

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES *for* LEADERSHIP AT WORK

# MAXIMIZE YOUR INFLUENCE



workmatters®



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# MAXIMIZE YOUR **INFLUENCE**

**workmatters<sup>®</sup>**

*We are very grateful for the generous support  
of David and Shelley Simpson who made  
the production of this study possible.*

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Published by Book Villages, P.O. Box 64526, Colorado Springs, CO 80962 [www.bookvillages.com](http://www.bookvillages.com)

ISBN: 978-1-944298-48-7

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**MAXIMIZE YOUR INFLUENCE** was written by Workmatters' David Roth and Catherine Gates, published by Workmatters, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit launched in 2003 in Fayetteville, Ark. Our mission is to help you pursue God's purpose for your work. These studies help you push beyond sitting in rows at events where you learn, to sitting in circles in groups where you grow.

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Thanks to Daphne V. Smith for her editorial contribution.

Cover and layout design by Thinkpen Design | [www.thinkpen.design](http://www.thinkpen.design)

# workmatters®

Participant,

Congratulations for taking this step to grow as a **leader of influence!** We truly believe you'll be blessed beyond your expectations as you learn from the leadership of Esther and Mordecai and begin applying the biblical leadership principles they demonstrated to your own work.

We're confident you'll gain insights on how you can transform your influence at work through this study and the discussions you have in your group. When you act on those insights and apply the **leadership principles** you learn, your work will go from being ordinary to extraordinary. You'll experience even greater growth as you share what you learn in community with other believers.

Workmatters wants to be a resource for you long after you complete this Workmatters Study. Be sure to visit our website at **workmatters.org** to discover additional resources to support your biblical leadership growth.

We pray that this study helps you use your influence even more powerfully at work while also helping you pursue God's purpose for your work!

Your work matters,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Roth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Roth  
President & CEO  
email: droth@workmatters.org

**“ Whatever you do,  
work at it with all your  
heart, as working for  
the Lord, not for human  
masters, since you know  
that you will receive an  
inheritance from the Lord  
as a reward. It is the Lord  
Christ you are serving. ”**

- Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)

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“ So whether you eat  
or drink or whatever  
you do, do it all for the  
glory of God. ”

- 1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)

# Introduction

The stories in the Bible can teach us how to work and live today. But it can be challenging to see how we can learn from people who lived thousands of years ago in another culture. They were very different times with very different people doing very different work—or were they?

## WHY ESTHER?

Esther and her older cousin, Mordecai were exiles living in ancient Persia, an empire that was hostile to their faith. The time was about 100 years after the Babylonian captivity. Mordecai took responsibility for raising Esther after her parents died, leaving her an orphan.

Mordecai was a servant in the king's court. Esther was chosen to be queen. These two unlikely candidates for prominent positions in the kingdom found favor with the king. Was Mordecai so powerful that the king was compelled to listen to his advice? Was Esther's beauty so superior to the other young women that she would have won the contest for queen hands down? Or was it God's providence and favor that put them in positions of influence?

Mordecai and Esther both had a lot working against them. Yet God used them to save an entire nation. In the workplace, it is easy to feel isolated and at a disadvantage. We are often confronted with threats to our security, our identity and even our faith. But those threats open up opportunities for us to use our influence for positive change. We can either disregard the influence we have or be intentional about using it to fulfill God's purposes for our work. Despite the fact that God's name is never mentioned in the book, it's clear that God is at work behind the scenes using Esther and Mordecai to influence the outcome of this story.

## GOAL OF THIS STUDY

The goal of this study is to help you learn that these stories are as relevant today as they were in ancient times. You will learn how impactful your influence can be, regardless of your role or level of leadership at work. And you'll learn the power of community. As you go through the story, we encourage you to put yourself in the story. Consider those times when you felt powerless or inadequate at work—times when you were faced with a situation and you didn't know what to do. Imagine what Esther and Mordecai went through as they sought God for wisdom and help in a desperate situation.

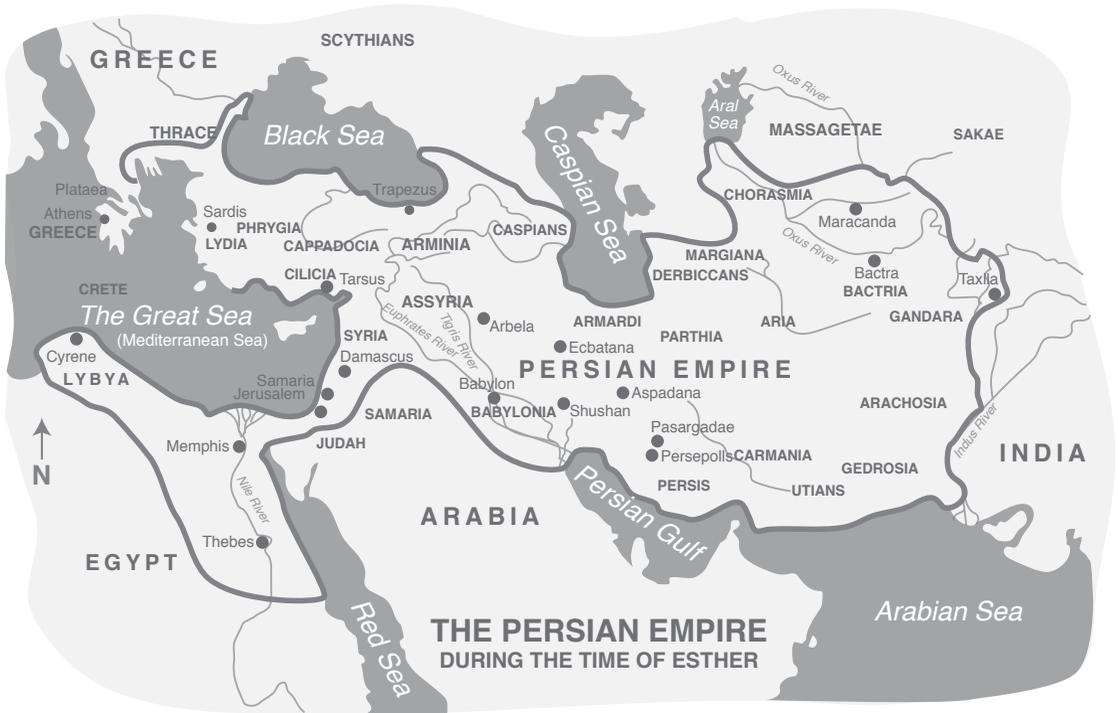
Consider how God has shown up for you, and how God can use your influence to bring about positive change when you turn to Him instead of trying to handle it—or run from it—alone.

## SETTING

The Persian Empire, which included 127 provinces.

## PURPOSE

Esther takes place after Babylon is overthrown by the Persians and Cyrus the Great had issued a decree to allow the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem. Some of them did, but others remained scattered throughout the land. Esther and her older cousin, Mordecai, remained in the capital of Susa near King Xerxes. God positioned them and used them to fulfill His purposes and save the Jewish people. Shortly after this, Nehemiah was called by God to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. The book of Esther is one of only two books of the Bible named for a woman.



## LIST OF LEADERS

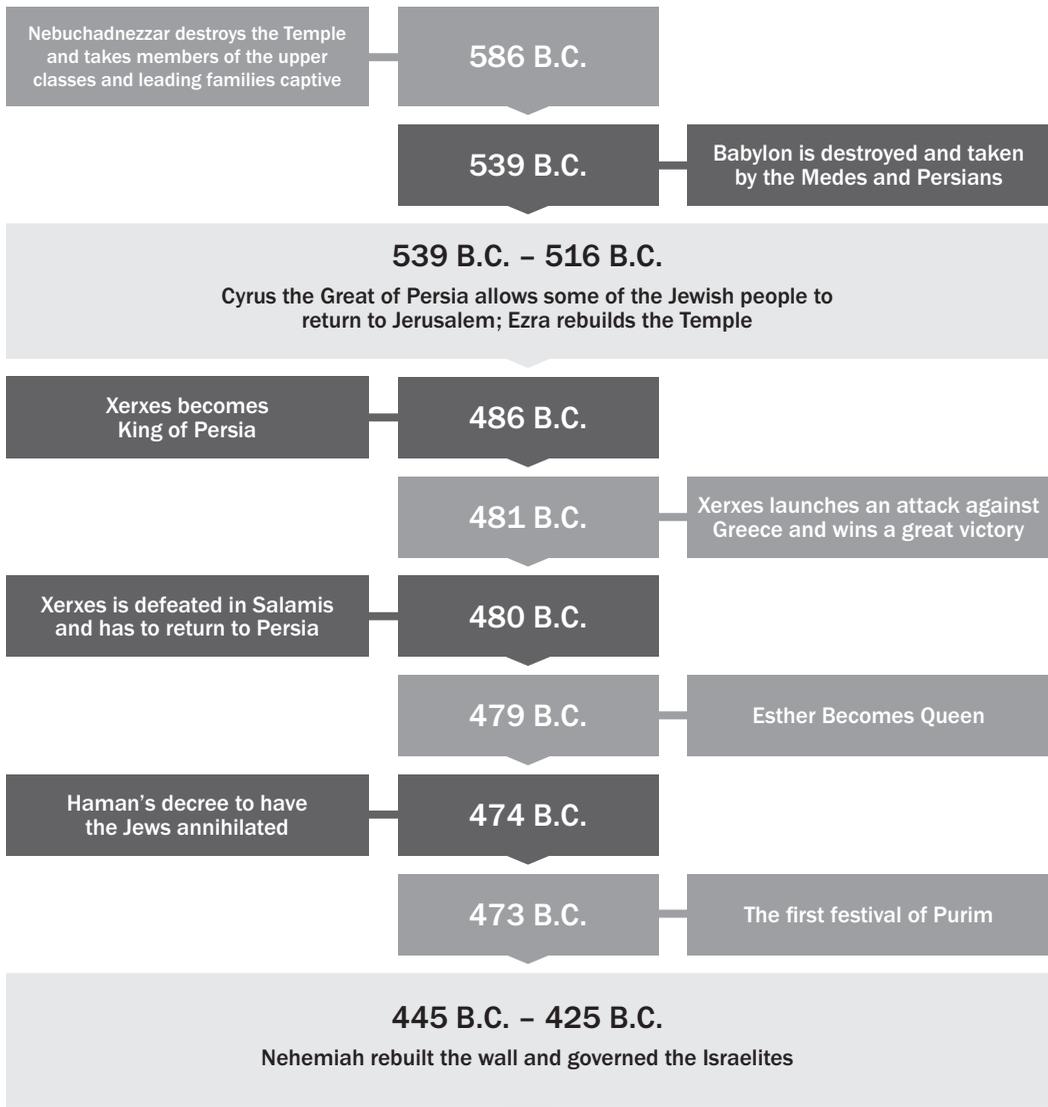
- **KING XERXES:** “... the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush”—Esther 1:1
- **HAMAN:** “King Xerxes honored Haman ... elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles.”—Esther 3:1
- **ESTHER:** “... King Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews.”—Esther 8:1
- **MORDECAI:** “The king took off his signet ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and presented it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed him over Haman’s estate.” —Esther 8:2

## DATE WRITTEN

Written in approximately 460 BC about the time period from 483 BC to 473 BC, during the first half of the reign of King Xerxes.

## AUTHOR

The author is unknown. Some scholars believe it could have been Mordecai or Nehemiah. There is no way to know definitively, but we know that he was Jewish.



## Getting The Most Out Of This Study

Work consumes the majority of our lives. The marketplace is more competitive than ever, exposing us to constant pressure, high levels of stress and huge demands on our time and energy, putting pressure on us to be available 24/7. It's not uncommon for leaders to be so focused on the bottom line that they take their eyes off of the needs of the people around them and even their own needs. Time for God? It's hard to imagine how to fit that in as well. Most of us are looking for answers ... the question is, are we looking in the right places?

**Your work matters to God.** The Bible is filled with instruction on how we can be successful leaders who have a positive influence on those around us. It is **the** resource to guide and direct us in our lives and our work! You may or may not have organizational leadership, but you always have influence in life and in work. We want to equip you to lead well and be an excellent example to others.

**This 8-session study is designed to help you see** how the leadership principles in the book of Esther apply to our lives as leaders—not just in theoretical ways, but in very practical ways that you can use to be intentional with your influence.

You have four ways to grow:

1. Through **reading the Scriptures** and **providing thoughtful answers** to the questions.
2. Through **participation in the discussion** with your group.
3. Through **application of the principles** studied and discussed during the next 8 sessions.
4. Through the **community** of believers you are building.

In some sessions, you'll find a reference to additional material called **Influence Builders**. These are available as PDFs you can download from the Workmatters website.

## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE STUDY

- **Pray for God to open your heart** and mind to His will and His message.
- **Mark your calendar** for the scheduled meetings.
- Sessions will **begin and end on time** to respect and honor everyone's time.
- **Participate** as fully as possible. If you're a talker, challenge yourself to listen more. If you're quiet, challenge yourself to share.
- **Maintain confidentiality** to provide a safe space for people to share experiences, and insights.
- **Read the book of Esther** along with suggested Scriptures.
- **Answer the questions** prior to each discussion, if possible.
- As you read, **put yourself in the story**. Relate the experiences to your work experiences to bring the Scriptures to life for you.
- **Pray about specific ways you can apply the principles** from this study to your work so you can **increase your influence at work**.

By the end of this study, you should have:

- A solid understanding of the book of Esther and how it is **relevant** to your work today.
- An actionable list of **biblical leadership principles** based on the lives of Esther and Mordecai.
- A clear understanding of how to apply the leadership principles to increase your **influence** at work and in community.
- **Growth** in your relationship with Christ.

## ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

Workmatters has additional resources that can augment your small group discussions. Make sure you visit:

- **workmatters.org/videos** for our latest Leadership Videos.
- **workmatters.org/blog** for the Workmatters blog.
- **workmatters.org/workplace-devotions** for YouVersion devotionals.
- **workmatters.org/workplace-scripture** for Workplace Scripture.
- **workmatters.org/audio** for audio content.

## For the Facilitator

We are very excited that you are facilitating a Workmatters Study. Your facilitation will help you grow as a leader and help other people pursue God's purpose for their work. This group can also fulfill the desire many people have for community.

### TIPS

Here are some simple tips to support your facilitation:

- Be sure to **get everyone's email address** so you can communicate before and after meetings.
- These studies are designed to be **facilitated discussions**. Avoid teaching. We encourage you to learn from one another.
- Focus on **quality discussion**. Don't be concerned about discussing every question or reading the questions word for word.
- Make time to share **Leadership Principles** at the end of each meeting. A complete list of suggested Leadership Principles for each week is provided at the **end of this guide**.
- Encourage everyone to **apply at least one lesson** discussed each week.
- **Build in accountability** by discussing how participants applied the principles and the difference it made.
- Make it a priority to create a **safe environment** for open conversation. Encourage confidentiality and respect for different perspectives.

### FACILITATOR RESOURCES

If you'd like a bit more detail on facilitating, or additional resources to support you through the process, we've got you covered. Visit [workmatters.org/studies](https://workmatters.org/studies) to find the following:

- Workmatters Studies
- Facilitator Guides
- Leadership Principles templates
- Serving Together—Tips for Where to Serve in Your Community
- Influence Builders for this study

## ONE FINAL NOTE

Thank you for your investment in not only your own leadership, but also in others. You may never know just how big an impact you have, simply by being the one to start a Workmatters Study in your organization, community or church.

The marketplace needs more people like you—people who are willing to invest in others, stretch out of their comfort zones a bit, and take the initiative to start the next study.

Keep your eyes open for those who have the potential to facilitate a study. Let them know about the potential you see in them, encourage them and walk alongside them.

- Be a **multiplier**.
- God has placed **future facilitators** in your group.
- Encourage two participants in your study to **start and facilitate a study!**

## For the Individual

We are very excited that you've chosen to participate in a Workmatters Study.

**FOR STUDY PARTICIPANTS:** Keep in mind that meetings are designed to be facilitated discussions that encourage a rich flow of experiences and insights. We also want to encourage you to listen to the ideas and experiences of others, since that is often the source of the richest insights.

**FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDIES:** This study can also be used as a personal Bible study. We recommend that you answer the questions thoughtfully.

Keep in mind that you can gain even deeper insights and a richer experience simply by discussing the content and the answers to the questions with one or two other people.

### ONE FINAL NOTE

Thank you investing in your leadership. You may never know just how big an impact you will have through the example you set as you apply the biblical principles you learn to your work.

The marketplace needs more people like you—people who are willing to invest in their own leadership. You can multiply your impact by taking the initiative to start the next Workmatters Study in your organization, community or church.

If you will prayerfully consider being a multiplier, you can trust that God will equip you if it is what He is calling you to do.

“ The Bible is filled with instructions on how we can be successful leaders who have a positive influence on those around us. ”

—Workmatters

“ You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. ”

- Matthew 5:13-16





## INFLUENCE MATTERS AT WORK

[ 10 MINUTES FOR 30-MINUTE DISCUSSION ]  
[ 30 MINUTES FOR 60-MINUTE DISCUSSION ]

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### FACILITATOR:

The important point to drive home is why we would want to be intentional about our influence at work.

Do you know who you influence today? Many of us probably have an idea of who we influence—the people close to us, such as family, close friends and coworkers. In this study, you’ll look at who you influence and how our sphere of influence is typically much broader than we realize.

Let’s begin by getting on the same page regarding what we mean by influence.

### INFLUENCE DEFINED\*

*The capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself.*

*The power to shape policy or ensure favorable treatment from someone, especially through status, contacts, or wealth.*

\*Oxford Dictionaries, (accessed Oct. 20, 2014): [www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com)

“I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.”

– Psalm 34:4–5

We all influence others—either positively or negatively. There are people you know you influence, like those you work with closely each day. But consider that there are others who are influenced by you, without your awareness or intention.

### Examples of people you influence include:

- Other employees of your company.
- Management in different areas of the organization.
- Customers and suppliers.
- People you interact with over the phone or online.

## WHO DO YOU INFLUENCE?

While we hope you learn many things from this study, increasing your positive influence is the main focus. Each session, you'll write down specific insights you gained to help you do just that. This exercise is designed to get you started. We recommend you give it thoughtful consideration. Please complete this exercise before the first meeting of your study, if possible.

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### FACILITATOR:

Explain that participants will be praying about who they influence and how they can improve their influence with at least one person.

## STEP 1: LEVELS OF INFLUENCE



In this study, you have an opportunity to become more aware of the degree of influence you have on people and gain a broader awareness of those you influence. We're going to keep it simple and define the Levels of Influence as **1. Powerful; 2. Average; 3. Passing; 4. No Influence.**

The closer you get to the center, the more effort you usually put forth in those relationships.

Just to make sure we're all on the same page, we'll define these levels of influence based on the quality of the relationship, the credibility you've earned and the exposure you have to the people at each level.

1. **Powerful:** Strong relationship, excellent credibility and a wide breadth of exposure
2. **Average:** Moderate relationship, average credibility and some exposure
3. **Passing:** Weak relationship, marginal credibility and very little exposure
4. **No Influence:** No relationship, no established credibility and insignificant exposure

## STEP 2: WHO YOU INFLUENCE

We'll never know the full extent of our influence. People whose names we may never know are watching us all the time. Let's take a moment to broaden your awareness with respect to who you influence. We've listed a few possible groups below for your consideration.

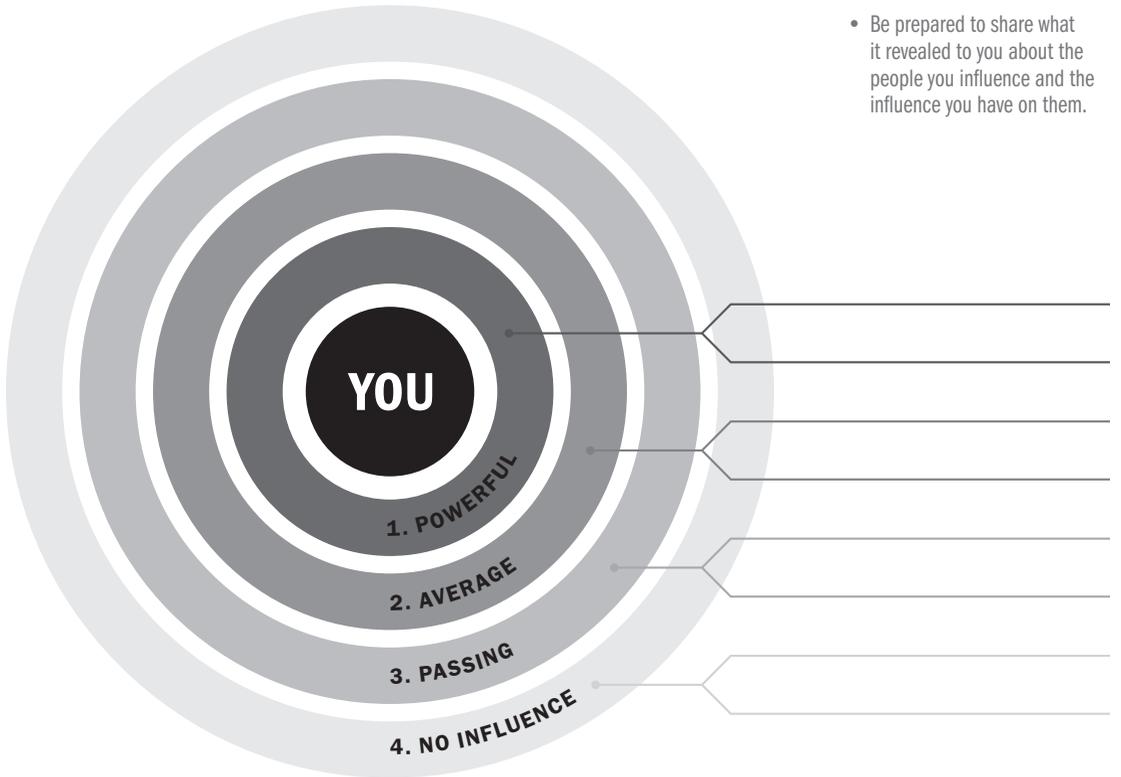
### POTENTIAL GROUPS

Coworkers in the same department/function	Peers who work for other companies
Coworkers in other departments	Friends
Executives in your company	Family members
Administrative team members	People in your community
Vendors	People in your church
Customers	Other:

You'll use the next image as your **Influence Map**.

## INFLUENCE MAP

As you consider the different groups, write the names or initials of at least one or two people you influence at each level in the white space. This will help you expand your awareness of the people you influence.



**FACILITATOR:**

- Ask participants what doing the exercise revealed to them.
- Be prepared to share what it revealed to you about the people you influence and the influence you have on them.

► What did you notice out of doing this exercise?

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### STEP 3: “INCREASE YOUR INFLUENCE” EXERCISE

**Now, it’s time to choose someone whom you would really like to influence more profoundly right now.** You’ll focus on increasing your influence with that person each week as you go through the eight sessions. Ideally, this person is someone who impacts your work (a boss, a leader in your company or a coworker, for example).

1. **Write the name of the person** below, along with the group this person represents.
2. On the left, **write a number from 1 to 4** based on the level of influence you think you have on that person.
3. On the right, **write the number that represents the level of influence you would like to have.** It should be greater than what you currently have.

“INCREASE YOUR INFLUENCE”	CURRENT INFLUENCE	INFLUENCE GOAL
Name:		
Group:		

Throughout this study, you’ll learn ways to increase your influence from Esther and Mordecai—as well as ways to destroy influence from Haman. Each session, part of your assignment is to **take what you learned and practice on the person you identified.** Then **make a note of the differences you notice** in how effective you are with them and how you can use what you learn with others.

You’ll discuss **Increasing Your Influence** each session to share experiences and support one another through challenges. Remember, **the next eight sessions is just a starting point.** The real challenge is to continue increasing your influence long after the study is completed, as God directs you.

► **What do you most want to get out of this study?**

*Be sure to write it down. You’ll want to refer back to it in Session 8.*

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## ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS

You can experience even greater support by **choosing an accountability partner**. This is someone in the study you partner with to hold each other accountable to the specific commitments you both make as you go through the study.

When you share your commitments with another person who cares about your success, you'll see that it helps you rise above the challenges that might otherwise hinder your progress and supports you in staying motivated even when it's hard.

“ God is the ultimate source of all power and influence. He gives it to various human leaders for a season, and He warns us that He will hold us accountable. Thus, we are called to use power and influence with grace and truth and to exercise power and influence in service to Him and for the good of others.\* ”

—Dr. Kenneth Boa, President & Founder of Reflections Ministries

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### FACILITATOR:

- Having an accountability partner can make a big difference in each person's success.
- Encourage the group to identify one person they will connect with on a weekly basis to share commitments, challenges and successes.
- It may not be practical for everyone in the group, but it will be very beneficial for those who do it.

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\* Dr. Boa, K., (2005 Oct 28) "Power and Influence," (accessed on November 7, 2014): bible.org

## WRAP UP

[ 5 MINUTES ]

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**FACILITATOR:**

- Don't do this alone! Invite participants to facilitate the session of their choice.
- No pressure. Not everyone is comfortable facilitating discussion.

**PRAYER:** Share prayer requests, if desired. Close in prayer.

Pray that God will show you what you can do to grow and **increase your influence** at work.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Pray about and connect with one person who can be your accountability partner. Ideally, that person will be a fellow participant.

**READING:** Read Esther chapter 1 and answer the questions in the guide, if possible.

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**FACILITATOR:**

- Let everyone know you'll send an email reminder of the activities and invite them to contact you if they have questions.
- Ask them to let you know if they will not be able to attend a session.
- Close in prayer.

## MORE OF GOD AT WORK

### GOD'S PROMISES ON INFLUENCE

Mordecai provided Esther with wise counseling and mentoring. Esther was obedient to Mordecai and learned how to gain influence within the culture she was placed using the strengths God gave her. She used her influence to make a positive difference.

As you go through this study, we challenge you to notice the influence you have on others and how you can increase your influence for good. Consider these promises of God when we commit to following His ways:

- **Psalm 34:4–5** “I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.”
- **Psalm 119:1–3** “Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep His statutes and seek Him with all their heart—they do no wrong but follow His ways.”
- **Proverbs 2:6–8** “For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds success in store for the upright, He is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for He guards the course of the just and protects the way of His faithful ones.”
- **Proverbs 13:5** “Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.”
- **Proverbs 28:18** “The one whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but the one whose ways are perverse will fall into the pit.”

With such promises in mind, you have a tremendous opportunity to see God work even more powerfully in your work. Seek God and trust Him to use your circumstances for good and give you favor where you need it.

**“ Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep His statutes and seek Him with all their heart—they do no wrong but follow His ways. ”**

- Psalm 119:1-3



## SESSION 2 | Your Influence Matters

# 2

### OBSERVE YOUR INFLUENCE

[ 10 MINUTES ]

Do you know you are being watched? People notice the way you do your work, they listen to what you share about your weekend, and they observe how you react to what people do and say—not in a creepy sort of way.

We all notice what others do and say so we can understand how they think, how to work with them and what we might need to watch out for. We also take notice to learn—both what to do and what not to do.

► **What are people learning as they observe you at work—the way you approach your work; the way you treat people?**

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#### FACILITATOR:

- Start meeting promptly at the agreed upon time.
- Open in prayer.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to direct the conversation and open your hearts to what God wants to show you through the story of Esther.

### SCRIPTURE: QUEEN VASHTI FIRED

#### Esther 1:4–12

For a full 180 days he [King Xerxes] displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty. When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king's palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest who were in the citadel of Susa. The garden had hangings of white and blue linen, fastened with cords of white linen and purple material to silver rings on marble pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and other costly stones. Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine

was abundant, in keeping with the king’s liberality. By the king’s command each guest was allowed to drink with no restrictions, for the king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished.

Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes.

On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who served him—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Karkas— to bring before him Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at. But when the attendants delivered the king’s command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.

## DISCUSSION

*[ 15 MINUTES FOR 30-MINUTE DISCUSSION ]*  
*[ 20 MINUTES FOR 60-MINUTE DISCUSSION ]*

### SHOW OFF

In chapter 1, King Xerxes holds an elaborate celebration in preparation for the battle he was planning against Greece. The purpose was to plan his battle strategy against Greece with the leaders of the 127 provinces of his kingdom and show off his wealth and power.

Can you imagine partying for six months straight?! He most likely traveled across his kingdom to accomplish his goal. He was, we could say, on a self-promotion publicity tour.

**1. What do these verses tell you about Xerxes’ character and leadership?**

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We can fool ourselves into thinking certain behavior is good or normal. But we need to be careful about the temptation that can accompany power. For example:

- Ambition can become twisted so that we will do anything, including compromising our values, to get ahead.
- Serving others can become about making ourselves look good or better than others.
- The good we've done can lead to pridefulness.
- We might expect to be rewarded when we demonstrate good characteristics.

After his defeat\* in Salamis, King Xerxes returned home and decided to continue the party for seven more days for all of the people in his hometown "both great and small."

Imagine what kind of party this was.

- Wine was served in goblets of gold and the royal wine was abundant, in keeping with the king's liberality.
- Everyone was free to drink as much or as little as he wanted. It was essentially an open bar.
- Queen Vashti was having her own party with the women.

**2. When have you seen people use social gatherings at work effectively to build relationships and strengthen influence? What do you think made them effective?**

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\* "Xerxes" (accessed November 23, 2014): [www.biblicaltraining.org/library](http://www.biblicaltraining.org/library)



Law prohibited anyone from looking on the faces of the royal women. Persian women of this position went about in closed carriages so as not to be exposed to the gaze of the general public. Vashti was requested to do something beneath her station and demeaning to her. She stood up for herself, unwilling to compromise her dignity.

Walton J., Matthews V. and Chavalas M., (2000), Intersity Press, *Bible Background Commentary* (p. 485)

## THE PARTY ENDS ABRUPTLY

### Review Esther 1:10–12.

At this point, the King made a rash decision “under the influence” that put him and his queen in a difficult situation (see side note). He demanded his Queen show off her beauty for the men at his party. It was against Persian custom for a woman to appear before a gathering of men. At the same time, it was not acceptable to refuse the command of the king.

The king was not just Vashti’s husband. He was basically her boss as well. It’s probably safe to say that we have all had people—our boss or other leaders in the company—ask us to do something that seemed inappropriate.

### 3. What do you do when someone in a leadership position makes a request of you that challenges your integrity?

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### 4. God gives us free will. What can you do to be more diligent in your relationship with God so you can avoid poor decisions and have a more positive influence?

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**IF ONLY DOING A 30-MINUTE DISCUSSION,  
SKIP TO WORK APPLICATION ON PAGE 18**

**FOR 60-MINUTE DISCUSSION,  
CONTINUE STUDY BELOW**

[ 15 MINUTES ]

**SCRIPTURE: SAVING FACE**

**Esther 1:13–20**

Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times and were closest to the king—Karshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memukan, the seven nobles of Persia and Media who had special access to the king and were highest in the kingdom.

“According to law, what must be done to Queen Vashti?” he asked. “She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes that the eunuchs have taken to her.”

Then Memukan replied in the presence of the king and the nobles, “Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king but also against all the nobles and the peoples of all the provinces of King Xerxes. For the queen’s conduct will become known to all the women, and so they will despise their husbands and say, ‘King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she would not come.’ This very day the Persian and Median women of the nobility who have heard about the queen’s conduct will respond to all the king’s nobles in the same way. There will be no end of disrespect and discord.

“Therefore, if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be repealed, that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Also let the king give her royal position to someone else who is better than she. Then when the king’s edict is proclaimed throughout all his vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest.”

**ib**

**INFLUENCE BUILDER:  
PRACTICAL TIPS TO  
INCREASE YOUR INFLUENCE**

Being intentional about your influence can have a huge impact on success in every area of life. For tips to help you increase your influence visit [workmatters.org/studies](http://workmatters.org/studies) and look for the Influence Builders.

The king now had to save face. It just wouldn't do if there were no consequences when word got out that Vashti refused the king's command. The men were concerned that wives everywhere would think that if it was OK for Vashti to disobey her husband, it would be just fine for them ... and that would be disastrous.

So the king consulted his executive team and they determined he must divorce his queen, banish her, and find a new queen. This was a strategic power move. The king could have ordered her death, which would have sent a totally different message.

According to the **IVP Commentary**, demotion within the harem was significant. Vashti was essentially stripped of her power, prestige and position. She would have no chance of an official presence in Xerxes' court and she could no longer hope to receive favors from the king. Even so, Vashti was fortunate to get away with her life.

**5. What consequences have you seen as a result of people at work who don't control their anger? What impact does anger have on a person's influence at work?**

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“ I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ”

- John 15:5

**6. Successful leaders have a circle of people they trust who can provide wise advice in difficult situations. Who do you have in your inner circle of trusted advisors?**

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## INFLUENCE TODAY

“Sociologists tell us that even the most introverted individual will influence ten thousand other people during his or her lifetime. This amazing statistic was shared with me by my associate, Tim Elmore. Tim and I concluded that all of us are leading in some areas, while in other areas we are being led. No one is excluded from being a leader or a follower. Realizing your potential as a leader is your responsibility.

The prominent leader of any group is quite easy to discover. Just observe the people as they gather. If an issue is to be decided, who is the person whose opinion seems most valuable? Who is the one others watch the most when the issue is being discussed? Who is the one with whom people quickly agree? Most importantly, who is the one the others follow? Answers to these questions will help you discern who the real leader is in a particular group.”

\*Maxwell, J., 1993, Developing the Leader Within You

### FACILITATOR:

Use the modern business example provided, or a current example from the news or your own experience, to connect the themes of this session’s lesson to the experiences we face at work today.

### 7. How does this research impact your perspective on the influence you have and the importance of becoming more aware of how you can grow?

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## WORK APPLICATION

[ 5-10 MINUTES ]

King Xerxes made a poor judgment call that produced negative consequences for which he had to do damage control. As we go through the book of Esther, notice both the subtle and obvious influences on others in the story and the people in general. Also, take note of where God is working behind the scenes. God uses the imperfect character traits of King Xerxes to set the stage for His great plan to save the Jewish people.

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**FACILITATOR:**

- Encourage participants to choose one idea discussed to put into practice this week.
- Ask them to share how they will put it into practice.

► **What one lesson can you take away from the discussion and apply to your work this week?**

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**INCREASING YOUR INFLUENCE:** Think about the person you selected with whom you want to increase your influence. Write down the actions you'll take to increase your influence with them this week. Also, write the results you notice during the week.

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**PRAYER:** Share prayer requests, if desired. Close in prayer.

## NEXT STEPS

**PUT IT TO WORK:** Practice the actions you wrote down with the person with whom you want to increase your influence. Before the next meeting, write down the results you noticed below.

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**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Schedule time to meet with your accountability partner for at least 15 minutes to discuss how you're living out the actions you identified. This can be done by phone or in person. If time is a challenge, write each other a brief email to discuss your progress.

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### RESOURCES:

Check out the **Influence Builder: Practical Tips to Increase Influence** at [workmatters.org/studies](http://workmatters.org/studies).

Share your biggest insight from this session on social media and tag it #myworkmatters

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### FACILITATOR:

Remember to invite participants who are interested to facilitate one session.

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### FACILITATOR:

- Let everyone know you'll send an email reminder for the next session.
- Invite them to contact you if they have questions.
- Ask them to let you know if they will not be able to attend a session.
- Close in prayer.