

Gathering

INFLUENCE

Social media is filled with influencers who have built a platform of thousands and even millions of followers because of their knowledge and/or expertise on various topics. Most of us may not have an impressive number of followers on social media, but whether we are aware of it or not, just like these social media personalities, we have the power to influence those who are around us.

In the book of Ruth, we find Naomi doing everything she could to discourage her daughter-in-law Ruth from returning with her to Israel. But Ruth's commitment to her mother-in-law did not allow her to leave her side. It was quite the opposite! When Naomi insisted, Ruth responded:

"Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16).

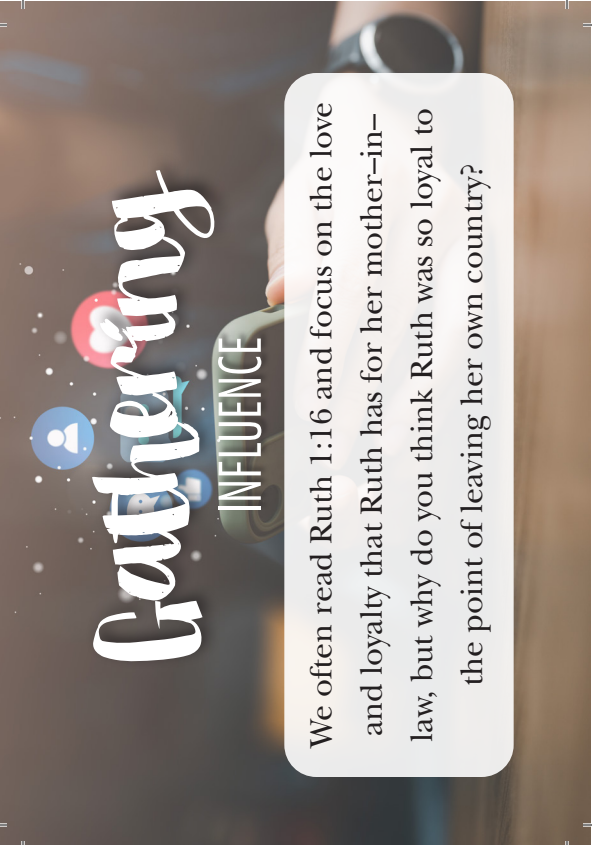
Naomi may have not even realized how great an influence she had on Ruth. Ruth saw in Naomi a woman that lost her husband and two children yet still honored and loved the Lord.

As Naomi influenced Ruth to know God and to live for God, we too have an opportunity to powerfully influence those who are close to us as we live for God every day. God used Naomi's influence as mother-in-law and mentor to bring Ruth to faith and used Ruth's respect for Naomi to bring Naomi support in her late years, reconciling them both with a common purpose that ultimately provided the lineage to Jesus.

After reading scripture consider these questions

- We often read Ruth 1:16 and focus on the love and loyalty that Ruth has for her mother-in-law, but why do you think Ruth was so loyal to the point of leaving her own country?
- Who has been the most influential person in your day-to-day walk with Jesus?
- How did that person guide you in your walk with Jesus?
- Think about in your own circle of influence right now, those close to you like your spouse, your family, your friends, your children, your coworkers, your neighbors. How are you influencing them? Are you like Naomi, impacting them for good, and for God?


Ruth 1:16



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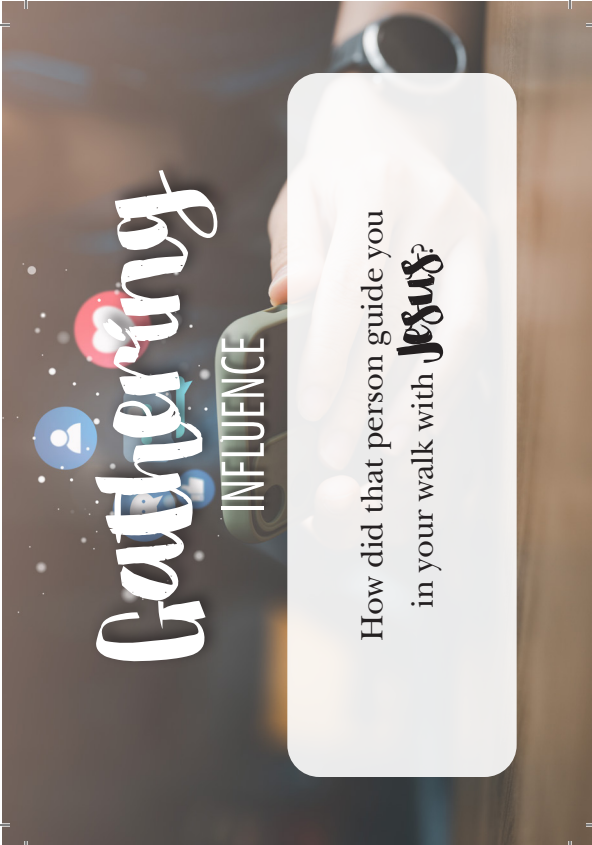
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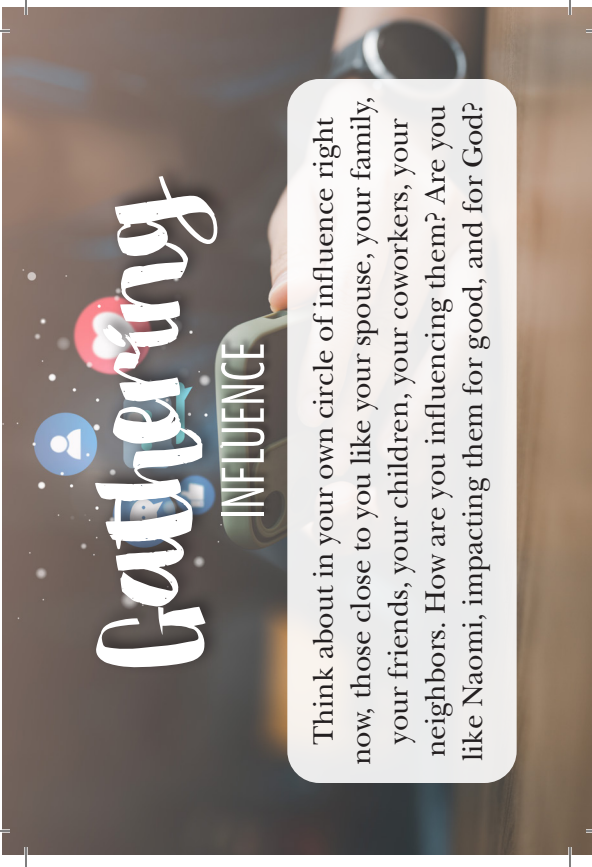
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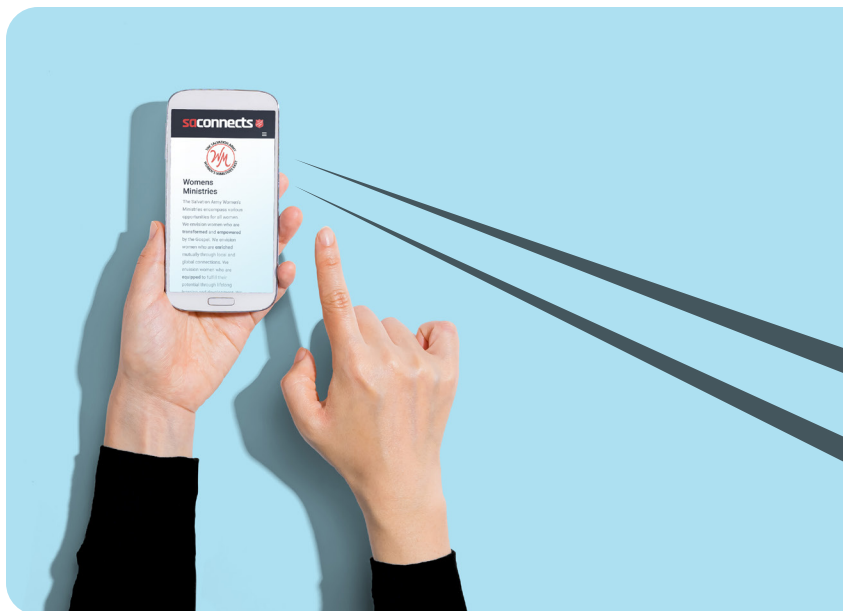
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Influence is the ability to have an impression on the character, behavior, and development of another person. Like Naomi, you have the power to influence others through your godly example and testimony. You can help others understand who Jesus Christ is and what it means to live for Him. Explore the following passages to discuss what does living for God look like:



ROMANS 12:2

What does it mean “not conform to the patterns of this world”? As Christians, what should we be doing instead?

JAMES 1: 19-22

According to this passage, what are some things that we should be doing to be a godly example for others? What does it mean to “get rid of all moral filth”?

Take some time this week and make a list of all the important relationships in your life. Then, ask yourself the following questions to assess your influence in them: Does this person know I am a Christian? How can I be a godly influence in his/her life?



Written by Captain Denise Salmon,
Southern New England Division

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