

Influence of Friends

MOVIE:
Taken



Lesson Objective:

God clearly tells us that who we choose to be influenced by makes a difference! We cannot have friends who sway us negatively and expect to live rightly. We deceive ourselves. Worst of all, more often than not, there are serious consequences involved with following the bad 'friends.'

Intro to the Movie:

Seventeen year-old Kim is the pride and joy of her father Bryan Mills. Bryan is a retired agent who left the Secret Service to be near Kim in California. Kim lives with her mother, Lenore, and her wealthy stepfather, Stuart.

Kim manages to convince her reluctant father to allow her to travel to Paris with her friend Amanda. When the girls arrive in Paris they share a cab with a stranger named Peter, and Amanda lets it slip that they are alone in Paris. Using this information, an Albanian gang of human traffickers kidnaps the girls. Kim barely has time to call her father and give him information before being discovered under the bed. Her father gets to speak briefly to one of the kidnappers and he promises to kill the kidnappers if they do not let his daughter go free. The kidnapper wishes him "good luck," so Bryan Mills travels to Paris to search for his daughter and her friend.

What isn't initially known is that the two girls are not where they said they were going to be. Amanda, the friend, influences Kim to lie to her dad in order to have a great adventure. The adventure goes terribly wrong, and the rest of the movie is about the dire consequences of the terrible influence of one friend on another!

(The 3D lenses) Look for themes such as deceit of parents, adventure seeking, lack of considering the cost of lying, going along with a bad idea, unthinkable consequences, an altered life.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. This movie has some pretty rough content. How's your emotional temperature after watching it?
2. The dad has some special skills. What special skills do your parents have that have gotten you out of a jam?
3. What's the dumbest thing you've done (so far) because a friend suggested it?
4. Sure, these are extreme consequences, but even as a military brat there are dangers because of your status. How do you count the cost of your decisions when confronted with some questionable ideas?
5. Consider these statements and discuss what you think about the personal application for you:
 - Violent people deceive their *friends* and lead them to disaster. (Proverbs 16:29)
 - Keep company with the wise and you will become wise. If you make *friends* with stupid people, you will be ruined. (Proverbs 13:20)

Group Input:

Leader-solicited responses from the large group on reactions to some of the questions

Gathering of ideas and themes recognized in the discussion groups with a focus on guiding the audience toward the main objective: *God clearly tells us that who we choose to be influenced by makes a difference! We cannot have friends who sway us negatively and expect to live rightly. We deceive ourselves. Worst of all, more often than not, there are serious consequences involved with following the bad 'friends.'*

Bullet Objective:

Put this summary section in your own words, but here are some ideas you can use:

OK, so who hasn't done something stupid that you regretted later? All of us make these kinds of mistakes, but when we're younger, they usually don't have the same level of personal cost involved as when we begin to make young adult decisions.

When your friend suggests you shoplift from the exchange as a game, you've got a decision to make. There might be a thrill in there for you to see if you can outsmart the cameras and people hired for security, or maybe you've got an inside man helping out, but, eventually you've got to make the decision if you're in or out.

Do you ask yourself, "What might be the consequences? What's the worst case scenario?" Here's where you need to be VERY careful. If you have friends that are trying to talk you into bad stuff, you probably want to distance yourself from them.

God's word tells us straight up that people like that are trouble. A man named Paul writes to his friends some pretty clear advice:

(from 1 Corinthians 15:31-33) – ³¹My *friends*, I face death every day! The pride I have in you, in our life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord, makes me declare this. ³²If I have, as it were, fought "wild beasts" here in Ephesus simply from human motives, what have I gained? But if the dead are not raised to life, then, as the saying goes, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die." ³³*Do not be fooled. "Bad companions ruin good character."* ³⁴Come back to your right senses and stop your sinful ways. I declare to your shame that some of you do not know God.

If that's not enough, the book of WISE sayings (and they're called wise because they offer wisdom – insightful stuff, intelligent advice, good judgment!) tells us these things:

(from Proverbs 29:5) ⁵If you flatter your *friends*, you set a trap for yourself.

(from Proverbs 24:1) ¹Don't be envious of evil people, and don't try to make *friends* with them.

(from Proverbs 28:7) ⁷Young people who obey the law are intelligent. Those who make *friends* with good-for-nothings are a disgrace to their parents.

Ouch, that last one will stick you in the eye! Apparently, God thinks it's important enough for your well-being to be very blunt about this subject. God is clearly telling us that *who* we choose to be influenced by makes a huge difference! We cannot have friends who sway us negatively and expect to live rightly. We deceive ourselves. Worst of all, more often than not, there are serious consequences involved with following the bad 'friends.'

Challenge:

1. Consider any friend you have that seems to pull you toward trouble (especially disobeying your parents). Discuss with them what you learned that God says about these things and ask them not to try to influence you that way.
2. Think of a couple of people with whom you could join together to provide good advice and godly counsel to influence others toward positive choices. Try celebrating in some creative way the good things that are done by friends!

*Pray for God's purpose and power to put it into action and transform lives.
Remind them of the online personal journey for further involvement with this topic of
Influence of Friends.*