

Discipleship Groups — Level 7

WEEK 3

Life Check: My Influence

Hi! I'm Pastor Jill and our discipleship groups have been working from the verse in 2 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV), "*Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test.*"

As we continue with our personal examination—session three—today's talk is titled MY INFLUENCE.

Yes—you have influence.

Every woman has influence, and your influence does not depend on having a position, platform, social media, or a lot of visibility.

As women we need to recognize that we can edify, lift-up, and strengthen people or hurt, tear down, and curse others simply with our words—so what are you saying? How are you saying them?

Our attitudes—can also carry a lot of weight with others. Remember as a child when your mom or grandma was mad, usually the whole house felt it. Our decisions (of course the big ones, but our little ones also) count. Should we take the shopping cart back or just put it between cars? And especially how we treat others—did you smile at the cashier or glare at her for not moving fast enough? Have you taken your anger out on a friend or family member?

The woman described in Proverbs 31 shows that a woman who fears God impacts those around her. In Proverbs 31:26 (NIV), it says: "*She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.*" In another translation it says, "*She speaks with wisdom, and lovingkindness...*" And one more says: "*When she speaks, her words are wise.*"

Influence is not about a platform, in fact we are going to look at it more like perfume — although unseen, perfume will fill the air.

This illustration shows how certain **invisible** things can have a real, strong, and transformative impact, such as perfume. It is not seen but it is perceived by many.

Let's dig into this a little deeper

1. **The invisible can be more powerful than the visible.**
Perfume is not seen, but it is noticed. Not touched, nor visible to the naked eye but everyone knows it's there.

So as Christians what influence can you share?

- Your faith—your devotion to God is shown in how you love and treat others.
- Your character—are you moral and have integrity when it seems no one is looking?

- Your testimony—how are you living out your life? People see you, your reactions, and attitudes in day- to-day life. What does that look like? What do they see? Are you sharing God's presence? Can people see God in you?
- Do you have a heart of prayer—are you regularly talking with God? People will notice your peace and joy when you do.
- Do you share a good attitude, joy, and peace even in difficult circumstances?

You can't see these things... but they do fill the atmosphere of the places you are in.

Let's Think of it this way "your life gives off a spiritual aroma."

You transmit an "aroma" which is your spirit:

- Is it an aroma of peace or the smell of criticism?
- Is it an aroma of humility or the smell of pride, arrogance, or insecurities?
- Is it an aroma of love or the smell of bitterness, complaint, or anger?

Do you give off an aroma of purity or the smell of immorality and worldliness?
Even if you don't say anything people will feel your spirit.

Having God's presence in you affects everyone around you like perfume:

- You will share a spirit of prayer and holiness—which is a humble peace and confidence in God.
- You carry humility and modesty—A proper view of yourself and you avoid indecency.
- You walk in love, with sincerity toward people, not indifference, with joy, kindness, and with a smile. God's presence in you will bless others.

On the other hand, **Sin can also "fill the atmosphere."** Even if no one sees it.

Have you ever walked into a room and felt the pain of criticism or whispers of gossip and judgement? The spirit of complaining and grumbling or envy? Have you experienced an environment of resentment in your spirit?

Now think about what you are carrying within yourself when you enter a space. How are you presenting yourself? How are you affecting the atmosphere? The invisible part of you is powerful...for better or for worse.

Perfume can make any place become pleasant, feel clean, warm, and harmonious. A life transformed by Christ will do that too.

Your *attitude* can perfume or pollute the environment you are in. Your *words* have a big impact on your influence.

Proverbs 31 says of the virtuous woman, "*When she speaks, her words are wise.*" Words have power. With our words we can encourage or discourage, heal or hurt, build or destroy. Words have the power to bring life or death to others, bring peace and joy, and give wise counsel and edify others.

Luke 6:45 (NIV) says, "...*For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.*" Discipleship teaches us to use our words wisely and to bring life to others not death.

Many times, a woman's greatest influence occurs in everyday places—in the home, with family, children, her husband. With friends at church, with acquaintances, especially those that are comparing you to God (those critical of God and Christians) and in her community.

Women are used by God to strengthen and support men, children, and other women, teaching and counseling others and peacemaking. They are called to raise up new generations, nurture and influence them with joy and bring wisdom into their environment.

Women have the ability to reflect God's character of mercy, hospitality, generosity, and lovingkindness every day.

Your Influence is born from a heart full of wisdom. Wisdom is not just knowledge. True wisdom comes from living a life guided by God.

The woman in Proverbs 31 doesn't just speak well; ***Her words reflect a heart formed by God.***

- What do you carry: a world view or Biblical view?
- Do you have a heart of thanksgiving or criticism?

When a woman walks with God, her decisions change, her attitudes change, and the way she reacts changes and reflects God's character. ***This is her influence, or her perfume.***

People will begin to notice a difference, and through that they will see God. In her peace, prudence, maturity, and in the way she treats others—especially those she lives with.

True influence is born from a life transformed by God.

Her life will leave a positive imprint. *Many times, a woman does not realize the impact she has.* When a woman lives in fear of God, her life becomes a source of blessing for many. Her influence not only affects the present, it also impacts the future.

With children, peers, family, and others observing the life of a woman. Think about women that impacted your life, I have a few and I still remember them, and their words and actions influenced my life—even the women that have passed away.

God has given each of you a unique influence, and discipleship helps us learn to use our influence to honor God and edify others.

Questions for Reflection in Your Group

1. What aroma does my life transmit when I enter a room?
2. Do I leave peace or tension? Does my spirit perfume or pollute?
3. How are your words influencing the people around you?
4. In what areas of your life, does God want to use your influence?
5. How can you use your words to bring more wisdom and grace to others?

6. Do people rest, fidget, or walk the other way when you are around?
7. If you were to meet yourself for the first time, what would you think of yourself? What about the attitudes or moodiness you share with others?
8. How would you behave differently if Jesus walked into your life?

Practical Prayer

"Lord, may my life be a perfume that fills places with your presence and your love."

Weekly Application: Send a message of affirmation to three women.

Memory Verse: Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

"Do not use rude or offensive language. Let all that they say be good and useful, so that their words may be of encouragement to those who hear them."