

Persuasion: A Christian Approach

Syllabus and Modules

The premise of this course is that God invites us to influence people and circumstances. Whether you're a parent shaping your kids' worldview and behavior, or a teacher instructing your class, or a manager trying to increase sales and motivate your people, or a pastor stepping into the pulpit, or a concerned citizen at a school board meeting, or an evangelistically-minded believer introducing someone to Jesus Christ, everyday influence opportunities abound. Through this course, students will learn how to do that, effectively and faithfully, based on fifteen scriptural principles of persuasion.

Course text: *Influencing Like Jesus: 15 Biblical Principles of Persuasion* (ISBN: 978-0578632001) and several videos.

	Topic	Lesson	Reading	Persuasion Principles	
Module 1	Pre-persuasion principles	Faithful persuasion begins before we ever say a word	Pages 5-36, 135-139	Principle 1: Pray for change Principle 2: Be a person others will follow Principle 3: Know your audience	Quiz
Module 2	Persuasion through relationship	Persuasion is more likely in the context of a relationship	Pages 37-60	Principle 4: Connect through similarity Principle 5: Serve their needs Principle 6: Ask for their opinion	Quiz
Module 3	Persuasion through reframing	Reframing persuades by helping the other side to see differently	Pages 61-86	Principle 7: Tell a story Principle 8: Construct a contrast Principle 9: Find a metaphor	Quiz
Module 4	Persuasion through evidence	Persuasion often requires proof for the claims we make	Pages 87-112	Principle 10: Use authoritative evidence Principle 11: Use experiential evidence Principle 12: Use social evidence	Quiz
Module 5	Persuasion through pressure	With the right motivation, exerting pressure can be a faithful, powerful approach to persuasion	Pages 113-134	Principle 13: Build a coalition Principle 14: Create, communicate and carry out consequences Principle 15: Limit the availability	Quiz
Module 6	Putting it all together	 <p>Video case study: 12 Angry Men (1957)</p> <p>Implementing your persuasion plan</p>			

MODULE 1: Pre-Persuasion Principles

ACTIVITY 1

Read pages 5-10 and 135-139 in your text. Then identify one or more situation where you would like to become more persuasive, and work on this throughout the study. As your reading for this week says:

"If you get in mind some specific influence challenges you'd like to address, you'll get much more out of this resource. Is there someone in your life whom you'd like to influence in a deeper way? Is there a difficult conflict that's been festering for a long time, one for which you've not been able to make much progress? Is there a big opportunity before you that requires you to be more persuasive than you've been in the past? Are you a leader who needs to get results through other people? Identify some specific changes you'd like to see and keep those before you as you navigate this material."

Write down your goal(s) on the Influence Planning Worksheet, which is available at the end of your text and at the end of this document.

ACTIVITY 2

Watch and take notes on the video [Persuasion: A Christian Approach \(Part 1\)](#) which covers the first three principles in this study: Pray for Change, Be a Person Others Will Follow, and Know Your Audience.

ACTIVITY 3

To understand these principles in greater depth, and for additional examples, read pages 11-36 in your text.

ACTIVITY 4

Using the Influence Planning Worksheet at the end of your text, or the end of this document, apply the lessons from this week to your specific persuasion challenge(s). Complete the relevant parts of the plan with creative ideas for how to influence this person or situation.

ACTIVITY 5

Complete the Module 1 quiz

MODULE 2: Persuasion through Relationship

ACTIVITY 1

Watch and take notes on the video [Persuasion: A Christian Approach \(Part 2\)](#) which covers the next three principles in this study: Connect through Similarity, Serve Their Needs, and Ask for Their Opinion.

ACTIVITY 2

To understand these principles in greater depth, and for additional examples, read pages 37-60 in your text.

ACTIVITY 3

Using the Influence Planning Worksheet at the end of your text, or the end of this document, apply the lessons from this week to your specific persuasion challenge(s). Complete the relevant parts of the plan with creative ideas for how to influence this person or situation.

ACTIVITY 4

Complete the Module 2 quiz

MODULE 3: Persuasion through Reframing

ACTIVITY 1

Watch and take notes on the video [Persuasion: A Christian Approach \(Part 3\)](#) which covers the next three principles in this study: Tell a Story, Construct a Contrast, and Find a Metaphor.

ACTIVITY 2

To understand these principles in greater depth, and for additional examples, read pages 61-86 in your text.

ACTIVITY 3

Using the Influence Planning Worksheet at the end of your text, or the end of this document, apply the lessons from this week to your specific persuasion challenge(s). Complete the relevant parts of the plan with creative ideas for how to influence this person or situation.

ACTIVITY 4

Complete the Module 3 quiz

MODULE 4: Persuasion through Evidence

ACTIVITY 1

Watch and take notes on the video [Persuasion: A Christian Approach \(Part 4\)](#) which covers the next three principles in this study: Use Authoritative Evidence, Use Experiential Evidence, and Use Social Evidence.

ACTIVITY 2

To understand these principles in greater depth, and for additional examples, read pages 87-112 in your text.

ACTIVITY 3

Using the Influence Planning Worksheet at the end of your text, or the end of this document, apply the lessons from this week to your specific persuasion challenge(s). Complete the relevant parts of the plan with creative ideas for how to influence this person or situation.

ACTIVITY 4

Complete the Module 4 quiz

MODULE 5: Persuasion through Pressure

ACTIVITY 1

Watch and take notes on the video [Persuasion: A Christian Approach \(Part 5\)](#) which covers the last three principles in this study: Build a Coalition; Create, Communicate and Carry Out Consequences; and Limit the Availability.

ACTIVITY 2

To understand these principles in greater depth, and for additional examples, read pages 113-134 in your text.

ACTIVITY 3

Using the Influence Planning Worksheet at the end of your text, or the end of this document, apply the lessons from this week to your specific persuasion challenge(s). Complete the relevant parts of the plan with creative ideas for how to influence this person or situation.

ACTIVITY 4

Complete the Module 5 quiz

MODULE 6: Putting It All Together

ACTIVITY 1

Watch and study the movie *12 Angry Men*. Be sure you're screening **the 1957 version** of the film starring Henry Fonda.

As you watch, complete the worksheet at the end of this document, connecting the arguments and actions of the characters to the persuasion principles in this study. Since the characters don't have names in this film, please refer to the list of jurors (at the end of this document) when necessary to offer your insights.



ACTIVITY 2

Put into action, if you have not done so already, the Persuasion Plan you have been designing since the beginning of this study. Recognize that you need not implement all of your ideas; all it may take is one or two to make progress. So before you move forward, review your plan for the best strategy—which principles to apply and which to defer.

THE INFLUENCE PLANNING WORKSHEET

The goal: To persuade _____ to _____

Persuasion Principle	The Question	Next Steps
1. Prayer Changes Things: God responds to our requests for change	Have I prayed diligently for change?	
2. Be a Person Others Will Follow: Who we are determines how persuasive we are	What characteristics will earn me the right to be heard? Which might be undermining my influence?	
3. Know Your Audience: The better we understand our audience, the more persuasively we can shape our message	What do I need to know about this person before I choose an influence strategy?	
4. Connect Through Similarity: People are more easily persuaded by those similar to them than by those who are different	What do we have in common that could be a starting point for relationship and discussion? Or should I instead work through others who are more similar to this person?	
5. Serve Their Needs: Meeting people's needs and desires makes them more receptive to our requests	What does this person value that I could give to him or her?	
6. Ask for Their Opinion: People are more likely to be persuaded if they're part of the process	Have I asked for this person's solutions and ideas, and have I genuinely listened to them?	
7. Tell a Story: Stories persuade because they keep our attention, they can touch our emotions, and they stay with us	What stories can I tell that will get my point across in a memorable and emotional way?	

<p>8. Construct a Contrast: The difference between things greatly influences our perceptions and decisions</p>	<p>Is there something to which this option compares favorably? Can I show how much worse things could be?</p>	
<p>9. Find a Metaphor: Showing that one thing resembles another thing can cause people to see and think in new ways</p>	<p>Is there a metaphor I can use that will encourage this person to see the situation differently?</p>	
<p>10. Use Authoritative Evidence: We're influenced by experts and credentials</p>	<p>Have I demonstrated my expertise on this matter or pointed to other expert evidence that this person would find convincing?</p>	
<p>11. Use Experiential Evidence: Sometimes people will not be convinced until they see it for themselves</p>	<p>Can I get this person to experience personally the cost of the status quo or the benefit of change?</p>	
<p>12. Use Social Evidence: We tend to do what we see people around us doing</p>	<p>Can I identify other people who are doing what I want this person to do, especially people who are similar to him or her?</p>	
<p>13. Build a Coalition: There's power in numbers, especially when influencing those in authority</p>	<p>Can I assemble some others to join me in this attempt to influence?</p>	
<p>14. Create, Communicate, and Carry Out Consequences: The likelihood of punishment or reward can be a powerful influencer</p>	<p>Can I point to negative consequences of refusal to change—consequences that this person will find significant? Can I reward behaviors that are praiseworthy and should continue?</p>	
<p>15. Limit the Availability: If something is scarce, we tend to want it more</p>	<p>Is there a way to limit this person's opportunity to do what I'm asking? Or is there a way to demonstrate the distinctiveness of this option?</p>	

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Persuasion Principles in *12 Angry Men*

For this culminating exercise, which will also reinforce your learning in this study, watch the movie *12 Angry Men*. Be sure you're screening **the 1957 version** of the film starring Henry Fonda.

As you watch, complete the worksheet below, connecting the arguments and actions of the characters to the persuasion principles in this study. Since the characters don't have names in this film, please refer to the list of jurors (below) when necessary to offer your insights.

Persuasion Principle	Examples in the film of <u>the use or misuse</u> of this principle
<p>2. Be a Person Others Will Follow: Who we are determines how persuasive we are</p>	
<p>3. Know Your Audience: The better we understand our audience, the more persuasively we can shape our message</p>	
<p>4. Connect Through Similarity: People are more easily persuaded by those similar to them than by those who are different</p>	
<p>5. Serve Their Needs: Meeting people's needs and desires makes them more receptive to our requests</p>	
<p>6. Ask for Their Opinion: People are more likely to be persuaded if they're part of the process</p>	

<p>7. Tell a Story: Stories persuade because they keep our attention, they can touch our emotions, and they stay with us</p>	
<p>8. Construct a Contrast: The difference between things greatly influences our perceptions and decisions</p>	
<p>9. Find a Metaphor: Showing that one thing resembles another thing can cause people to see and think in new ways</p>	
<p>10. Use Authoritative Evidence: We're influenced by experts and credentials</p>	
<p>11. Use Experiential Evidence: Sometimes people will not be convinced until they see it for themselves</p>	
<p>12. Use Social Evidence: We tend to do what we see people around us doing</p>	
<p>13. Build a Coalition: There's power in numbers, especially when influencing those in authority</p>	
<p>14. Create, Communicate, and Carry Out Consequences: The likelihood of punishment or reward can be a powerful influencer</p>	
<p>15. Limit the Availability: If something is scarce, we tend to want it more</p>	

The Jurors in *12 Angry Men*



Juror 1: The foreman

Juror 2: The meek guy

Juror 3: The business owner

Juror 4: The stockbroker

Juror 5: The "slum kid"

Juror 6: The house painter

Juror 7: The salesman / baseball fan

Juror 8: The architect (and protagonist)

Juror 9: The old man

Juror 10: The garage owner and bigot

Juror 11: The watchmaker

Juror 12: The advertising executive