

## The 7-Step Method of Gaining Influence

If we study the lives of successful politicians in Scripture (Joseph, Daniel, David, Nehemiah, Esther, Mordecai, etc. ) we find a clear seven step method for gaining and keeping power that was developed by the Israelites in Babylon and has served the Jewish people very well since. In brief outline it is as follows:

1. **Access** – get access to those in power, get close to “the King”, the source of power - even as a cupbearer, harp player, exiled youth or prisoner.
2. **Solidarity** – form a group or join a group of people you are “one spirit” with- even a small group such as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.
3. **Distinctiveness** – of purpose, philosophy and personal standards, do not lose Christian values. Moses, Daniel and friends, Joseph etc. Mordecai was distinctive and this initially made enemies but eventually turned out for good.
4. **Contribute Vertically** - Do good for others especially the King, make a contribution, solve difficult problems, build credibility, demonstrate excellent wisdom. Daniel and Joseph read the King’s dreams, Mordecai stopped an assassination, David calmed Saul’s moods with his lyre...
5. **Mutual Promotion** – bring your group with you as you are promoted – Daniel and his friends, Joseph and his brothers, David and his mighty men etc.
6. **Strategy** - Aim for key positions and control points even if they do not have much prestige at the time. Joseph and food distribution, Mordecai was a door-keeper, Nehemiah a cup-bearer of the King.
7. **Unity** – resist attacks and threats as a united group. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Esther & Mordecai etc.

**Access** - As we saw in the earlier article “A Theology of Politics” legitimate power is always a gift from a superior. Therefore one must be in contact with such a superior and in a favorable relationship with him or her. Power is rarely handed to someone unknown to those in authority. The superior authority generally must feel safe, and recognize the person as a being of genuine worth and not simply another “want-to-be”. Simply out you need to put yourself amongst the powerful – even in a very humble role as an office worker, intern or aide-de-camp. It can help to join a political party and to turn up when others don’t, and to contribute positively and diligently over time until the break comes.

**Solidarity** – Politics is all about loyalty to a group. It involves networks, coalitions, interest groups and political parties. A one-man political party is doomed to failure. Join a group or form a group. You probably need three groups (or more). The first group is your core group that you pray with, are one-mind with and which “fires you up” and shares your passions, a band of brothers. The second group is your “interest group”, a small section within the larger political party that you have common interest with e.g. those with environmental concerns. The third group is the political party as a whole – Bangon Pilipinas, Republicans, Liberals, Christian Democrats etc. There is no perfect political party and you will find yourself in tension with any that you join, but is generally better to join that not to join. You are free to disagree if the group goes against the will of God – though this may be difficult.

**Distinctiveness** – You must be salt and light and leaven. This means being different. You are not there for yourself – to just blend in and be promoted, you are there for

Christ to transform the political realm for God. All politically effective Bible characters were distinct from the surrounding culture – Joseph, Daniel, Moses, Mordecai, Esther, Nehemiah, and of course Jesus. If you are faithful to God, He will be faithful to you. The distinctiveness of these heroes of faith sometimes involved conflict – but God delivered them and their courage was noted and they were promoted. Moral distinctiveness helps you stand out from the crowd and be noticed by “the King”.

**Contribute Vertically** – Be useful to the King. Go the extra mile, solve problems, interpret dreams, show discernment, have an “excellent spirit”, be someone who makes the boss look good, work out what the King wants most and ensure he gets it – and that you get the credit. Mordecai stopped an assassination attempt, Joseph and Daniel interpreted dreams, David helped assuage Saul’s moods and fought Goliath. Always work to build your credibility, so contribute humbly and not in a way that looks like you are overly ambitious.

**Mutual Promotion** – Bring members of your core group and interest group with you when you are promoted. Joseph promoted his family, Daniel promoted his three friends, David his mighty men, etc. This surrounds you with people who care for you and who are loyal to you and is the best form of political protection.

**Strategy** – Target the key political positions, not just the most honored political positions. Some high status political positions carry very little real power and influence. Gain the positions that control ideas, legislation and money or which are key “control points” such as a licensing or censorship board. Work out where you can have the most genuine influence for the gospel. Joseph took over food distribution and used this to control the country and purchase the land for Pharaoh.

**Unity** – Resist attacks as a united group. Politics has its rough spots and if they are survived as a united core group then the bonds grow even closer. On the other hand disloyalty during a time of crisis creates much bitterness. Like the Three Musketeers – it should be all for one, and one for all. Unity also builds spiritual strength and power and makes all things possible (Genesis 11:4) - Daniel and his friends, Mordecai and the Jews in Babylon, Jesus and the disciples.

## **Conclusion**

The 7-step method for gaining influence is found all throughout the Bible and in most successful groups today. Yet it is not “magic”, it is just a simple, commonsense political technique. It can be used for good as well as for evil, for Christ or for the Devil. You will still need to pray, fast, study the Scriptures and obey the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ.