



Sway

Week 2: "It's Up to You"

What we want students to learn: Who is determining the course of your life?

What we want students to do with what they've learned: Surrender their decisions to Jesus instead of the crowd around them.

Scripture Focus: Mark 15:6-15

The Main Point

Why is it that the crowd has such an attractational pull on our actions? Pilate was no stranger to the influence of the crowd. Pilate's choices, at least in his interaction with Jesus in the gospels, were rooted in the opinions of those around him, rather than any personal conviction. Who is influencing the action in your life? Who will you be, someone who follows the crowd or someone who follows where Jesus is leading? During the month of September, we will explore the life of Pilate as we learn what the Bible says about the motivation and follow through of our actions in our walk with the Lord. This week specifically we will be talking about who we let determine the decisions we make in our lives.

INTRODUCTION

- **Out of the following people, who are you in the friend group?**
 - *The planner. You make everything happen.*
 - *The fun one. You are always up for an adventure.*
 - *The funny one. No matter what you are doing, you can make anything entertaining just by being around.*
 - *The cautious one. You are always wondering if you all should really be doing that.*
 - *The "whatever" one. You never really make a decision. You just say, "it's up to y'all" and go with the flow.*

As their group leader, share which friend you were when you were in middle school and high school. No matter who you are in the friend group, we all at one time or another in our lives have lived an "it's up to you" life. We let our friends, and the culture around us, influence the decisions we make. They seem to bear more weight than where God is leading us.

LESSON

- **What does it mean to let the "crowd" make your decisions for you?**
- **Who do you think, based on those listed below, has more influence on your decisions?**
 - *You – what you want*

- *Jesus – what He wants for you*
- *The crowd – what those around you want for you*
- **Have you ever done something because the people around you wanted you to do it? What was it?**
 - *We have ALL done something because someone else wanted us to do it. Maybe they made a decision based on a popular trend circulating through social media. Maybe they did something with a group of people just because the group was doing it.*
- **Why is it so easy to do what those around us want us to do?**
 - *Doing things contrary to the world is HARD. There is a reason we fall victim to it every day. Everyone has an opinion. On YouTube alone, you can find millions of videos telling you how to dress, who to date, what to think and how to live.*

To kick off the lesson for the night, have your students read Mark 15:6-15. In this story, Pilate was a man who knew what it was like to be influenced by the crowd. He faced a similar struggle that we do today, just with a different plot.

Mark 15:6-15 - 6 Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. 7 A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. 8 The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. 9 “Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate, 10 knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. 12 “What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?” Pilate asked them. 13 “Crucify him!” they shouted. 14 “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!” 15 Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

- **How did Pilate let the crowd determine his actions?**
 - *This all started with Pilate’s intentions. He was willing to surrender his decision to the crowd before he ever made a firm decision on his own.*
- **What do you think Pilate let the crowd make the decision for him?**

LIFE APPLICATION

- **What is the difference between what God wants for you and what the world wants for you? In what ways can they be similar? In what ways can they be different?**
 - *Similarities – The people around us can often confirm where God is leading us. Those walking with God can help us discover where God is leading us. Just because someone says it or suggests it doesn’t mean it is against God.*
 - *Differences – People can also have different intentions than God. There are lots of things in the world around us that conflict with what God wants for us. Will we be bold enough to say no to those things?*
- **How can you know what God wants for your life?**
 - *Let’s be honest, this question is a big deal. Not the question itself, but knowing the answer to it. This is one of the questions we most often ask. How do I know if God wants me to date this person? How do I know if God wants me to join this team? How do I know if God wants me to talk to this person?*
 - *So, how do we know? We know God’s will for our lives by learning to discern His voice and His leading. We do this by reading His Word consistently and reflecting on where he has led us in the past and how we knew that.*

- *Some decisions however aren't so hard. There are things God outlines in His Word for us that we don't even have to question. Should I forgive this person? Should I be kind to this person? Should I fight for purity in my dating relationship? God answers these clearly in His Word. As we are obedient to these, it becomes easier to be obedient in other areas of our life and to know where he may be leading us personally.*
 - **This week, what is one way you can choose what God wants for you instead of what the world wants for you?**
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TAKE IT OUT

Close small group out with prayer requests. Praying specifically that your group would experience the freedom that results when God leads our lives and not the world around us.

After prayer, be sure to remind them of any upcoming group serving activities or student events and THE WEEKEND!