

CREW Bible Study

Message – The YOU Effect - Week 2

- **BOTTOM LINE:** Having a big effect starts with a small group.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand that their individual impact on the world can be multiplied in a small group as they learn to live together and serve together as Jesus followers.
- **SCRIPTURE:** *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*
– Acts 2:37-47

MESSAGE

Do you have a favorite inspirational quote? How about one that says you can "change the world"? Here's a few you may have heard.....

- Harriet Tubman once said, "You have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."
- Author J.K. Rowling said, "We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better."
- And Apple founder Steve Jobs said this, "The ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones that do."

Maybe you hear quotes like this and they truly do inspire you. They make you want to get up and get moving and do something. But some of you might be a little skeptical. I mean, Steve Jobs had the brain of a genius, the staff of a giant global company, and the billion-dollar budget of Apple. With all of that, of course he could change the world!

And you look at yourself in comparison and think, "I make average grades, I get nervous speaking in front of people, and I've got four dollars in my Venmo account. I don't think I'm going to change the world anytime soon!"

Well, this is exactly why we began this message series called "The YOU Effect." We're talking about how all of us have more of an effect on others than we think. Because of your YOU effect, God can do more than you've ever imagined with your influence. Today, we're looking at the possibilities YOU have to make a BIG effect on the world.

There's a book in the New Testament of the Bible called Acts. It comes right after the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and it's filled with stories of the actions that the first followers of Jesus took after he died.

There's a powerful moment that happened when these early followers of Jesus were gathered together. It's called Pentecost. The people were worshipping together when, all of a sudden, a violent wind came through their gathering space. It caused a lot of confusion among the people. They didn't know what was going on! And Peter, one of Jesus' followers, stood up and took this opportunity to talk to them, to share a powerful message with them about who Jesus was, what Jesus was about and how in this moment, Jesus had sent the Holy Spirit to be with them.

And in Acts, chapter 2 beginning with verse 37, we hear what happened next.....

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

So this fisherman named Peter, who was really just an average guy, stood up and *preached* this awesome message, and it had a MASSIVE effect. A *lot* of people were impacted by his message about living life in a better way—three thousand, it says. Can you imagine if something you said or did made three thousand people want to do *anything*?! This is the kind of influence we all think of when we hear those inspirational quotes that talk about changing the world – BIG moments with BIG results like this.

But what's interesting is what happens next. These new followers who were gathered that day didn't just walk away after Peter finished preaching. They didn't just shake his hand, say "Great sermon, thanks for sharing!" and then go back home. No. They put what they had heard into action at once. Listen to how this story continues with verse 42.....

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Did you catch the last part of that? "*And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*" It didn't stop at the 3,000 people listening to Peter. More and more people began to follow Jesus because these Jesus-followers shared his message with others. And so on. And so on. These people made up the early "church." They were known as a gathering of people who shared a cause of living a better life. Something BIG happened in their lives that changed them, that influenced them, and caused them to live their lives differently than ever before. It was Jesus. And they had no idea that a couple thousand years later, we'd be sitting here talking about them.

The book of Acts tells us that these people met together, ate meals together, shared what they had with each other and gave to each other. In other words, they were WITH each other and FOR each other. These people started a movement that has influenced millions of people, but it started simply by them caring about the people around them, taking the initiative to have an effect on those who were within their reach.

That's how the "YOU effect" works. Sure, sometimes there will be one person like Peter who preaches and changes thousands of lives. But more often, movements that change the world are started by small groups of people, *with* each other and *for* each other.

So what does this mean for you? Well, it starts with a small group. As Christians, it means circling up with a few people around you and deciding to live life the way Jesus taught. And to do that, keep these three things in mind:

- **Show up.** The people in the early church did everything together. Being together was a priority. Now, we can't do *everything* together in youth ministry, but we *can* make being together a priority.
- **Stand out -in a good way.** As a circle of Christians, we do stand out. But is it good? Does the way we treat each other reflect the way Jesus taught? We can stand out together and influence others, but we've got to practice what we preach. It means that you and I should do our best each day to do good, do no harm, and stay committed to God.
- **Start something.** When you have the support of your circle, it can give you the confidence to do something bigger than what you might do alone. Where do you see a need in the world? What's one small effect you can make? Gather a small group and start there.

Here's one more inspirational quote for you. This one is from Mother Teresa: "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create ripples."

Your YOU effect can start a ripple effect. And when your YOU effect is teamed with the YOU effect of a small group of others, the ripples can reach ever further. Imagine better, together.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you have a favorite inspirational quote? What is it?
2. If you could give a million dollars or a million hours to serve one charity or cause, what would it be?
3. What do you think holds people back from getting involved in a greater cause?
4. Have you ever stepped back from an opportunity to serve or lead or get involved because you felt like you wouldn't have much of an effect? What reasons led to that decision?
5. In Acts 2:37-47, Luke tells us how the earliest followers of Jesus ate meals together, shared everything, and provided for each other's needs. And, the early church grew very quickly. Why do you think those actions had such an impact and drew so many to join the church ?
6. What is one area where our church or our youth group could decide to have a collective impact? What might hold us back from doing that?
7. Imagine yourself in a small group (think 10 or less) of people your age who were committed to living life the way Jesus taught. Imagine that you met up frequently to check on each other, had meals together, and worked on a project together. Who do you imagine is in this small group with you? How would you start this small group? Reach out to Pam and share.