

Life Group Leader Guide: “Influencing the World”

Dates: 10/11/20- 10/17/20

Focus: Legacy and influence in God’s kingdom are attained through service and sacrifice, which stands in opposition to the world’s standard of self-focus and self-promotion.

Video:

Show the video. It is about 3 minutes long. It will set up the conversation on transparency

Scripture: Acts 6:8- and 7:54-60

Stephen Seized

8 Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. **9** Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. **10** But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. **11** Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.” **12** So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. **13** They produced false witnesses, who testified, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. **14** For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.” **15** All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

The Stoning of Stephen

54 When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. **55** But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. **56** “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” **57** At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, **58** dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. **59** While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” **60** Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

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Reflection Time

- We recommend taking about 4-5 minutes for people to reflect after the passage. But before you do, say something like:
 - “I encourage you to first take a couple minutes to reflect on this passage and the video, come up with any questions, connections, or what the passage says to you tonight.”

Question: How would you define the concept of influence? How would you define the concept of legacy? Do you believe that you have influence?

Question: Verse 58 mentions a man named Saul taking some leadership role in the execution of Steven (laying coats at the feet would indicate a measure of authority). What ultimately happened to Saul in the book of Acts?

Question: Why would the author of Acts have made sure to include such a small detail as Saul’s presence at the execution?

Observation: In Acts Chapter 7:1-53, Steven uses his opportunity to advocate for himself as a platform to give biblical evidence for the validity of Christ’s divinity and his resurrection.

Question: What surprises you about the way that Steven spends his opportunity to defend himself?

Observation: Steven’s sacrifice would seem insignificant in the moment. But, he would be a key influence in the conversion of the apostle Paul, who would help the gospel spread across the world.

Question: What kind of influence do you think Steven had? What kind of legacy did he leave behind? (verse 60 is helpful for this!)

Question: In Matthew 20:16 (**LEADERS: read to the group, if helpful**) Jesus established an atypical standard for how influence functions in the kingdom of God.

What is the difference between how influence is attained in the world vs the kingdom of God?

Question: Based on the scripture we read tonight, how can service and sacrifice become powerful influencers?

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Question: What is an area of your life that you might need to sacrifice something to leave a lasting kingdom impact?

Question: At this point in your life, what kind of legacy do you think you have formed? How do you hope to grow in leaving a godly legacy?

Prayer:

(LIFE GROUP LEADERS):