



# INFLUENCER

THE STORY OF ESTHER

UNITED YOUTH

*If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?*

**- Esther 3:14**

## SUMMARY

Every young person has influence but not everyone one is an “influencer.” Everyday we are pressed with the choice of living a stand up life in a world that attempts to push us down. There is a price to being an influencer and throughout the month of March we want to create an open conversation about what that looks like in today’s world for young people. Is it possible to use cultural trends and norms and still connect with others in a Godly way? Is it possible to move from the comfort of blending in to the discomfort of standing out?

## Week One:

# THE COST OF CALLING

It's not about you, just like the book of Esther isn't really about Esther. It's about God, the Creator and Savior of the world. He's the main character of this book of the Bible, and whether you realize it or not, he's the main character in your story, too. Have you met him yet?

Esther lived in a time where nations were ruled by Kings. King Xerxes was the King of Persia where she lived. He was proud and controlling. He removed the Royal Crown from Queen Vashti's. Set out to find his new Queen. Insert Esther.

### **ESTHER 2:7**

7 This man had a very beautiful and lovely young cousin, Hadassah, who was also called Esther. When her father and mother died, Mordecai adopted her into his family and raised her as his own daughter.

Esther was a Jewish orphan. Raised by a relative named Mordecai. There was an opportunity to be used for more and started with entering a beauty pageant, thus began Esthers journey to becoming an influencer.

### **ESTHER 2:8-10**

8 As a result of the king's decree, Esther, along with many other young women, was brought to the king's harem at the fortress of Susa and placed in Hegai's care. 9 Hegai was very impressed with Esther and treated her kindly. He quickly ordered a special menu for her and provided her with beauty treatments. He also assigned her seven maids specially chosen from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maids into the best place in the harem.

10 Esther had not told anyone of her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had directed her not to do so.

What is an influencer? Is there actually a path or formula to becoming one? Being an influencer by God's design looks completely different from the world's design.

In Esther 2 we begin to discover the path that God used and we realize that God works through the unusual. Esther came from a

difficult family background, was put in a difficult place and was asked to carry out a difficult direction. What parts of your life are difficult? Have you been denying those when God actually wants to work through them?

What we learn is that all God wanted was availability, not Esther's ability. Talent was secondary to the purpose that God had for Esther. Are you available?

### **THINK IT THROUGH AND TALK IT OUT!**

1. What do you think of when you hear the word influencer?
2. Who is your favorite influencer in culture? What makes you admire them?
3. Who has been the most influential person in your life? Why?
4. Read Esther 2:8-10. Esther came from a difficult family background, was put in a difficult place, and was asked to carry out a difficult direction. What parts of your life are difficult?
5. Share of a time when God worked through a difficult part of your life for positive?
6. What do you think this means, "God values availability more than ability."
7. Being available to God means making time for Him. How can you make more time for Him this week?

Growth path: Pray as a group, watch some of the suggested video content and go through the Bible plan as a group.

## BONUS MATERIAL



## Week Two:

### FROM ZERO TO 100

Transformation always begins somewhere. It's a process. And it has to start somewhere. For Esther – and even more-so for Mordecai – it began with a crisis. If Esther were teaching a class on transformation, she would remind us that sometimes God uses crisis to kick-start transformation.

#### **ESTHER 3:5-6 - NLT**

5 When Haman saw that Mordecai would not bow down or show him respect, he was filled with rage. 6 He had learned of Mordecai's nationality, so he decided it was not enough to lay hands on Mordecai alone. Instead, he looked for a way to destroy all the Jews throughout the entire empire of Xerxes.

Can you imagine how sick to his stomach Mordecai became when he learns about Haman's plan? Do you think Mordecai wished he could go back in time and do things differently? Don't you think he would have bowed down and just let Haman have his moment rather than risk the lives of millions of people?

Has life ever slapped you in the face? One day things seem fine but then you get a phone call, or a test result, or a text – I mean – one day things are fine and then something happens and you know your life will never be the same?

What are we to make of these situations? I'd like to encourage you to allow crises to crowd us to the cross. Crisis have a way of making us assess our relationship with and to God. And crises will normally either crowd us closer to Jesus or, they have a way of starving our faith.

Crisis has a way of forcing the issue – of making us move. We can either move toward God or sometimes crisis cause us to question God and move away from him, but rarely do crisis leave us neutral.

#### **ESTHER 4:13-14 NLT**

13 Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: "Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. 14 If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"

Mordecai wanted Esther to know – how are you going to use your clout? Your connections? Your network? Your resources. How are you going to use them? Are you going to use your clout to feather your own nest? Will you use your clout to serve yourself or to serve others? Which kind of human being are you going to be? And the deal is true for her as it is for us today.

In some ways what Mordecai is asking her is this: You've been given the palace. Are you going to use the palace? Or are you going to be a prisoner of it?

#### ***THINK IT THROUGH AND TALK IT OUT!***

1. Name off your favorites when you were a kid: cartoon, music artist, food
2. What do you think of when you hear the word "transformation?"
3. God used crisis to transform Esther from a follower to leader, share about a tough moment that transformed you.
4. Read Esther 4:13-14. Mordecai challenged Esther to be leader for her people. Who in your life challenges you to change?
5. "Show me your friends and I'll show you your future." What's your perspective on this quote?
6. What area in your life is God calling you to be a leader in? What friend is God calling you to be a leader to?

Growth path: Pray as a group, watch some of the suggested video content and go through the Bible plan as a group.

### **BONUS MATERIAL**



## Week Three:

### TELL THE WORLD

Upon learning of this sordid plan, Mordecai challenges Esther to step it up and intervene on behalf of her people. Although she had kept her nationality a secret these past five years in the palace, Esther decides to make a bold move and appear before the king uninvited, which could cost her her life unless the King pardons her. She asks Mordecai to tell all the Jews living in the city to fast for her for three days in preparation, and her famous words to Mordecai were, I will approach the King and “if I perish I perish.” We pick up events here in chapter 5.

#### **ESTHER 5:2-4**

2 When he saw Queen Esther standing there in the inner court, he welcomed her and held out the gold scepter to her. So Esther approached and touched the end of the scepter. 3 Then the king asked her, “What do you want, Queen Esther? What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!” 4 And Esther replied, “If it please the king, let the king and Haman come today to a banquet I have prepared for the king.”

Here we see Esther taking a big step and risking death to save her people. But this wasn't the end...

#### **ESTHER 5:7-8**

7 Esther replied, “This is my request and deepest wish. 8 If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request and do what I ask, please come with Haman tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for you. Then I will explain what this is all about.”

This banquet leads to the final step Esther takes, revealing the plan to kill her people and stepping into what God created her for.

#### **ESTHER 7 NLT**

7 So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet. 2 On this second occasion, while they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, “Tell me what you want, Queen Esther. What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!”

3 Queen Esther replied, “If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request, I ask that my life and the lives

of my people will be spared. 4 For my people and I have been sold to those who would kill, slaughter, and annihilate us. If we had merely been sold as slaves, I could remain quiet, for that would be too trivial a matter to warrant disturbing the king.”

I wonder what God is asking you to do? You're not necessarily living under persecution like Esther and her people but God has designed you to “Tell the World” in some way. We get stalled in the “how” or “what” but God just wants you to be driven by the “why.” He wants to push you into your purpose just like Esther had to discover. She needed to be in certain places, certain people, and in certain situations to bring Gods calling out of here.

You have been picked to “tell the world,” now its time to GO!

#### ***THINK IT THROUGH AND TALK IT OUT!***

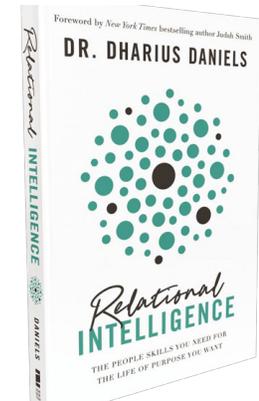
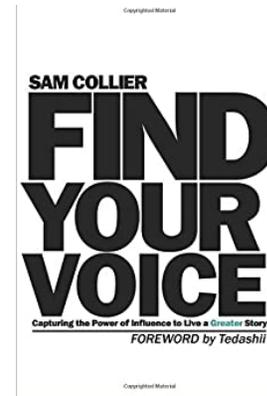
1. Name off your favorites: TV show, athlete, movie, shoe brand, clothing brand.
2. What's something that makes you uncomfortable and why?
3. Being bold for Christ is often associated with being disliked. Can you still be popular and be a Christian? Can you still wear popular brands, listen to popular music, and watch the latest Netflix series? Why or why not?
4. Read Esther 5:2-4. Here we see the boldness of Esther on display. The step she took to save her people could've cost her life. Has serving God ever cost you something?
5. Read Esther 7:1-4. Esther used her voice to influence the highest authority in the land, where do you need to use your voice for Christ? What's the best way to be an influence for Christ in today's world?
6. What's one small step you can take to “tell the world?”

Growth path: Pray as a group, watch some of the suggested video content and go through the Bible plan as a group.

## BONUS MATERIAL



## EXTRAS FOR LEADERS



## SPOTIFY



## SERMONS

