

Thrive with us by following on Instagram and YouTube  
@FlagNazChurch, @FlagNazYouth and FlagNaz.org



# INFLUENCER

In what ways do you or are you tempted to sell others the gospel?

How do plainspoken stories of life make you think and feel differently than well-crafted tales?

How might you approach conversations with the curious differently if you perceived Jesus standing there listening to you?

**2 Corinthians 2:17** – For we are not peddlers of God’s word like so many; but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in his presence.

## I) **Build A Following...**

Like so many modern phenomena, social media has made something old new again. Today, many seek to convert followers into revenue streams. As a result, we can find influencers for any subject online telling us what to buy, how to use it, even what to think. All this in pursuit of fame and fortune. Some of these really believe in the products, services, and expert advice they offer. Others sell their followers to the highest bidder. It can be hard to tell the difference between the sincere and the phony until it’s too late. Jesus will show us a way to authenticate ourselves and build a following for Him. You must be a different kind of influencer if you want to achieve the mission He has given you.

**JULY 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2025**

♦**Not for sale:** Social media influencing is a terrific tool for generating legitimate income. Experts in all sorts of things can help audiences pick the best products and services, learn new skills, and improve themselves. We try to filter out the phonies by selecting the highest rated, most followed, best reviewed influencers. Scammers know how to game the system. Until we try someone and see how their guidance works, it's tough to know. Jesus has another way. "For we are not peddlers... (2 Corinthians 2:17)," authenticating ourselves as stewards by denying any gain from sharing. It's not for sale.

♦**Priceless:** The maxim you get what you pay for is often true. Online deals peddled by influencers are often junk. Or the initial cost is low but needs to be followed up with ongoing, costly purchases. The wisdom Jesus offers is not free—it's priceless. If it were self-help wisdom, we would make a fortune selling the books, counseling sessions, and app subscription. It isn't. It is "God's word (v17)," which He entrusted to us so we would share it with many. We do not restrict access to monetize it "like so many (v17)," but give it to as many as will take it. Who does that?

## II) With Enthusiasm...

Not many. None whose purpose is to gain from their influence. Only those passionate about their subject and eager for others to be better at it give away their expertise. They are so excited about what they have discovered that they share it with the world for free. Some, it's how to fix things. Others, tips to get the most out of objects. They prove their legitimacy as experts with enthusiasm and demonstrated experience. That's how we build Jesus' following, too.

♦**Personal experience:** Our influence is rooted in our personal experience. We talk the talk because we walk the walk. Telling others how Jesus can change them has little impact. Showing the difference He has made in our lives and telling others how to receive the same carries weight. When "in Christ we speak (v17)," we tell others how we have been brought to life, contrasting that with the former deadness of existence. These are stories about the impossible, not self-improvement hacks.

♦**Full transparency:** Influencers learn how to polish the presentation, embellish the results, and connect with their audience's dreams in a way that makes them seem real. We all know what it feels like to be let down, at least a little, by something that is good, but not THAT good. The gospel is THAT good. The best presentation is one spoken "as persons of sincerity (v17)," a straightforward description of what Jesus has accomplished in us. There is no need to exaggerate that which in full transparency is as good as it gets. Such a simple presentation is likely to stand out in the crowd.

## III) For Jesus...

What most authenticates the gospel is our lack of concern for the number of followers we attract. We are not the influencer. He is. The followers are for Jesus. Some may follow us to follow Him. That's a privilege. Some may follow others, or venture on their own, to follow Him. That's a relief. All that matters to us is that the good news of Jesus elevates His fame as the Son of God. This is what sets us most apart from the common influencer and suggests that what we offer is the real deal.

♦**Divine agents:** We do not come in our own name. We are divine agents, "persons sent from God (v17)," for the sake of showing His love for everything He created. He made it to be good, made us to tend it for good, and sent His Son to restore its goodness. Our purpose is not to sell the message. It is to find everyone who has a heart to know its truth and activate them in the Holy Spirit. Common influencers analyze their techniques, constantly perfecting their pitch to convert their followers into dollars. Jesus' followers have already received their full reward.

♦**In plain sight:** Have you ever told someone else's story while they listen in? That's what happens when we tell others about Jesus. We tell His story in plain sight of Jesus Himself, "standing in his presence (v17)." He wants it told precisely. When we tell His story through our lives without adornment, we let others decide whether the simple truth is good enough. He wants followers for a lifetime. Any false expectations, any slight deceptions, lead to disappointment. In a world that oversells everything, the greatest influencer is the One who isn't selling.

JULY 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2025