

# What Is Influencing You?: Lessons from Titus (Youth)

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Most people probably don't realize how powerful the influences in their lives are. The Bible has some important things to say about what influences us.

## **We are all easily influenced**

We are influenced by our parents, friends, teachers, and even celebrities. We're influenced by what we read on Facebook and Twitter and see on Snapchat. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. Sometimes, people are a really good influence on us. Maybe you want to be like a teacher who really inspires you. Or, you've read a book that really motivated you to do something meaningful with your life. That's great. But there are a lot of bad influences in life, too. And that brings us back to Titus.

## **We are easily influenced by the world around us**

The truth is that we don't always realize how much culture influences us. By culture, I mean everything we watch, read, listen to, and just the general values of the world we live in; all of that is our culture. The Christians in Titus were being negatively affected by their culture.

***Titus 1:12** "Even one of their own men, a prophet from Crete, has said about them, 'The people of Crete are all liars, cruel animals, and lazy gluttons.'"*

Remember from last time that the book of Titus is written to Christians on the island of Crete. You can see from this verse that the people of Crete had a toxic culture. People didn't value the truth. People didn't mind being evil to others to get what they want. And they were just generally lazy people.

Think about our culture for a moment. How would God describe our culture? Do the television shows, movies, and books we read line up with God's truth, or not? If not, then that is a problem.

## **Bad influences can pull you away from God**

We have to be careful because negative influences hurt our relationship with God. This is what was happening in Titus.

***Titus 2:10** "For there are many rebellious people who engage in useless talk and deceive others."*

There were all sorts of people in the church who taught things contrary to God. They taught people that salvation doesn't come through faith in Jesus, and encouraged people to disobey God. They were bad influences. So, if we have bad influences in our lives, what do we need to do?

## **Identify bad influences**

Here is how to identify bad influences. Ask yourself: Does this person, movie, or song help me love God and others more? Do they help me honor God? If not, then they are probably a bad influence. The Bible is clear about what to do with bad influences:

## **Eliminate bad influences**

You probably need to rethink some of the movies you watch and the tv shows you watch, and even the things you listen to. You may even need to stop watching and listening to some of them. I know this might sound a little extreme, but look at the words of Jesus.

**Matthew 5:30** *And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*

Jesus doesn't literally want you to cut off your hand. Instead, he wants you to take bad influences seriously. He wants nothing to get in the way of your relationship with him.

Let's put this into practice. In your small group talk about your influences and make sure they bring you closer to God.

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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

[Submit questions](#)

1. **Set Up:** Watch the video together or invite someone to [summarize the topic](#).
  2. Who is your favorite singer or band? What is the theme of most of their songs?
  3. Describe a time when you have been positively influenced by someone or something. Describe a time when you have been negatively influenced by someone or something.
  4. How do you know if something is a bad influence in your life or not?
  5. Read [Matthew 5:30](#). What is Jesus' point in this verse? How can you apply it to your life?
  6. Do you consider yourself to be a positive or negative influence on others? Explain.
  7. **Takeaway:** Write a [personal action step](#) based on this conversation.
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