



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 9: Authority

Suggested Week of Use: April 26, 2026

Core Passage: Matthew 21:23-32

News Story Summary

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* says an “influencer” generates interest in something through social media posts.¹ These days, influencers can be found on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and many other platforms. Some are “nano-influencers” (up to ten thousand followers), while others are “mega-influencers” (more than one million followers). With 56 percent of Americans using social media to research products, influencers can shape trends, drive consumer decisions, and build trust in the brands they endorse. They may have credible training or experience in their respective areas, such as travel, health, beauty, and countless others. However, many articles describe the downside of following an influencer, using words like unrealistic, inadequate, obsessive, anxious, and unhealthy.

For more about this story, search “What is a social media influencer?”

Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, ask: *Who influences your everyday life the most?* Allow adults to share. Read the news story summary about social media influencers. Note that, in some ways, influencers carry a measure of authority. Lead a brief discussion on the pros and cons of relying on an influencer for information. Ask: *How was Jesus an influencer?* Remind the group of situations in earlier chapters of Matthew where Jesus exerted influence through His miracles and His teaching. Emphasize His authority in all these areas of life.

Share that today’s session takes place after Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, so Matthew’s account is moving toward the crucifixion and resurrection. Encourage the group to look for ways Jesus responded to those who challenged His authority and how they can apply these truths to their lives each day.

Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, encourage adults to consider if their lives usually reflect the attitude of the first son or the second son in Jesus’s parable. Review the content from the news story summary. Remind adults that we all are being influenced by someone and that someone is being influenced by us. Say: *The religious leaders had spent their lives*

studying and teaching the Scriptures, yet they chose to reject the truth that Jesus's authority came from God. Challenge adults to avoid letting their hearts grow hard like the leaders.

Close the session in prayer, asking the Lord to soften each person's heart so that Jesus can take His place as the ultimate authority in their lives.

1. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/influencer>, accessed 16 April 2026.