

CREW Bible Study

Message – The YOU Effect - Week 3

- **BOTTOM LINE:** We can change the effect we have on others.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand that they have the ability to change the effect they have on others and regain influence over time.
- **SCRIPTURE:** *When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." Jesus answered him, Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." - Luke 7:36-48*

MESSAGE

Have you ever wished you could have a do-over? What was the situation?

- You had the chance to score the final point in a tight game and you missed it?
- You didn't study for a test and you failed?
- You yelled at your best friend in the heat of an argument and said something you regret?
- You hit "share" or "send" on a questionable photo?

We all mess up in life sometimes. We all make mistakes. And although we wish there wasn't, there *is* a cause and effect reaction in these situations.

- You missed that game-winning point and now your teammates aren't trusting you with the ball.
- You failed the test and you lost gaming privileges at home.
- Your best friend isn't talking to you right now because of what you said during that argument.
- People are talking smack about you because of that picture you posted.

Your "YOU effect" was all good – with your friends, or with your team, or your parents and family - until *that* happened. Now, your "YOU effect" has deflated, your good influence is gone, and you wish you had a do-over to get it back.

Sometimes we lose influence in a big way. One big mistake becomes headlining gossip, you lose respect, and it seems like everyone is incredibly disappointed in you.

Sometimes we lose influence in a small way over time. There wasn't a big moment to set it off, but a series of small moments that continue to happen. The way you choose to act, the things you say and the way you say them, and the ways you treat people. Small moments have turned into all-the-time things. And now, you're seen as a different person. And you've lost your influence because of it.

Whether it happens overnight, or over time, we can end up feeling like we can't ever get back what we lost. We mess up, people find out, and we think that's the end. But here's some good news. It's not the end.

If you've ever felt that any positive "YOU effect" you had was gone for good, you're not alone. The Bible is full of stories of people who had a positive influence at one point, lost it, and were sure their story was over.

One story is about a woman whose influence hit close to rock bottom. In her culture, women already had less influence than men. Women were seen as property and people believed they had very little value. And on top of that, this particular woman had made some pretty bad decisions. It caused people to only see the negative in her. But listen to what happens when she meets Jesus. Her story was recorded in the book of Luke. Hear these words from Luke chapter 7, beginning with verse 36.....

When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, Jesus went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

This story might sound really weird, but foot washing was very common at that time. Imagine spending all day walking on dirt roads in sandals. Everyone's feet had to be really *nasty*! So, it wasn't unusual to wash your feet when coming into someone's house. But what's different in this story is that the woman wasn't using

water. She was using an expensive jar of perfume. Why would she do that? Because she wasn't just washing his feet, she was worshipping this man who preached about forgiveness and second chances, and he was accepting her – a sinner.

But listen to what happens next. The Pharisees clearly didn't like what was happening.

Verse 39 continues the story.....

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself. "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is – that she is a sinner." Then Jesus turned toward the woman and said to Simon the Pharisee, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet. But she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven – as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

Simon, the Pharisee hosting this dinner, looked at this woman only as a sinner. She was worth nothing in his eyes. But Jesus saw things differently and he calls Simon out on it. He points out all of the ways this woman showed kindness, faithfulness, and love for Jesus and in contrast how Simon failed to show any of it. Where Simon and the Pharisees saw trash, Jesus sees treasure. Jesus sees potential in her and he gives her a new start. She is forgiven. Her lost influence and her lost reputation weren't lost forever. Jesus gives her a do-over.

And this story can give us hope for a do-over too. Have you made some decisions you regret? Have you ever assumed that your bad decisions meant you weren't the kind of person God would want to use? It's never too late to change direction. Here are three steps to take:

Reflect – Ask yourself, "What choices am I making that are leading me to have a negative effect on myself and others?" Do you seem angry all the time? Is that the perception you give? Are you too harsh or sarcastic? Do you have a tendency to lie? Are you cheating in some way? Are substances like alcohol or drugs involved? Whatever it is, take some time to be really honest with yourself about what might be changing your "YOU effect".

Confess – If there are choices you have made that have led you to have a negative effect on yourself and others, talk to God about it. If life feels messy, invite Him into your mess. He sees potential in you and His love is unconditional. Nothing is too big for him to handle.

Take a step – Identify your next step to rebuild. If you need to apologize, plan your apology. If you need to make a shift away from something that tempts you,

figure out how to do that. Find someone to help hold you accountable to stay on this new path forward – someone who will help you be the best version of yourself.

We all make mistakes. But when we do, it doesn't mean that our positive YOU effect is gone forever. Jesus makes it clear. He invites us to get up instead of give up, and to make a change one step at a time.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Name someone famous who lost influence because of something they did? What happened and how did people react?
2. Who are some people you have seen regain influence and do good with it? How did they do it?
3. Have you ever felt like you've lost influence because of a decision you've made? Were you able to regain your influence? If so, how? If not, what happened next?
4. If you make a mistake and your reputation suffers, how can regaining your good influence be difficult in middle school or high school?
5. From the following areas, where do you think you have the most influence on the people around you? The least influence? Put these in order of how much influence you have:
 - a. In your school environment
 - b. With your circle of friends
 - c. At home with your family
 - d. On your sports team or extracurricular club
 - e. At church / in CREW
6. Think of one area where you would like to have influence to do good. What is one step you can take this week toward changing the effect you have?