



In One Ear, Out The Other

Part 1 - "Acceptance Magnets"

Small Group Material

October 15th, 2017

Leader Guide

Bottom Line: *Your friends will determine the direction and quality of your life.*

Study Verses: *Proverbs 13:20, Ephesians 1:3-6, Proverbs 27:17, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*

Define The Win: *Participants would take inventory on their friendships and relationships. They would pinpoint the influence these connection points are having on their character and integrity. Group members would recognize they are accepted by Christ and no longer need to seek acceptance through their relationships with others.*

Insightful Quotes

"The people you surround yourself with influence your behaviors, so choose your friends wisely." -David Buettner

"The more we study engagement, we see time and time again that just being next to certain people actually aligns your brain with them. This means the people you hang out with actually have an impact on your engagement with reality beyond what you can explain. And one of the effects is you become alike." -Moran Cerf

"Associate yourself with people of good quality, for it is better to be alone than in bad company." -Booker T. Washington

Key Points

- *We are acceptance magnets.*
- *Acceptance paves the way to influence.*

- *Determine the direction of the influence.*
- *It is better to be alone than surrounded by those of negative influence.*
- *Godly wisdom loses its potency and power when it's not put into practice.*

ENCOUNTER

- **What pieces of wisdom did your parents give you that went “in one ear and out the other”? Why did you ignore their words? How did failing to listen to their advice lead to regret?**
- **Fill in the blank: _____ will determine the direction and quality of your life. What makes you answer in the way that you do? Over time how has your answer changed or stayed the same?**
- **We are acceptance magnets. How did this truth play out in your life growing up? Why do we naturally gravitate towards those that accept us? Do you believe the pull of the acceptance magnets lessens, grows stronger or stays the same as we get older?**

FORMATION

- **Read Proverbs 13:20. On Sunday, Brett Eddy made the case that our friends determine the direction and quality of our life. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Why is it easy for this wisdom found in Proverbs to go “in one ear and out the other”?**
- **Read Ephesians 1:3-6. How does knowing we are fully accepted and loved by Christ impact the drive to seek acceptance in our relationships with others?**
- **Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and Proverbs 27:17. Why is a supportive community needed if we want to reflect Christ’s heart in our lives?**

EXPRESSION

- **Read the quotes from David Buettner, Booker T. Washington, and Moran Cerf. How are your relationships and friendships shaping the person you are becoming?**
- **Determine the direction of the influence. Are there relationships that are having a negative impact on your life, your integrity, and your pursuit of Christ? What needs to change with these relationships?**

- **Determine the direction of the influence. Are there relationships that are having a positive impact on your life, your integrity, and your pursuit of Christ? How can you further develop these connection points?**
- **If acceptance paves the way to influence, who needs to know that you accept them and are rooting for them? How can taking this posture deepen the influence you have with this individual?**

LEADER INSIGHT: *Over the years our parents, family members, teachers and coaches shared with us words of wisdom about life. Sometimes the advice came out of left field and didn't make much sense. How could one's eyes be bigger than their stomach? Would our face really get stuck that way if we didn't stop with that smirk?*

Yet, peppered in between the random and silly advice, were insightful nuggets that helped us navigate through life. Money doesn't grow on trees. Treat others like you want to be treated. It's better to give than receive. If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

If we soaked up every ounce of wisdom they told us, the trajectory of our lives would have been drastically different. Sadly, all of us can think of times when their words went "in one ear and out the other." Because of this, a lot of heartbreak, confusion, pain, and shame was experienced. Failing to put into practice what we heard is what lead to many of our greatest regrets.

Take for instance the area of friendships and relationships. Our parents went on and on about avoiding the drama, not falling for peer pressure, and that in order to get a friend, you need to be a friend. They urged us to steer clear of the wrong crowd. We were told that it's easier for those we hang around with to pull us down than it is for us to pull them up. They asked us whether we would jump off a bridge if our friends did.

As we attempted to develop our sense of identity, many of their words fell on deaf ears. We shook our heads and then went about our business trying to find the one thing we craved the most: ACCEPTANCE. By nature, we are acceptance magnets and gravitate towards those who accept us and love us. This force is so powerful that if we're not careful, we were willing to make unwise decisions just to fit in and find our tribe. We exchanged our integrity for whatever acceptance and love we could get our hands on.

Now, there are some who believe the allure of peer pressure lessens as we grow older. The influence our friendships and relationships have on the person we are becoming is minimal now as adults. But, it's simply not true. The same truth that went "in one ear and out the other" is just as relevant and just as true today.

Scripture and science show us time and time again that our connection points form and mold us. They can take their toll on our heart as well as make it come

alive. We are the sum of the people we surround ourselves with. Quite simply, our friends will determine the quality and direction of our lives.

Because this is true, we must pause and determine the direction of the influence. What connections are causing chaos? Who is dragging us down? Which relationships are having a negative effect on our attitude, actions, and perspective? Where are we looking for acceptance in all the wrong places? How can we cut off this influence? On the flip side, what relationships are helping us flourish? Who in our lives spurs us on to pursue God's heart? What connections cause you to gain confidence in our character? How can we tap into these relationships and up the influence they have in our lives?

We must choose our friends wisely. We can't let this important truth go "in one ear and out the other."