

FAITH INFLUENCERS

While reading the newspaper one day, I was amazed by the incredible dreams children have for their future. It was quite a surprise that when children were asked what they wanted to be when they grew up, sports star or astronaut was not at the top of the list. Instead, at the top of the list was a social influencer. It came as a huge shock to me. Back in my day when NASA was starting up and working on getting a spacecraft to orbit the earth, John Glenn was a big name. It truly spurred my imagination. Wanting to always play baseball, stars like Luis Aparicio, Willie Mays, and Billy Williams also captured my attention. These were the ones who allowed this little boy to dream. When I read social influencer, I knew the world had changed. I wasn't really sure what that is, let alone knew money can be made by making TikTok videos. Times have changed, but the power to influence has not.

Before us Ouper kids could dream of growing up, there was a solid foundation which was the undercurrent of our family life. I was blessed to have a mom who allowed her actions to speak volumes to us of what really mattered. She had influence and she also had a wooden spoon for persuasion, but she rarely used it. The power of the wooden spoon was knowing it existed and that it could be used if needed. My mom influenced all of us in different ways. She was a faith influencer. Far from what social media influencers try to do, the subtle living of faith every day made her a faith influencer. It never had to be seen or publicized. It was lived. It wasn't just lived for the duration it takes to make a Facebook post or a TikTok video; it was lived day in and day out. I think moms have that ability. They allow us to grow and make mistakes over and over. They can be a steady force despite the chaos we encounter in life. My mom was steady and although she may not have been perfect, she was exactly who God wanted to use to influence her kids.

We all need faith influencers. We need this ministry to be lived in every household. It is not about anything theological my mom ever said to us, it was her perseverance to be herself even when we were not listening or paying attention. Her gift came from her faith. She believed and no one could ever influence otherwise.

May God bless all moms—biological mothers, adoptive mothers, stepmothers, foster mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, and spiritual mothers. May their influence lead all to a deeper faith.



Father John Ouper