

UNDER THE INFLUENCE: HOW TO BE A GODLY INFLUENCE!

Scripture used: [Psalm 1:1-3 \(NIV\)](#); [Matthew 5 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

This week's message asked two essential questions: Who is influencing us, and who are we influencing? To influence is to bend, to shape, to redirect. Whether we realize it or not, we are all being formed by the voices we follow and the choices we make. Psalm 1 reminds us to avoid walking in step with the wicked, and instead root ourselves beside living water—God's Word. Meanwhile, Jesus calls us "the light of the world" in Matthew 5:14. That is not a metaphor; it is a mission! Even a single light can push back tremendous darkness. We live in a world that feels increasingly fractured by injustice, division, and despair. But Jesus has already declared victory over the grave and through His resurrection, He handed us the ministry of shining His light into the world. We don't need to extinguish all darkness to make a difference; even a faithful flicker can change the atmosphere. The Sermon on the Mount shows us how to live this out. It begins in the heart, takes root in our habits, and expands into a life of purpose. Our goal isn't just to behave better—it's to become more like Jesus. When we cultivate inner light, bear the fruit of faith, and live with Kingdom-aligned purpose, our lives become vessels of influence. We are shaped so we can shape others. We are lit up so we can poke holes in the darkness.

KEY POINTS

1. **Cultivate an inner light.** The Beatitudes ([Matthew 5:1–12](#)) are not just spiritual ideals—they're an invitation to be reshaped by God. A spirit-shaped heart is humble, compassionate, courageous, and justice-seeking. Jesus calls us to let this light grow within us—not instantly, but intentionally, like tending a lantern. When Scripture forms us, we begin to shine even in dark places.
2. **Cultivate a fruit-bearing faith.** In [Matthew 5:20–48](#), Jesus confronts the shallow righteousness of rule-followers and calls for a deeper transformation. He wants heart change, not just behavior modification. Private practices like worship, confession, and surrender stretch our hearts. As we live out our faith in practical ways, we become known not by what we say, but by the fruit we bear.
3. **Cultivate a Kingdom What and Why.** In [Matthew 6:33](#), Jesus tells us to seek God's Kingdom first—not just as a belief system, but as the organizing principle of our lives. We all need a "what" (our calling) and a "why" (our purpose). When we put God's will at the center, He realigns us—even when it hurts—and uses our lives to accomplish something eternal.
4. **Influence through presence and action.** Influence isn't always loud. Sometimes it looks like showing up when others pull away—especially during crisis, loss, or injustice. Whether it's during wildfires, floods, or community tragedy, Christians are called to be first responders in love. We shine through prayer, service, and generosity. Just like Jesus, we are called to be light *with skin on*—tangible, visible, and bold.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - You are already influencing the world around you. The question is: toward what? God has placed His light in you—not just to comfort you, but to shine through you. Even when darkness thickens, Jesus says the light *cannot* be extinguished.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Which part of your life is currently bending under the influence of the world instead of God's Word? Which of the Beatitudes challenges you most right now? Are you letting God stretch your heart—or just trying to manage your behavior?
- 3) **DO** - Identify one area where you can shine light this week—at home, at work, or in your neighborhood. Pray: "Jesus, shape me from the inside out. Let my life reflect Your love, justice, and grace. Make me a person who pokes holes in the darkness—starting today."