

Jacquelyne Horbrook

HOW TO BE A  
**CHRISTIAN  
INFLUENCER**

Making Social Media  
a Social Ministry



InterVarsity Press  
ivpress.com

Taken from *How to Be a Christian Influencer* by Jacquelyne Horbrook

Copyright © 2026 by Jacquelyne Horbrook

Published by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL

[www.ivpress.com](http://www.ivpress.com)

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	The Call to Influence	<i>1</i>
<b>2</b>	Where We Fit In	<i>10</i>
<b>3</b>	Marketing and Excellence Matter	<i>20</i>
<b>4</b>	Innovation Required	<i>40</i>
<b>5</b>	Four Components of Influence	<i>54</i>
<b>6</b>	How to Grow Your Platform	<i>66</i>
<b>7</b>	Navigating Social Media	<i>74</i>
<b>8</b>	Making Disciples Through Influence	<i>101</i>
<b>9</b>	Stewarding Your Influence Well	<i>117</i>
	Acknowledgments	<i>123</i>
	Suggested Resources	<i>125</i>
	Notes	<i>129</i>

# 1

## THE CALL TO INFLUENCE

When people ask me about my call to influence, I always say it started long before I was even born. It began with my parents, Tanya and Michael Horbrook, who laid the foundation through their faith, integrity, and example. Their influence shaped the way I see the world, long before I ever realized I had a calling of my own.

I firmly believe that we inherit influence before we even learn how to wield it. Whether we realize it or not, we all start out under someone else's influence (good or bad), shaped by the prayers they prayed, the sacrifices they made, and the examples they set. My father in particular left an unforgettable mark. He wasn't just my dad—he was my first pastor, and through him, I learned what it meant to step boldly into my calling. His influence didn't come from big stages or bright lights. It started on the street corners of Chicago.

### STREET MINISTRY AND THE DIGITAL AGE

My dad used to tell me a story about when he first became a minister. Back in the day, he'd grab his bullhorn and a stack of tracts and head out to the corner of 63rd Street and Ashland in

Englewood, Chicago, to preach the gospel. If you grew up in a traditional church setting, you probably already know what tracts are. But for those who didn't, tracts were small, pocket-sized brochures, often illustrated in a comic book style, designed to break down the message of Jesus in a way that was simple, creative, and impactful. Tracts were basically the Instagram posts of their time—short, bold, and meant to catch your attention.

It's funny to think how something so small could carry such



THE METHOD HAS  
CHANGED, BUT THE  
MISSION REMAINS  
THE SAME—  
REACHING PEOPLE  
WHERE THEY ARE.

a big message, but that was the whole point. These weren't just papers to pass out; they were tools of connection, conversation starters that could lead to transformation. And my dad knew how to use them. With his tracts in one hand and his bullhorn in the other, he was meeting people right where they

were, creating a direct line between the message and those who needed to hear it.

This wasn't some quiet, behind-the-pulpit kind of ministry. It was a street team ministry. The goal wasn't to fill a pew but to plant a seed. It was all about taking the church outside the four walls, meeting people in their everyday lives, and sharing the gospel in the most direct way possible.

And while it was effective, it didn't come without risks, some of which were life-threatening. One day, while my dad was preaching, a young man pulled a gun on him, attempting to

rob him. Most of us would have dropped the bullhorn, handed over the wallet, and called it a day. But not my dad. Instead of freezing or backing down, he did something bold and maybe even a little crazy. He started singing. At the top of his lungs, he belted out, “One, one, one! One way to Jesus, baptized in Jesus’ name!” Now, I’ll be honest, my dad is not the greatest singer. But that didn’t stop him. His voice got louder, his confidence grew, and he kept preaching with a gun pointed at him.

As he sang and preached, something shifted. The gunman changed his mind. Without a word, he turned and ran away, leaving my dad standing there with his bullhorn, his voice echoing through the streets of Chicago.

### THE DIGITAL HIGHWAYS AND HEDGES

That story makes me think about the parallels between street team ministry and sharing the gospel on social media today. Sure, the tools are different—back then, it was bullhorns and tracts; now, it’s hashtags and Instagram stories—but the concept is the same. Social media is like a digital street corner, giving us the opportunity to reach people who might never walk into a church. The potential to spread hope and truth to thousands, even millions, is right at our fingertips.

A staggering 72 percent of the public uses some form of social media.<sup>1</sup> That’s not just a statistic but a wake-up call for believers who are serious about their calling to influence. On average, people spend two hours and thirty-one minutes per day on social media, with younger generations spending even more time. Studies project that social media users will grow to

5.85 billion by 2027, meaning that more than half the world's population will be actively engaging on these platforms.<sup>2</sup>

But with all that influence comes a responsibility. And history has shown us that influence can be a gift—or a weapon.

### THE CORRUPTION OF INFLUENCE

Most people don't think of Lucifer as an influencer, but he was. Just not in a way that led to anything good.

Jealousy influenced Lucifer to rebel.

Lucifer influenced Eve to second-guess God's Word.

Eve influenced Adam to disobey, and just like that, sin went viral. One moment, they were living in paradise. The next, they were hiding, blaming each other, and figuring out life on the other side of Eden.

This is how influence works—it's shared. Just like a trending post, it moves from one person to the next, reshaping thoughts, decisions, and even destinies. A single moment of deception turned into humanity's most catastrophic repost. And the worst part? It couldn't be deleted.

Lucifer's mistake wasn't just rebellion. It was that he wanted more influence than he was given. Instead of using his influence to worship God, he wanted to be God.

Isaiah 14:13-14 records his exact words: "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God . . . I will make myself like the Most High."

Pride not only caused Lucifer's fall but also redefined his entire purpose. That same toxic cycle is still at work today. We've seen pastors fall when their platforms became more about their name than God's name. We've seen influencers

who once stood for truth start compromising for clicks, views, and brand deals. We've seen leaders, celebrities, and everyday people allow their influence to shift from something pure to something self-serving.

Proverbs 16:18 makes it plain: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."

That's why guarding our influence is so important. If the enemy can't stop us from having influence, he'll try to corrupt it.

Which brings us to a classic lesson in influence, straight from Saturday morning cartoons.

### THE TOM AND JERRY DILEMMA

I remember watching *The Tom and Jerry Show* as a kid. Tom, the mischievous cat, would get stuck in a moral dilemma and suddenly, two tiny versions of himself would pop up on his shoulders. On one side, the good angel—halo shining, voice calm, telling him to walk away and make the right choice. And on the other? The bad angel, red with a pitchfork, hyping him up to do something reckless.

That, my friends, is influence in action. Every day, we have voices in our ears nudging us toward decisions—some wise, some disastrous.

In this world of social media, it is extremely easy to lose yourself and become enticed by the notoriety that comes with being an influencer. These days, it doesn't take much to become an influencer on social media. A nice website and a few catchy quotes can be enough for people to jump on the bandwagon without hesitation. But with the price of influence so low and the demand for it so high, we are often left to swim

in a sea of saltwater, thirsty for anyone with relevant-sounding solutions. Our faith in God has waxed cold as our hope in humankind grows stronger with every well-captioned post. We are living in the days that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:5: “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (KJV). Just look around. Every day we see more and more experts, gurus, and influencers come to the surface claiming to hold the keys to success, deceiving many who desire to be quenched.

### RECLAIMING THE PURPOSE OF INFLUENCE

Somewhere along the way, the meaning of *influencer* got hijacked. What was once about impact has become about image. Influence was never supposed to be about selling detox tea or going viral for a trendy dance. It was meant to glorify God and guide people toward him.

So here’s the reality check: We don’t need more influencers chasing clout. We need more influencers chasing Christ.

It’s time for us, sincere followers of Christ, to reclaim the true purpose of influence. Not for popularity, not for self-promotion, but for something far greater. And that starts with understanding what Christian influence is truly supposed to be.

1. Publicly share your belief in Jesus Christ. (No, not just in your Instagram bio—live it out loud.)
2. Live a life that exemplifies godly principles. (Your content should match your character.)
3. Never lose sight of the Great Commission. (Because Jesus didn’t tell us to keep our faith to ourselves.)

Speaking of the Great Commission, let's look at what Jesus said. In Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV), he makes it crystal clear: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Let's break this down:

- "Go therefore"—Don't sit still. Influence is active, not passive.
- "Make disciples"—Influence isn't about followers; it's about leading people to Christ.
- "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you"—This isn't a "live your truth" situation. Jesus gave clear instructions, and part of influence is helping others live according to his Word.
- "I am with you always"—You're not doing this alone. Influence with faith, not fear.

The problem is, too many Christians have gotten comfortable staying silent. Maybe it's fear of criticism, fear of rejection, or fear of not being relatable. But Jesus never said, "Go and blend in with the crowd." He said, "Go and make disciples."

If we don't publicly share our faith, the world will publicly replace it with something else.

Publicly sharing our belief in Jesus is biblical but also practically endorses our faith in him. Studies show there has been a steady increase in the number of Americans who say they are atheists, agnostics, religiously unaffiliated, or believe "nothing in particular."<sup>3</sup> With every passing generation, more and more people are separating from Jesus. This is why it is even more

necessary that believers are vocal and visible with their faith. Some Christians might feel that sharing their beliefs publicly could negatively impact their careers. However, the Scriptures are clear on this: “If you are ashamed of me and of my teaching, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:26 GNT). The consequences of not sharing our faith are far greater than those we might currently anticipate.

### **JOSEPH AND DAVID: TWO INFLUENCERS, TWO OUTCOMES**

Joseph didn’t ask to be an influencer. His circumstances positioned him for it. He was betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, and thrown into prison. By all accounts, he should have

**INFLUENCE ISN'T  
JUST ABOUT WHO'S  
FOLLOWING YOU—IT'S  
ABOUT WHERE YOU'RE  
LEADING THEM.**

been bitter, broken, or at the very least, silent. But instead, he let godly influence shape his story. His integrity and faith elevated him to a position where he could save an entire nation from famine (Genesis 41:39-41).

David, on the other hand, shows us that being an influencer doesn’t require flawlessness. David made catastrophic mistakes, his sin with Bathsheba being one of the most infamous (2 Samuel 11). But his response to failure set him apart. Instead of deflecting blame, David repented wholeheartedly. His prayer in Psalm 51:10 is one of the most raw and sincere in the Bible: “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

David's humility and willingness to return to God remind us that true influence isn't about perfection. It's about authenticity and redemption.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

If I'm going to encourage you to embrace vulnerability as an influencer, then it's only right that I lead by example. That's why, in the chapters that follow, I'll take you on my personal influencer journey: how I got here, what I had to sacrifice, and the unexpected lessons I learned along the way. Most people have seen my accomplishments and success, but very few know the real story behind them.

Next, we will dive into the secret ingredient that most people overlook when building an impactful social media platform. Spoiler alert: It has nothing to do with algorithms, aesthetics, or even viral content.

We'll also look at case studies of individuals who have successfully used their platforms to glorify God and make a lasting impact. You'll see firsthand what works, what doesn't, and what truly sets apart an effective Christian influencer.

Finally, we'll break down the four key components of influence and how you can use them to grow your platform, amplify your message, and walk boldly in your calling.

At the end of the day, influence is inevitable. The real question is, will your influence push people toward God or pull them away from him?

**BUY THE BOOK!**

[ivpress.com/how-to-be-a-christian-influencer](http://ivpress.com/how-to-be-a-christian-influencer)