

Initial Influence Insights

Improving Our Influence, part 1
Pastor Bob Johnson, January 13th, 2019

Why this series to launch into 2019?

(Proverbs 28:2, Judges 21:5)

Three Laws of Leadership:

1. Leadership is ...

(1 Timothy 4:12)

2. Leadership is ...

(Hebrews 13:7)

Characteristics of Good Leadership:

- they have a M...
- they have a L ...
- they have a F ...

3. Leadership is ...

(Philippians 4:9, Nehemiah 1:1-4)

Three Reasons For Nehemiah's Influence:

1. Nehemiah was S...

2. Nehemiah was D...

3. Nehemiah was A...

This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to week 1 of our first small group season for 2019!! It is our prayer at GPC for our Sundays and small groups to provide the encouragement we all need to support each other as we desire to grow closer to God and build friendships in the coming weeks. This small group season will be for 11 weeks and wrap up the week of March 24th. In the weeks ahead, we'll be discussing some insights from the Book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah is full of insights related to helping us making a more positive impact with our lives.

Getting Started:

For our first week, let's spend some time catching up and getting to know each other. What is something that you enjoy doing that most in the group don't know about you?

Nehemiah was a cup bearer who became a wall builder. What is something that you were part of building that initially was a bit overwhelming ... but after it was completed, brought you some encouragement?

What is something you are looking forward to this year? Any new challenges or goals, upcoming trips, more clarity on something? Is there anything you are looking forward to starting, stopping, speeding up, or slowing down?

Two Sundays ago, Bob encouraged us to start with 'who goals' (focusing on our character) before 'do goals' (filling up our calendar). Who is someone you would like to become more like this year? What character quality would you like to see more developed in your life?

How can our small group help support each of us in what we are looking forward to this year?

Since this is our first meeting, let's take some time going over some 'group ground rules' so we can all be on the same page.

The following are the four things we'll focus on together:

SHARING

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. This is a highlight each week as we get to share about our week and are reminded we are not the only ones with issues to wrestle with and receive God's guidance on.

STUDYING

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word. We'll use our sermon based discussion guides to help us learn and apply some of God's truths to our everyday lives.

SUPPORTING

Each week we'll learn how to support and care for one another as Christ encouraged us to (John 15:9-13). This support can take many forms such as praying, encouraging, listening, challenging one another, and meeting practical needs.

SERVING

Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through serving others. The serving role each of us fills is important to the health of GPC and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community and beyond (Ephesians 4:11-16). In and through our small groups, it is our hope that we can be affirmed in the ways God has designed us to serve and be a blessing to others.

The following are six decisions that will help our group maximize our time together in the coming weeks:

- 1) Make spiritual growth our top priority** (Romans 8:29)
As we meet together, along with building friendships, let's decide that studying and applying God's Word is a priority.
- 2) Take care of one another** (John 13:34)
Let's consider praying for each other as a priority. When life happens, let's support each other.
- 3) Treat each other with respect** (Ephesians 4:25-5:2)
Let's be honoring to one another as we meet together.
 - by listening and not interrupting each other
 - by not offering 'quick fixes' for each other
 - by allowing all to be heard and included
 - by avoiding put downs and insensitive remarks
 - by maintaining trust within the group

- 4) Be open to new folks joining us** (Matthew 5:13-16)
Let's be open to new people that God might bring to our group. Being new can feel awkward. Let's be great welcomers :).
- 5) Do our best to attend regularly.** (Hebrews 10:24-25)
Let's try and be at our meetings as much as possible. We are better together and our group is better when we all choose to attend even when life is crazy and exhausting. Ongoing consistency begins with an initial commitment.

If we cannot attend one of our meetings, let's contact someone in our group so we will know you're okay and how we can possibly pray for you that week.
- 6) Build friendships beyond our meetings.**
A small group is more than a 'scheduled meeting'. Let's decide to reach out and build some friendships beyond our meetings in the weeks ahead.

Digging Deeper: (A quick look at 2 Timothy 4)

From last week's message that highlight some initial influence insights, what was helpful or encouraging to you? Was there a question that you thought of after listening to the message we can discuss together?

Nehemiah was able to lead his people to accomplish something most thought was impossible. Being a strong finisher is something we all aspire to. As we kick off this small group season, let's read about another strong finisher and discuss some insights from his last days. The Apostle Paul finished his life of ministry well and is a good example for us.

Read 2 Timothy chapter 4. This is Paul's last bit of wisdom he is encouraging a younger pastor with. Soon after writing this letter, Paul was martyred for his faith. From this chapter, what insights do we see regarding Paul's character and perspective on his life that we can learn from and ask God for strength to live out in 2019.

Before we wrap up, let's share some prayer requests and pray for each other and the rest of our small groups as we launch into a new year together.