVD and memorize the Law of Influence and the key verse now?

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Many people today think that leadership is about having a position or a title. Maybe right now you think that is what leadership is. I remember as a young man that was my definition of leadership. I used to think that if I did not have a position or title, I was not a leader. I also thought that if I worked hard and got a position I would become a leader.

In reality, neither of those thoughts is true. You see, leadership is not about having a position. I can have a position but not influence anyone. I can have a position, but if I have the wrong attitude, or I treat people wrongly, nobody will follow me. If nobody is following me, I am not a leader.

The other thought is that if I do not currently have a position or title, then I am not a leader. This is also not necessarily true. In this lesson we will learn that being a leader is primarily about influencing people. Anybody can influence people. I do not need to have a position or title to influence others.

In the last lesson, the Law of the Lid, we learned about King David and King Saul. In that lesson we looked at the various lids that were in each of their lives, and how those lids hindered Saul, but how David was able to lift the lids off his life. David and Saul also are a good illustration of the fact that leadership is influence.

Do you remember the story of when David killed Goliath? You can read about it in 1 Samuel 17. We won't take time to read it now, but let me just quickly highlight some key points for you. First of all, Saul was the king. He was the one with the position and the title. But he wasn't leading the army of Israel, at least not in a positive way. When David arrived at the battlefield to bring his older brothers food, he found the entire army, including King Saul, cowering in fear of Goliath.

At that time David was a lowly shepherd boy. He had no position or title, but he knew who God was. He knew that God had helped him in the past to protect his father's sheep from both a bear and a lion. He knew that God would help him now. So he went out to face the giant Goliath and defeated him. As soon as the army of Israel saw that Goliath was dead, they charged the Philistine army and won a great victory for Israel.

Now the question is, who led the nation of Israel that day? Was it King Saul, the man with the position and title? No! It was David, a lowly shepherd boy. David's faith in God allowed him to lead the nation that day. Not only did David lead the army, but he also influenced the entire nation. We read in the next chapter that, when the army returned home from the battlefield, the women danced and sang a victory song that went like this: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Clearly David had influenced the nation, and was the one who showed true leadership that day.

So we see that having a position or title in itself does not mean I will be a leader. We will see in a later lesson that having a position is a level of leadership. It is the lowest form of leadership, but having a position does not make me a leader. If I am a good influencer of people, however, I will be able to be the best that I can be in whatever position I might have.

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[Discussion – in pairs or groups of 3 or 4]

- a) Before today, how have you defined leadership?*
- b) What do you think the difference was between David and Saul? How did David influence the nation without any position, while Saul could not influence them even though he was the king?*

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Now, let's get to the story for this lesson. To help us learn this leadership law, we are going to study the life of a man named Joshua in the Bible. If you remember Joshua was the man who took over leadership of the nation of Israel from Moses, and led them into the Promised Land.

The slide on the screen right now gives us an overview of the story and shows us where Joshua lived in relation to other people and events. The slide shows how Jacob, who became Israel, moved with his family to Egypt around 1701 B.C. He was 130 years old at the time and lived in Egypt for seventeen years before he died at the age of 147.

About 158 years later, Moses was born. When Moses was eighty years old he led the Children of Israel out of Egypt and into the wilderness. About two years later, Moses and the Children of Israel had arrived at the southern border of Canaan, ready to enter the Promised Land. Moses sent out twelve spies, one of whom was Joshua.

When the twelve spies reported back to Moses, ten of them brought a negative report. They said that the land was good, but they did not believe that they could conquer the land. Joshua and Caleb were the only spies who gave a positive report. They trusted in God and believed that he would help them conquer the land.

But at this point in his life, even though he was already a leader in his tribe, Joshua did not have enough influence to persuade the nation to follow God and occupy the Promised Land. As a result, in their unbelief the people murmured and grumbled against God, so God said that they would wander in the desert for forty years until the unbelieving generation had died out. Only Joshua and Caleb would be allowed to enter the Promised Land because they believed God.

Forty years later, after Moses died at the age of 120, Joshua was able to lead the next generation of Israel into the Promised Land. What happened between the first time he tried and the second? He grew in his leadership and his ability to influence. That is what we will take a closer look at in this lesson – how Joshua grew in influence, and how we too can grow in influence just like he did.

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Before we go any further in our lesson, it would be good for you to read the scriptures pertaining to this story. Why don't you stop right now to take a moment and read the following scriptures, if you have not done so already?

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Scriptures to read: Numbers 13:1-33; Numbers 14:1-38; Numbers 27:12-23; Joshua 1:1-18; Joshua 24:1-33

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The Story of Joshua

Our story begins with Moses, Joshua, and the nation of Israel at the southern border of the Promised Land. Let's take a moment and review how they got here.

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If we go back to the book of Exodus, chapter one we find out that the nation of Israel was being held captive as slaves in Egypt. They lived in a part of Egypt called the Land of Goshen, where they were oppressed by the Egyptians and forced to do manual labor. In their oppression they cried out to God for deliverance.

In spite of the oppression and hardships that Israel faced, God caused the nation to grow in number and the Egyptians began to fear the Israelites. The king of Egypt, Pharaoh, issued a decree that all Hebrew (another name for the Israelites) baby boys should be killed at childbirth. In time, a baby boy named Moses was born. His mother hid him for as long as she could, but eventually she could no longer hide him.

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She took a basket and waterproofed it with tar and pitch. Then she placed baby Moses in the basket and put the basket in the reeds along the bank of the Nile River. When Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, she saw the basket in the reeds and sent one of her slaves to get it. When she opened the basket and found the baby Moses inside she decided to adopt him as her own child.

So Moses grew up in the palace of Egypt. He was schooled at the finest schools and raised as a son of Egypt. But there was something inside him that had been put there by God. Deep down inside there was a call to deliver the Hebrew nation, Israel.

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One day, when he was about forty years old, Moses saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite and became so angry that he attacked the Egyptian and killed him. The next day he went out again and saw two Israelites fighting with each other. When he tried to stop them they asked if he was going to kill them the same way he had killed the Egyptian.

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When Moses heard this he became afraid and fled from Egypt. He ran far away to a land named Midian, where he became a shepherd and found a wife.

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One day, when he was about eighty years old, Moses was tending his father-in-law's sheep. He led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to a mountain named Horeb, which was called the mountain of God. There God appeared to Moses in a burning bush.

God told Moses that he was sending him back to Egypt to deliver his people Israel. At first Moses argued with God, coming up with many excuses as to why he could not go, and why he was not the best person for the job. But in the end, God won out and Moses headed back.

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When he arrived in Egypt, Moses confronted Pharaoh and demanded that he free the Israelites. Pharaoh refused, and so God sent ten plagues upon the Egyptian nation. Eventually Pharaoh changed his mind and agreed to let the Israelites leave Egypt.

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Moses led the nation of Israel out of Egypt and into the desert. This was the beginning of a journey in which they would see God do many mighty and miraculous things. Just a few days into the journey, the nation of Israel found themselves in a place where they needed a miracle from God. In front of them was the Red Sea. Behind them was the army of Pharaoh.

God told Moses to stretch out his hand and raise up his staff over the water. As he did so the waters began to divide, building up on both sides. Before them now was a path of dry land through the sea, which allowed the nation of Israel to cross over to the other side. By this time the army of Pharaoh had caught up to them and also attempted to cross to the other side. But when they got to the middle of the ocean, God released the waters and the entire Egyptian army was drowned.

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Moses and the Israelites now began their walk through the desert. God provided supernaturally for all of their needs. When they needed water, it came gushing out of a rock. When they needed food, God sent manna and quail. Even the clothes on their bodies and the shoes on their feet did not wear out.

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The first time the Bible mentions the name of Joshua is in Exodus 17. The nation of Israel had reached Rephidim. The Amalekites to the north feared that Israel might change direction and attack them, so they attacked Israel first. Moses instructed Joshua to choose some men and go out to face the Amalekites in battle.

Moses climbed a nearby hill with two men, Aaron and Hur, to watch the battle. As long as Moses held up his hands the Israelites were winning the battle, but when he let his hands drop down the Amalekites started to win. Eventually Aaron and Hur had Moses sit on a stone and they held up his arms, one on each side, so that his hands remained steady until sunset. As a result, Joshua was able to overcome the Amalekites and win the victory for Israel.

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In the third month after Israel left Egypt, they came to a place called Mount Sinai, where they set up camp. At Mount Sinai God began to speak to the nation of Israel and to teach them his ways. He made a covenant with them, saying that he would be their God and that they would be his people.

In Exodus 24 we see Joshua mentioned again. God called Moses to come up onto the mountain to meet with him and to receive the tablets of stone with the law and commandments written on them. When Moses went up the mountain, Joshua went with him. The Bible says that Joshua was Moses' assistant at this point. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

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When the people saw that Moses was taking so long, they became impatient and convinced Aaron to make a golden calf idol so that they might worship it. They thought that something had happened to Moses and that he was not coming back. Aaron made the idol for the people and the next day they worshiped it with great feasting and rejoicing. As Moses and Joshua came down the mountain, they heard all the noise from the camp and thought that Israel had been attacked.

But when Moses got close enough to see what was actually happening, he became so angry over what the people were doing that he threw down the tablets of stone that God had given him. They fell to the ground and were broken at the foot of the mountain. A short while later Moses had to go up the mountain again for God to give him a second set of tablets.

In Exodus 33:7-11 we read that Moses pitched a tent a little way outside the camp where he would go to meet with God. It was called the Tent of Meeting. When

Moses would go into the tent the glory of the Lord would come down and the Lord would meet with Moses there.

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Verse 11 of this passage is the next time we read about Joshua. It says this:

Exodus 33:11

¹¹The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

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We see from this verse that Joshua had a desire to know God and enjoyed being in God's presence. Even after Moses had left the tent and returned to the camp, Joshua stayed in the tent to be in God's presence.

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The nation of Israel camped at Mount Sinai for about two years, then the cloud that guided them by day lifted and they were moved again. The Lord brought them to a place called Hazeroth.

In Numbers 13:1-3 the Lord instructed Moses to choose twelve men, one from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. He also told Moses that these men were to be leaders of their tribes. The next eleven verses list the names of the men and the tribes they were from. Joshua was the representative from the tribe of Ephraim. Since Joshua was chosen, we know from this that he was already considered a leader at this point.

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While the twelve spies were in the land of Canaan, Moses and the rest of the nation moved north to a place named Kadesh Barnea. This is where they were camped when the spies met up with them again and gave their report of the land.

When the twelve spies returned they brought back the fruit of the land to show Moses and the people. They reported that the land was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey just as Moses had said it would be. But then they started talking about the people in the land. They said that the people were powerful and lived in fortified cities. They said that they even saw giants in the land.

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Only two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, brought a positive report. They tried to persuade the people and pleaded with them not to rebel against the Lord. But the people would not listen. They grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and even threatened to stone Joshua and Caleb.

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Let's look at a few verses from Numbers 14 to see what happened:

Numbers 14:1-2

¹That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. ²All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert!

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Numbers 14:5-10

⁵Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. ⁶Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes ⁷and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. ⁸If the LORD is

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pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. ⁹Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them." ¹⁰But the whole assembly talked about stoning them.

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At this point in the story I want you to take note of something important. Joshua was already a leader. Remember that the Lord told Moses to choose twelve men who were leaders in their tribes. So Joshua already had a position and some influence in his tribe. But his influence did not extend to the entire nation. He was not able to persuade them to trust God and enter the land, even with his good report.

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[Discussion – in pairs or groups of 3 or 4]

- a) Based on what we have learned about Joshua so far, do you think it is possible to have different levels of influence with different people?*
- b) Without knowing the rest of the story yet, what do you think? Will Joshua be able to grow in influence so that he can fulfill God's purpose for his life?*

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Let's continue with our story: Joshua and Caleb brought a good report and were confident that, with God's help, they could go up and take the land. But the people listened to the negative report of the other ten spies and rebelled against the Lord.

The Lord became angry with the nation and wanted to send a plague to wipe them out because they did not trust him to bring them into the Promised Land. Moses interceded on their behalf and the Lord decided that he would not wipe them out on the spot. Instead of wiping out the whole nation, only the ten men who came back with a negative report were struck dead. The Lord also said that not one of this unbelieving generation, except Joshua and Caleb, would enter the land. Every person older than twenty years would die in the desert and not inherit the land.

The nation of Israel spent the next forty years wandering in the desert until the unbelieving generation had died out. Towards the end of the forty-year period, God told Moses to commission Joshua to be the next leader of Israel.

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We read about this in Numbers 27:12-23. Let's read a few of the verses together.

Numbers 27:18-20

¹⁸ So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him. ¹⁹ Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. ²⁰ Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him.

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Numbers 27:22-23

²² Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. ²³ Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses.

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Shortly after this, Moses climbed Mount Nebo, which is just to the east of the Jordan River and the land of Canaan. From there the Lord showed him the whole of the Promised Land that he was giving to Israel. There Moses died at the age of 120 years.

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Now our story takes us to the book of Joshua. Moses has led the people out of Egypt and brought them to the border of the Promised Land. Joshua has been commissioned to lead the people into the land. Remember, once before Joshua had an opportunity to persuade the people to go into the land, but he was unable to do so. Will he be able to do it now? Let's find out. We will read some verses from Joshua, chapter one.

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Joshua 1:1-3

¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ² "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

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Joshua 1:6-11

⁶ "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. ⁷ Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Do not let this

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Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you

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wherever you go."

¹⁰ So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: ¹¹ "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your supplies ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.' "

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Did you notice that four times God tell Joshua to be strong and courageous or not to be discouraged? It seems to me that Joshua was not feeling very confident at this moment. God had to encourage him repeatedly to be strong, not in himself but in the Lord.

Now let's see what the people's response was. Remember the last time Joshua tried to persuade them to enter the land they refused. In fact, they threatened to kill Joshua. Essentially Joshua is saying the same thing to them now as he did forty years ago. I wonder if they will respond differently. Let's read verse 16 and find out.

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Joshua 1:16

16 Then they answered Joshua, "Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go."

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Wow! That is quite a different response. The first time they wanted to kill him and now they say they will do whatever he commands. Something had changed. Yes, the nation was different. A generation had changed. But Joshua was different also. He had grown as a leader and in his ability to influence people. In a moment we will look at some specific areas and ways in which Joshua grew in his leadership.

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[Discussion – in pairs or groups of 3 or 4]

- a) *Looking back on what we have learned about Joshua in this lesson, what do you think were some of the factors that helped him to grow as a leader?*
- b) *Think about yourself as a leader. How would you rate your current ability to influence others? What areas do you need to grow in?*

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We are in the process of studying the life of Joshua to see what we can learn about the Law of Influence. We have seen how Joshua had two pivotal moments in which he had an opportunity to influence the nation of Israel. The first time he was unable to persuade them to follow God because he lacked influence with the people. As a result, an entire generation failed to enter into the promises of God. The second time, Joshua *was* able to influence Israel to follow God. He had grown in his ability to influence others.

We turn our attention now to looking at the principles we can learn about influence from the life of Joshua. We will focus on four main thoughts.

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1. Leadership impact increases as influence increases.

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2. When a leader has little influence, little can be accomplished.

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3. When a leader has much influence, much can be accomplished.

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4. Influence begins at home.

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Let's start with the first thought.

Leadership impact increases as influence increases.

Perhaps the most important thing we learned from the story of Joshua is that our impact as a leader will increase as our influence increases. The good news is that no matter how much, or how little, influence I have today, I can grow in my influence. My influence can increase and, with it, my impact as a leader

Obedience to God is important. Because Joshua and Caleb were obedient, they were the only ones from that generation who entered the Promised Land. But, for a leader, obedience is not enough. If they can not get the people to follow them, they will fail in their God-given mission.

Let's look at some things we learn from Joshua about the nature of true leadership.

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1. Leadership is influence.

When the nation of Israel stood at the border of the Promised Land the first time, Joshua's leadership impact was minimal. The people let him speak out of respect for his position as a leader in his tribe, but they did not follow him. He failed to influence them. Forty years later however, they not only let him speak, they also did everything he asked them to do. He had grown in his ability to influence.

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2. Leaders do not possess influence in every area.

According to Numbers 13:2, all the men selected as spies were leaders in their tribes. That means that Joshua was a leader and had influence in his tribe. But his influence did not extend to the whole nation. In other words, he had influence in one area, but not in another.

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3. Our influence is either positive or negative.

Influence is like a two-edged sword. It can cut both positively and negatively. The ten spies who came back with a negative report were all leaders in their tribes. Remember, that was the criteria for being chosen as a spy. But they used their influence in a negative way. They used their influence to lead the people away from God's plan for them. The result was disaster, not only for those leaders, but also for all of the followers.

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4. Faithful leaders use their influence to add value.

Influencers who lead because they want to advance their own agenda will always manipulate the people for their own gain. That's what the other ten spies did. They were afraid, and they used their influence to create fear in the people. They lied to the people saying that the land "devours those living in it." On the other

hand, Joshua and Caleb desired to motivate the people to do what was right for the benefit of everyone. That is always the agenda of great leaders.

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5. With influence comes responsibility.

Perhaps the other ten spies did not plan to start a rebellion, but that is what they did. They did not understand that with influence comes responsibility. After they gave their negative report the people wanted to get rid of Moses and Aaron and return to Egypt. As a result, those ten leaders died of plague, and all of their followers died in the desert.

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6. Influencing others is a choice.

Many people who have failed as leaders in the past give up and never attempt to lead again. Fortunately for Israel, Joshua was not that type of person. He wanted to become a better leader. He would get a second chance to lead the nation into the things of God. In the meantime he remained faithful to God and learned as much as he could from Moses who became his mentor. He made a choice to grow in his ability to influence others.

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[Discussion – in pairs or groups of 3 or 4]

- a) *In your group, reflect on what we have just talked about regarding influence, and discuss what you can do to increase your ability to influence others?*
- b) *Individually, choose one of the things you talked about in a) and decide how you can implement that in your own life.*

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The second thought from the life of Joshua about influence is this:

When a leader has little influence, little can be accomplished.

Gaining influence with people takes time. When you begin to lead a new group, or a new person joins your existing group, you start all over to build influence with them.

When you are just starting to build influence you won't be able to accomplish much. But as your influence with people grows, you will be able to accomplish great things for God's kingdom. The important thing to remember is to keep growing. None of us is perfect yet. None of us has arrived yet. All of us still have room to grow.

There were three main factors that caused the people of Israel to disregard Joshua and Caleb's advice and to resist their leadership.

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1. They forgot the past.

At the beginning of this lesson we read that the nation of Israel had been living in Egypt as slaves. Exodus 1:14 says that the Egyptians “made their lives bitter with hard labor.” They had only been gone from Egypt for two years, but already they had forgotten how miserable their lives had been there.

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2. They were settled in with the present.

God answered the people’s cries for help by sending them a leader to take them out of slavery in Egypt. Then in their disobedience, they refused to enter the Promised Land. They actually looked for a leader who would take them back to Egypt.

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3. They feared the future.

The root of their problem was fear. Joshua and Caleb looked at the land of Canaan and saw only potential. The rest of the people saw only problems, even though God himself had promised them the land.

When followers face an uncertain future, they always experience fear. The greater the challenge that lies before them, the greater their fear is likely to be. What causes them to overcome the fear and move forward in spite of the challenge? Leadership! It is the size of the leader, not the size of the challenge, that determines whether people will conquer new territory. If a leader’s influence is great enough, the people will follow.

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The third thought from the life of Joshua about influence is this:

When a leader has much influence, much can be accomplished.

How was Joshua, once a tribal leader unable to persuade the people, transformed into a leader able to take Israel into the Promised Land? Why did his influence grow so much?

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1. Joshua’s influence grew because of his relationship with Moses.

Joshua spent a lot of time with Moses. Not long after Israel left Egypt Moses selected Joshua to be his assistant. Wherever Moses went, Joshua went too. When Moses went up the mountain to meet with God, Joshua went also. When Moses went to the Tent of Meeting, Joshua went too. Moses mentored Joshua for over forty years. Just before Moses died, he imparted his authority to Joshua by commissioning him to be the next leader of Israel.

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2. Joshua’s Influence grew because of time and maturity.

The first time Joshua had an opportunity to influence the nation of Israel, his message to them was, "God is with us. We can take the land.", but they would not listen. The second time he had an opportunity to influence them, his message was the same and this time they followed wholeheartedly. What was the difference? Time and maturity! The second time he spoke those words he was speaking to a new generation in a different time, and he had grown and matured in his own leadership ability.

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3. Joshua's influence grew because of timing.

Sometimes a leader has little influence until their followers want to go somewhere. That's because of the Law of Timing which we will study in a later lesson. The first time Joshua tried to lead the nation the people didn't want to go. The second time he tried, the timing was right and they entered the land.

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4. Joshua's influence grew because he possessed patience and integrity.

Joshua continued to grow patiently even after the people rejected his words the first time. He displayed great consistency and credibility until they were finally ready to follow. In Joshua 1:5 God spoke to Joshua just before he led Israel into the Promised Land. He told Joshua, "No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life." That's a direct contrast to the first time when everyone stood up against him.

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5. Joshua's Influence grew because he was right and also modeled right living.

Joshua's words stood the test of time. His message never changed and eventually everyone saw that he was right. From the beginning Joshua had tried to do the right thing. He had tried to lead the people in the direction they should go. The first generation missed their opportunity to obey God and prosper. The next generation did not.

Not only did Joshua do the right thing, he also tried to model right living. As a result he consistently lived beyond his ability as a leader. Here are some of the things Joshua modeled in his life:

a) Prayer.

Joshua was a man of prayer. Remember when he went with Moses to the Tent of Meeting to meet with God. When Moses left to return to the camp, Joshua stayed behind to spend more time with God. He did not rely on the relationship that Moses had with God. He developed his own relationship with God.

b) Obedience.

Joshua obeyed God as a servant to Moses, as a warrior, and as a leader. When he spoke to the children of Israel to persuade them to enter the Promised Land, he did so as one who understood God. Joshua believed that God would do what he said he would, and he was willing to obey God no matter what. The rest of the nation did not understand God so they were not willing to obey him.

c) Faith.

Joshua's life was marked by courage. It took courage to lead the army against the Amalekites. It took courage to stand up against the other spies and the whole nation. Courage is nothing more than faith in action. When a leader's faith is great, there is no limit to what they can do. With God, all things are possible.

d) Commitment.

Joshua's commitment can be seen in his willingness to risk his life. He fought in battles where he was greatly outnumbered, and the people wanted to stone him when he stood up to them. But he never failed to give his best for what he believed in.

e) Partnership

Through partnership with God, Joshua and the rest of Israel were able to conquer the land of Canaan. The battle of Jericho most clearly shows that partnership with God outweighs any other advantage. Remember what God told them to do? You can read about it in Joshua 6, but here's a quick summary. God told Joshua to have the people march in silence around Jericho, once a day for six days. On the seventh day, they were to march seven times around the city. On the seventh time around the priests were to blow their trumpets and the people to give a loud shout. They obeyed God and did exactly as he said. When they did, the city wall collapsed and Israel was able to invade and capture the city.

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[Discussion – in pairs or groups of 3 or 4]

a) *Is there an area in your life where you haven't accomplished as much as you could? What can you do to grow your influence in that area?*

b) *In what area of your life are you accomplishing much through your influence?*

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We close our study of Joshua by looking at one last passage of scripture spoken by Joshua at the end of his life, just before he died.

Joshua 24:14-15

¹⁴ "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond

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the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

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This brings us to the fourth and final thought about influence from the life of Joshua.

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Influence begins at home.

As a leader, where should your influence begin? For Joshua it began at home. Before anything else Joshua took responsibility for the spiritual life of his family. Let's take a closer look at his values when it came to leadership:

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1. Joshua's leadership of his family was greater than his leadership of the nation.

It may sound strange, but the fact is that when a leader puts his family first, the community will benefit. But if the leader puts the community first, both his family and the community will suffer. Starting at home is always the key to affecting others in a positive way. Because Joshua had his priorities right and led his household well, he gained credibility to lead the entire nation of Israel.

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2. Regardless of what others did, Joshua didn't wait for the crowd.

We saw earlier on in his life how Joshua didn't follow the crowd when he stood with Caleb as the only spies to bring a positive report back to Moses. Now at the end of his life we see his resolve has not changed. He tells the people to serve God and follow him only. Then he says if they can't do that, it will not change anything for him. He and his household will serve God no matter what. Joshua led his family with integrity before God and encouraged them to do what was right.

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3. Joshua modeled faith-filled leadership as a parent.

We have already seen the kinds of things that Joshua modeled in his life, such as prayer, faith, obedience, commitment, and partnership with God. Here at the end of his life we see that nothing has changed. He is still committed to following God, no matter what anybody else does or thinks. He modeled a faith-filled life not only for his family but also for the entire nation.

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[Discussion – in pairs or groups of 3 or 4]

- a) *If you want to impact your community, your nation, or the world, the place to start is at home. Are you truly placing your family first?*
- b) *What one leadership insight that you have learned in this lesson will you pass on to another leader this week?*

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The Law of Influence in the Life of Jesus

When I think about influence in the life of Jesus, the first thing that comes to mind is when he called the first disciples. Listen to what Matthew says about it. It is interesting to note that Mark records the calling of the first disciples in almost exactly the same words as Matthew does. Here is Matthew's account:

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Matthew 4:18-22

¹⁸As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him.

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²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²²and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

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There was something about Jesus that compelled Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow him. There is no record of Jesus having to spend a lot of time talking to these men trying to convince them that he was worthy of following. He simply approached them, told them to follow him, and they dropped what they were doing and went with them. There was no reluctance, no hesitation. It says that Simon Peter and Andrew followed him "at once" and James and John "immediately" left their boat and their father to follow him. That's influence.

I don't know exactly what it was about Jesus that got the attention of these four men. But, perhaps, it had something to do with his attitude. The apostle Paul gives us some insight into that.

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Philippians 2:1-8

¹If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider

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others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very

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nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!

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In this passage Paul gives us some incredible wisdom on how to relate to others. I believe that as leaders this is so important if we are going to grow in influence. Paul says that we must not be selfish, but we must in humility think of others before we think of ourselves. Then he shows how Jesus was the perfect example of this attitude. I believe that it was this attitude of humility and selflessness that gave Jesus so much influence over people. If we can have that same attitude in our leadership, it will go a long way to increasing our influence with people.

Jesus was very clear about his style of leadership. This is the model that all kingdom leaders must follow. In Mark 10:35-44 the sons of Zebedee, James and John came to Jesus and asked for positions of importance in his kingdom. Listen to what Jesus said after he called all his disciples together before he responded to James and John.

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Mark 10:42-45

⁴²Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the

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Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

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Jesus made it clear to his disciples that leadership in his kingdom does not follow the pattern of the world (Gentiles). In the world, leaders "lord it over" their followers and "exercise authority" over them. Their attitude is the exact opposite of the attitude of Jesus. They are full of pride and think that it is all about them. They are the leader and those under them must do as they say.

In direct contrast to this attitude, Jesus says that in his kingdom, leaders must lead others by serving. It takes an attitude of humility to serve others.

When a leader leads from an attitude of position or title, they will always think of themselves first and the people second. Their influence will often be negative, and very soon people will stop following them by choice. But when leaders lead with the attitude of a servant heart, they will always put others ahead of themselves. Their influence will be positive and people will follow them wholeheartedly. This is the kind of influence that Jesus modeled for us.

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This brings us to the end of this lesson of *Leading God's People God's Way*. I hope that you have learned something about influence today and that you have made a decision to never stop growing in your ability to influence others for God's kingdom.

Next time we will study the life of Joseph as we discuss the Law of Process in more depth. On the screen right now are listed a number of passages of scripture, which I recommend that you read before the next class to remind yourself of some of the key points in the story of Joseph.

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Let's pray as we bring this lesson to a close:

Heavenly Father, thank you for what we have learned in this lesson about the importance of influence. Lord, you never force us to do anything. You are not a God who controls and manipulates us into doing what you want us to do. You gave us a will and the freedom to choose to follow you or not. In the same way we must never force, control, or manipulate anyone following us. Please help us, Lord, to have the same attitude that Jesus had. Help us to humble ourselves and to always think of others before we think of ourselves. Help us to have the heart of a servant and always to be led by your Spirit as we lead others. I pray for your strength and grace to be the kind of leader that you have called me to be. I choose to humble myself and walk before you with a servant's heart. Thank you, Lord, for the work that you are doing in my life. Thank you for helping me to become a better leader. Thank you for helping me to grow in my ability to influence others. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

