

Small Group Study Guide

ICE BREAKER

- Describe someone who has had a significant influence on your life. What was it about them that made such a lasting impact?

STUDY

What most struck you about this week's message?

1. **The younger son used his influence for himself rather than for God's purposes.** Where has God given you influence (home, work, friendships, gifts, finances, etc.) and how are you currently using it?
2. **The older son saw himself as a servant instead of a son.** Why do you think it's so easy for Christians to slip into trying to **earn** God's approval rather than living from the security of being His sons and daughters? How does that affect the way we pray, serve, and relate to God?
3. **The father modeled influence that restores rather than condemns.** Think about someone in your life who is far from God or struggling spiritually. What would it look like for you to reflect the Father's heart toward them this week instead of responding with frustration, judgment, or indifference?
4. **Jesus is the greatest example of Godly influence because He willingly sacrificed Himself to restore us to the Father.** What is one practical way you can intentionally use your influence this week to point someone closer to Jesus?

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 5:16 (NIV)

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

REFLECT

This week, which of these three choices best describes your life?

- **Misusing** your influence for yourself.
- **Underestimating** or failing to realize the influence God has already given you.
- **Using** your influence to help restore others to Christ.

What is one step of obedience God is asking you to take because of this message?

PRAY

- Ask God to help you faithfully use every opportunity, relationship, resource, and spiritual gift He has entrusted to you for His glory.
- Thank God that through Jesus you are His son or daughter. Ask Him to help you live from His acceptance rather than striving to earn it.
- Pray by name for someone who is far from God or struggling in their faith. Ask God to use your influence to lovingly point them back to Jesus and give you opportunities to encourage them this week.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Each morning this week, ask yourself one question before your day begins:

"How can I use the influence God has given me today to help someone take one step closer to Jesus?"