

Are You an Influencer?

A recent report detailed that the highest paid social media influencer in 2025 is being paid over \$3 million per sponsored post and has over 647 million followers on Instagram. Social media influencers are people with large followings who shape opinions, set trends, and persuade others to act. They persuade people to buy certain products, and businesses are eager to partner with influencers that can impact their bottom line. In a time where this is possible, many are trying to make a living by filming content for social media to be an influencer.

Influencers can only be effective if there are those upon which they can have an influence. I think it's a worthy question to ask, who are you allowing yourself to be influenced by? There are both good and bad influences that we have access to, whether it be on social media, work, family, or other personal contacts. It's up to each person to determine who they will allow to have influence over them. The bible warns about evil companions: *"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals.'"* (1 Corinthians 15:33) *"My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent."* (Proverbs 1:10) Bad influences pull us away from God. Good influences point us toward Him. Who are you being influenced by?

On the other hand, we are all influencers. Not like the high-earning ones we mentioned earlier, but we are examples to people for either good or bad. To be a good influence, we need the courage to be different from the world. *"How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!"* (Psalm 1:1) *"The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, But the way of the wicked leads them astray."* (Proverbs 12:26)

How is your influence and who are you allowing yourself to be influenced by?

- by Josh McCord

"You Think You Are Right"

We often hear the accusation, "You folks think you are right and everyone else is wrong!" Well, of course we do. So does the one who makes such an accusation. So does everyone else. Anyone who does not think he is right will quit thinking that, and start thinking what he does think is right.

Even if a man thinks that it does not make any difference what a person believes, he believes he is right about that, and thinks those who think it does make a difference are wrong! Think on that for a bit.

- by Mark White

Abraham Lincoln on America . . .

We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!

- Abraham Lincoln

The Danger of Bitterness

Bitterness is one of those sins that we tend to overlook or excuse. It often hides deep within the heart, but its effects are deadly and far-reaching. God's Word warns plainly: *"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled"* (Hebrews 12:15).

Please observe a few important truths about this destructive attitude:

1. Bitterness Causes Harm to Ourselves

When a person harbors bitterness, it eats away at his own heart. Instead of peace, there is turmoil. Instead of joy, there is misery. The bitter person often thinks he's hurting the one who he imagines has wronged him — but in reality, he's only destroying his own spiritual well-being. Proverbs 14:30 says, *"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones."* Bitterness is spiritual poison. It robs us of the *"peace that passes understanding"* (Philippians 4:7) and separates us from the joy of serving Christ.

2. Bitterness Destroys Relationships with Others

Bitterness cannot stay hidden for long. It eventually shows itself in harsh words, cold attitudes, and an unforgiving spirit. Paul wrote, *"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"* (Ephesians 4:31–32). When we hold grudges or bitterness, our relationships — in our families, friendships, and among brethren — will inevitably suffer. Love cannot flourish where bitterness reigns.

3. Bitterness Produces Strife in the Local Church

Churches have been torn apart because someone refused to let go of resentment. One bitter heart can infect others. Hebrews 12:15 warns that "many" can be defiled by one root of bitterness. Instead of unity and peace, there will be factions, gossip, and distrust. Satan delights in such situations. He knows that when brethren are consumed with personal grudges, they lose focus on their mission of preaching the gospel and edifying one another (Philippians 2:2–4). Brethren, we must be on guard! A church cannot thrive spiritually where bitterness is allowed to grow unchecked.

4. If We Continue in Bitterness, It Will Cost Us Our Souls

This is the most serious point of all. The one who clings to bitterness is walking in darkness and cannot have fellowship with God (1 John 2:9–11). To continue in bitterness is to live in open rebellion against the very heart of the gospel — the grace and mercy that God has shown us through Christ. Unless we repent, bitterness will drag us down to eternal ruin.

Bitterness is a root that must be pulled up — completely and immediately. Don't let it take hold in your heart. Remember the mercy you've received from God, and extend that same mercy to others. Let us strive to be a people who *are "kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven" us* (Ephesians 4:32).

- by Greg Gwin