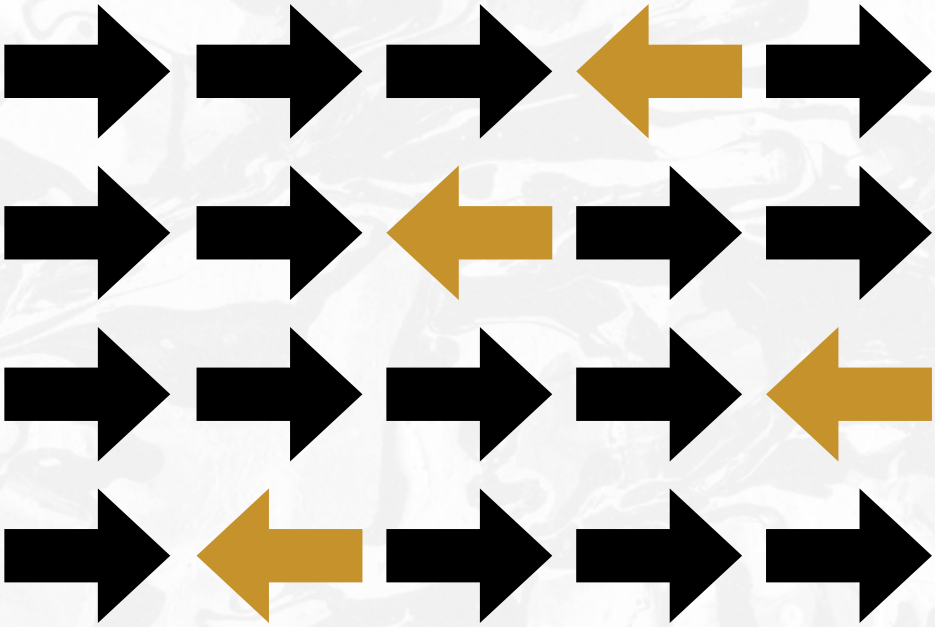
reTHINK SUCCESS

Winning Through The Wisdom Of Submission



Funmi Johnson

reTHINK SUCCESS

Winning Through The Wisdom Of Submission

Funmi Johnson

Rethink Success
Copyright © 2025 by Funmi Johnson

Unless otherwise noted, all verses are taken from the New International Version of the Holy Bible

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without the Publisher's written permission.

ISBN: 978-978-776-446-6

Credits
Editors: Iboro Tonye-Edet, Oladipupo Johnson, Oyindamola Johnson-Awoniyi
Cover design + Layout: Tonye Creates
Printed by: Expand Press Ltd

Publisher:
Megalios
25 McEwen Street,
Off Herbert Macaulay Way,
Alagomeji Yaba.

Tel: 08023182030

Email: megaliosconsulting@yahoo.com

Contents

Foreword v

Reviews ix

Introduction xiii

Chapter One: Influence 21

Chapter Two: Yield 39

Chapter Three: The Concept Of Headship In Marriage 71

Chapter Four: Obstacles 95

Chapter Five: The Root "Ruth" Of Submission 111

Chapter Six: Submission, Not Subordination 135

Conclusion 149

Foreword

IT'S A RARE AND SPECIAL THING WHEN A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO people transcends titles and expectations to become true friendship built on mutual respect. In my own life, I have been privileged to experience such a bond — one grounded in honest dialogue, admiration for each other's intellect, and the freedom to challenge and support one another. It's even more remarkable when that person turns out to be not only a mentor, a friend, or a guide, but also your own mother.

The author, Funmi Johnson, has always modeled a way of living that puts aside ego, expectation, and even tradition to ensure that what is best, what is true, is always what is put forward. It is this same heart and clarity that shines throughout the pages of this book.

The subject the book takes on — submission — is both critical and controversial, yet so often misunderstood. In many settings, submission has been reduced to a tool for control: a word twisted by those who seek to dominate their spouses, silence dissenting

voices, or avoid the weight of true leadership. Some brandish it in homes, others from pulpits, podiums, or boardrooms. Too often, it is preached with shallow motives or accepted without deeper thought.

This book is different.

Drawing from decades of experience as a life coach, counselor, benefactor, and leader, my Mom approaches the topic of submission with intellectual honesty, spiritual depth, and practical wisdom. She examines it through scriptural, historical, linguistic, and personal lenses, offering a vision that is neither simplistic nor self-serving. Instead, she restores submission to its rightful place: as a key, often hidden, ingredient in lasting success.

Reading this book will challenge you, not in an abrasive way, but in the best way possible. It will invite you to pause and rethink what success truly demands. Submission, as presented here, is like yeast in bread or baking soda in a cake: quiet, nearly invisible, yet essential for true growth.

This book will push you to ask honest questions:

- What does submission truly mean?
- What does it look like to be submitted to someone — or to have someone submitted to you?

- How might embracing a spirit of submission lead to stronger, more life-giving relationships and accomplishments?

In my own life — in my marriage, with my parents, my employers, and my teams — I've found that the healthiest relationships don't center on titles, demands, or authority. They thrive on listening, deference to each other's strengths, and mutual honor.

In my marriage specifically, my wife and I do not battle for dominance. I intentionally seek her opinions, encourage her challenges, and defer to her expertise when needed. I don't impose my own way or compel her to mine. As a result, we are able to make decisions together in ways that have helped us avoid many mistakes — and achieve success that feels shared, not solitary. This way of living reflects the kind of submission this book describes — one rooted in love, wisdom, and a deep commitment to bringing out the best in one another.

I wholeheartedly encourage you to read this book with an open mind and heart. Whether you are single, married, leading a family, a business, or a community, there is something here for you. I even recommend couples read it together — not to arm themselves for debates, but to better equip themselves to give the very best to one another. After all, if giving your best wasn't your goal, why did you choose each other in the first place?

If this book speaks to you (and I am confident it will), don't keep it to yourself. Share it. Gift it. Spread it. Together, we can reshape the narrative around submission into something that breathes life, builds strength, and fosters true success — just as Funmi Johnson so powerfully envisions.

Thomas Johnson, *Manager, Deloitte, Canada*

Reviews

Funmi Johnson brings not only truth but also heart. She connects history and culture to Kingdom purpose in a way that's both eye-opening and practical. And just when you think it can't get any better, she shifts the focus in Chapter Two! While Chapter One teaches us about true influence, Chapter Two shows us the power of submission. This chapter is a healing and freeing message. It clears up the confusion between godly submission and harmful control. Through the Greek word Hupotasso, Funmi Johnson teaches that real submission isn't about being weak - it's a loving choice that reflects the heart of Christ.

Together, these two chapters call the Church to wake up - to stop chasing trends and return to God's design. They challenge us to choose purpose over popularity, humility over hustle, and God's Kingdom over worldly chaos.

This book isn't just something you read; it's something you live. Funmi Johnson speaks truth with love and leads with power from heaven.

To God alone be the glory for such a timely and timeless message.

If the next chapters are anything like these, we're not just reading a book - I believe we are part of a move of God. I can't wait to see what's next. Get ready; these chapters are life-changing.

Pastor Mario Alonso

Family Revival Church – San Diego, CA

There are books that inform, and there are books that transform—this is one of those rare treasures that does both.

In this book, Dr. Funmi Johnson doesn't just write; she wields the sword of truth, cutting through the thick fog of cultural practices that have long masqueraded as Christianity. With grace and boldness, she lays kingdom principles beside societal norms, and one by one, the lies we've embraced as truth begin to crumble.

This is not just a book about headship, influence, or submission—it's a divine blueprint for leadership in the Kingdom. She redefines yielding and submission not as chains, but as keys—unlocking doors to true authority and heaven-backed influence.

For every leader, whether in the church, the marketplace, or the home, this book is a mirror and a map; a mirror that reflects where culture has blurred one's vision, and a map that guides one back to God's original design.

Don't just read it—let it read you.

Let it undo you.

Let it rebuild you into the kind of leader heaven can trust.

Every leader needs this book.

Because in the Kingdom—you truly can't do it alone.

Praise Fowowe

Institute of Family Engineering and Development

This is a beautiful work that digs deep into the soul and reveals the intent of the same with the word of God. I found it quite engaging and a very easy read in my quest to unravel the truth of the word of God behind relationships, particularly in marriage.

I discovered that in areas where I had previously doubted myself - such as my influence within my community - the first chapter on INFLUENCE opened my eyes to understand and appreciate the level of influence I have wielded so far and could continue to wield in line with God's purpose and agenda for me.

The second chapter on YIELD is astronomical in its bold exposé on what submission means. It is neither an entrapment nor enslavement. It is one person allowing or deferring to another in time or space over a period. It is not an incessant subjugation of will or mind to another person. Rather, it reflects a willingness to defer to a superior argument, logic, persuasion or inclination without any form of belligerence.

The book also clearly highlights that the perception and expectations of society on spousal roles in marriages can affect the quality of marriages. If such expectations define marriages, they are vulnerable. As a study guide on relationships, especially in marriage, this book will provide emotional intelligence tools on how to manage human and social connections.

Abiola Segun-Williams
Thespian, CEO Party People

What distinguishes Rethink Success is the unmistakable passion that permeates every chapter. This is not a book written from the head alone, but from the heart and soul of someone deeply convicted. Her message is not only timely; it is urgent. The theme of submission—often misunderstood or misrepresented—is explored here with extraordinary clarity, rooted in rigorous biblical research and enriched by real-life experience. This is not a superficial treatment;

it is a compelling, scripturally grounded exploration of a principle that is both ancient and essential for modern life.

Each chapter presents a new lens, offering fresh insight and confronting long-held assumptions. It is difficult to highlight a single favorite, as every section contributes uniquely to the whole.

This book is not for those unwilling to change. It demands self-reflection, challenges ingrained ideologies, and invites the reader into a transformative journey. But for those ready to engage deeply and honestly, this book offers a life-altering perspective—one that redefines what it means to live with purpose, influence, and integrity. I strongly recommend this book to every young person aspiring to build strong, meaningful relationships and a life of lasting impact. Rethink Success is not only a timely contribution—it is a necessary and enduring gift to this generation.

Olutayo Olufemi-Fadipe
Program Director, Whitefield Foundation

BREAKING THE STEREOTYPE

"With analytical rigor, Rethink Success by Dr Funmi Johnson constructs a compelling framework that meticulously redefines foundational concepts like submission, headship, and influence. It challenges readers to engage deeply with its definitions and logic, offering a structured, thought-provoking exploration of principles vital for navigating relationships, leadership, and personal purpose with clarity and integrity. Essential reading for the discerning thinker."

Abisoye Coker,
CEO, KiaKia Global Inc.

Introduction

Welcome, dear friend, to a journey I believe holds a key—perhaps the key—to unlocking a life of meaningful influence and true success here on earth. If you've ever longed for deeper impact, richer relationships, or a sense of purpose that reaches beyond your immediate world, you've picked up the right book.

Countless books preach the virtues of hard work, vision, and assertiveness as the sure path to success and influence—and rightly so. Yet, for all the emphasis on striving, leading, and conquering, something vital is often overlooked.

In 2005, I wrote a small book titled *Must I Submit?* The responses were strong, varied, and unforgettable. Though that book is now out of print, the conversations it sparked never left me. The questions it raised and the misunderstandings it exposed have stayed with me, urging a deeper response. That desire—to bring clarity, healing, and transformation—has led to the book you now hold.

This book was written to shift perspectives, heal struggling relationships, and liberate readers from long-standing misinterpretations of a powerful and often misunderstood principle: submission.

In a world obsessed with dominance, power, and self-assertion, the concept of submission often evokes negative reactions. For many, submission represents the antithesis of influence and great success. Yes, I know that word can be unsettling. It may stir thoughts of weakness, silence, or loss of identity. But what if our understanding has been fundamentally flawed? What if the very thing we've often resisted holds the secret to lasting influence and strength?

Think for a moment about nature: the mighty oak stands tall not because it never bends, but because it yields to the wind. Water, soft and yielding, reshapes even the hardest stone. The natural world thrives through a constant rhythm of giving and receiving—a mutual submission that sustains all life.

This book was born from observing how many relationships—marriages, teams, churches, communities—suffer needlessly under distorted views of authority and submission. Too often, scriptures about wives submitting to husbands, children obeying parents, or servants respecting masters have been weaponized

instead of being wisely applied for flourishing, collaborative living. Yet this principle isn't confined to marriage or church life; it affects every sphere—our friendships, families, organizations, and societies.

Across six chapters, we will explore how submission—rightly understood—brings harmony to marriage, strength to teams, unity to communities, and stability to society. We'll look at its role in parent-child dynamics, among peers, and even in the humble posture of an employee within the workplace.

We will also face the obstacles—pride, fear, mindset, public opinion, and ignorance—that often block our ability to submit, and we'll explore practical paths to overcome them. My aim is not to burden you but to reveal submission as a pathway to connection, wisdom, and lasting impact.

This is not a call to be passive or voiceless. It is an invitation to embrace the counterintuitive truth that true authority often flows from willing surrender, that real leadership emerges from service, and that enduring influence is born not from dominance, but from humility.

For people of faith, this message resonates deeply with the example of Christ—whose path to exaltation began in

submission. But the truth in these pages is not limited to faith traditions. If you're seeking more harmonious relationships, meaningful leadership, or a way of living that creates lasting change, you'll find something here that speaks to you.

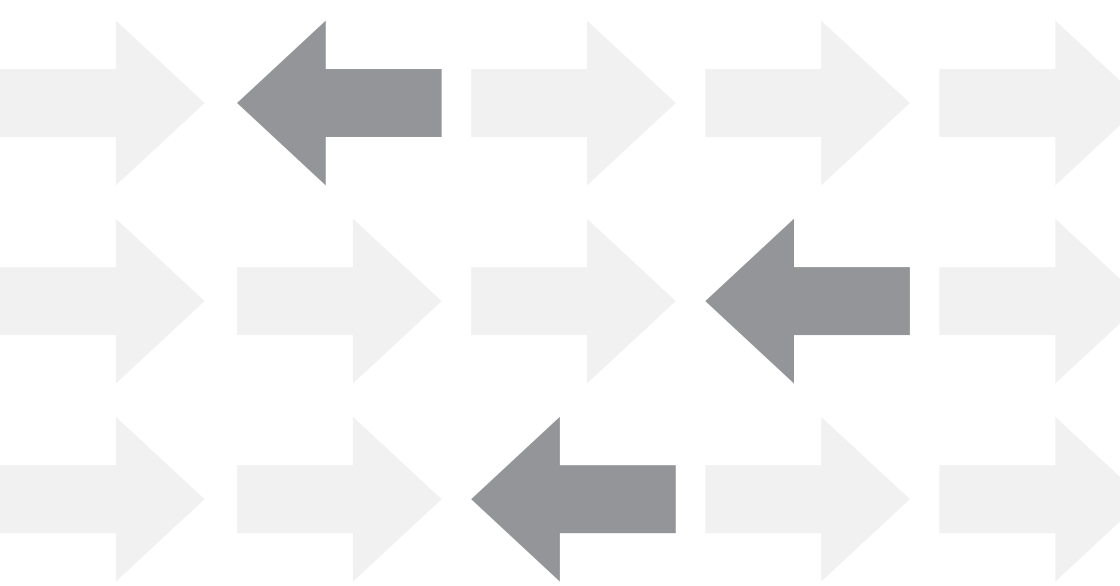
This book is for anyone—married or single, leading or following, believing or questioning—who desires relationships that thrive, influence that endures, and a life aligned with something greater than self.

History's most impactful figures—whether spiritual leaders, revolutionary thinkers, or compassionate pioneers—understood that true authority isn't seized; it's earned through humility, trust, and the willingness to yield to a higher purpose. Without submission, ambition becomes arrogance, leadership turns into tyranny, and relationships fracture under the weight of self-interest. This book reveals why submission—not as defeat, but as a divine strategy—is the missing link between struggle and significance, between force and lasting influence.

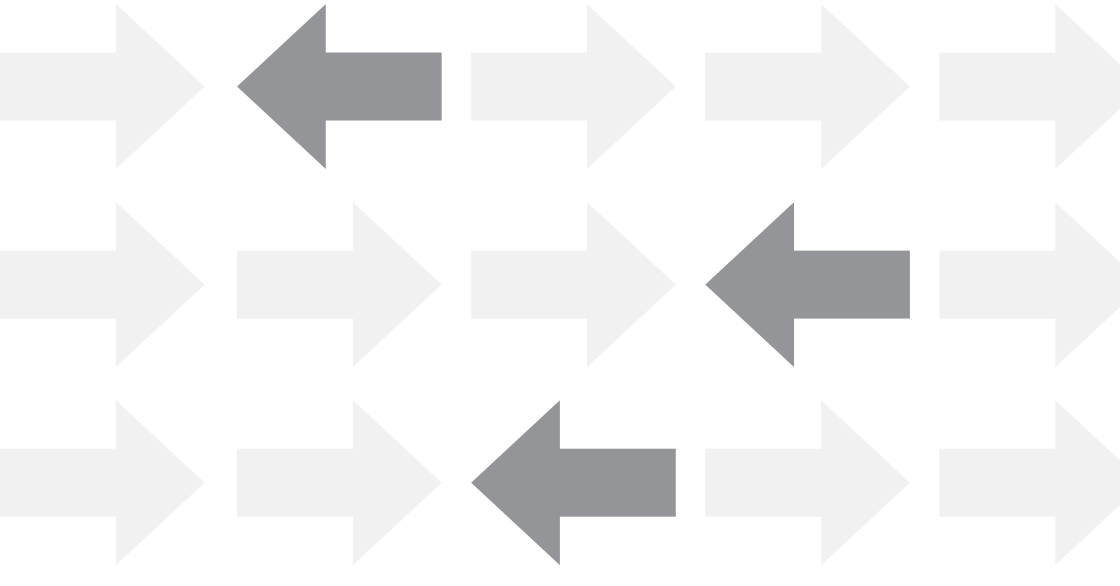
So take a deep breath and come with me on this journey. Let's reimagine submission—not as the enemy of success, but as its missing link. Whether you've wrestled with this idea or lived its truth, I believe you'll discover new insight, deeper peace, and the kind of influence that doesn't fade.

Submission isn't about losing yourself. It's about finding your place in a greater design—one that leads to strength, freedom, and a life of real and lasting impact.

Let's begin!



Chapter One



CHAPTER 1

Influence

Influence is like the wind: invisible yet undeniable. You may not choose to accept it, but its presence is impossible to ignore. Its impact can shift your stability and alter your course. Similarly, influence is akin to yeast—its power is not measured by its size or volume but by the lasting effect it creates and the profound consequences it brings.

As an African, I see and feel the deep impact of colonialism all around my beloved continent. The official languages spoken here are either English or French—languages that are not native to us, yet they shape and define how we live, communicate, and relate to one another. This is the power of influence at work.

Everywhere I look, I witness the far-reaching influence of globalization. The internet and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have brought about the most significant shift in human communication in history. Social media is teeming with content creators, many of whom boldly identify as 'influencers,' wielding power in once unimaginable ways.

While it is undeniable that leadership and influence are closely linked, influence goes beyond merely holding a leadership position or accumulating followers on social media platforms. True influence is not about numbers or visibility—it's about the impact you create and the lives you touch.

I believe that influence, just like the wind or yeast, must pass these tests:

1. **Impact:** What changed? What is the 'before and after' story?
2. **Culture-Shaping:** Did the influence redesign people's way of living and thinking?
3. **Generational Transformation:** Has the influence outlived the influencer? Have others imbibed and embodied the influence? Do we have personal testimonials of other people using the principles to experience the intended outcome?

Based on the criteria above, certain people or things come to mind as having influence:

1. **Electricity:** Significant inventions and discoveries by Benjamin Franklin and the light bulb by Thomas Edison.
2. **Cars:** Invented by Karl Benz and revolutionized by Henry Ford.
3. **Airplane:** The Wright brothers,
4. **Computer:** Charles Babbage conceptualized and invented the first mechanical computer in the early 19th century.

We may also mention some individuals like:

Nelson Mandela, best known for successfully leading the resistance to South Africa's policy of apartheid in the 20th century.

Rosa Parks, famously became a leader in the 1950s Civil Rights Movement when she refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white passenger.

Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, activist who fought for the right of Nigerian women to vote, is also popularly known for being the first woman to drive a car, paving the way for the right of women to own and drive cars in Nigeria.

Take a moment to write one thing that has influenced you or an individual whose life has greatly impacted you in more ways than one.

.....

Just like the wind and the yeast described earlier, I discovered one individual whose life passed every test and criterion for influence. His example stands as a powerful lesson on how to influence the world around us. This is a person whose actions, character, and legacy have left an indelible mark on history—a figure whose influence transcends time and culture. Let me introduce you to His profile:

This Man lived thousands of years ago, and His influence is still relevant today. Though He was rejected by His tribe of birth in His lifetime on earth, He remains the most famous man from that tribe who has ever lived.

He is the central figure in the best-selling and most popular book in history. At over 5 billion copies sold and still counting, this book is not only the best-selling, it is also the most translated of all time.

Ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle spoke extensively about societal ills such as slavery, but this influential and successful man launched an equality revolution. Despite not explicitly speaking on slavery, this influential man's teachings implicitly conveyed the importance of respect and honor

for human life, without regard to social status. He promoted mutual respect and humility in service, irrespective of one's position in life.

He embraced women and children. He emphasized the treasure and value of every human life, stating that even their hairs, as small as they look compared to the body, are numbered.

This most influential character also redefined heroism. Most heroes are recognized by their conquests in wars, and they have to defeat someone to stand on top. His own heroism came about from denial, sacrifice, and humility. In the short span of 33 years on earth, He raised men who were described as unlearned to become wise and audacious. They left philosophers of their time astonished by their reasoning. It was recorded that His followers turned the world upside down.[1]

People who fully subscribe to His ideology and honor His belief system are raised in the ocean of compassion. Just to cite a few of His billions of followers worldwide:

- Mother Teresa founded Missionaries of Charity, a religious congregation devoted to helping the sick, poor, and dying based in India.

1 Acts 17:6 (NKJV)

- William Wilberforce is best known for his leadership in the movement to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire.

- Martin Luther King Jr. was a prominent civil rights leader in the United States, recognized for his efforts to combat racial segregation and promote civil rights for African Americans through nonviolent civil disobedience.

- William Carey: He was celebrated for his pioneering work in missionary activities in India. Carey contributed greatly to the development of Indian linguistics, education, and social reform. His efforts in promoting literacy, particularly in the Bengali language, and his work to improve the status of women in India also stand out.

These individuals are celebrated for their significant contributions to society in various forms of social justice, humanitarian work, and cultural transformation. Their actions and legacies have inspired change, uplifted communities, and sparked movements that continue to resonate across generations.

To this day, His assertion that nothing was created outside of Him has not been successfully invalidated by any individual, dead or alive. His life and legacy reshaped humanity's relationship with the divine, and since His arrival, life has never been the

same. That personality is none other than Jesus, the Christ, Savior, and King!

Jesus' earthly life was characterized by outstanding events. He left us with enough guidance to help us lead lives of influence and impact, just as He did. Who better to learn from than the most influential human to ever live? Come along with me as we follow the trail of His life and uncover a fundamental yet often understated principle that can help us influence the world.

His birth was marked by extraordinary spiritual experiences for His earthly parents, Mary and Joseph. Despite this divine beginning, Jesus never lived a life of extravagance or disrespect. At just 12 years old, He displayed such wisdom that the teachers of the law were astonished. Yet, when His parents arrived, He reverently yielded to their care and authority.[2]

According to history, Jesus was born into the family of Joseph, a carpenter, in a small village with just eleven houses and one street. Everyone, I believe, knew Him as the carpenter's son. If a roof leaked, they'd call His dad, "Joseph, come fix it!" Yet Jesus knew His purpose was bigger than that village. He recognized

2 Luke 2:41-52

that staying as a village carpenter wouldn't fulfill His divine assignment. He had to transition.

Jesus didn't rush into ministry. For years, He worked, learned, and prepared. When the time came, He moved decisively, saying, *"I must be about My Father's business."*

He did not abandon His growing-up season prematurely. Rather, He mastered it, using it as a foundation for what's next by growing in wisdom and stature. He did not mismanage the transition.

When He came of stature to start His ministry, in wisdom, He sought the blessing and seal of approval of the most seasoned preacher of His day, John the Baptist. Having a clear understanding of the prophecies that John the Baptist was His forerunner, He humbled Himself to be baptized. Despite His divine power, He did not despise the process, neither did He stay stuck in it. He had enough wisdom and discernment to know that growth requires guidance and humility precedes honor. Even Jesus—the King of kings —yielded to an authority figure.

What followed after the baptism was beyond anyone's expectations. The heavens opened, the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and the Father spoke in affirmation of His

identity. What better endorsements could one receive at the start of a ministry than these?

In ministry, Jesus never walked alone. He chose twelve disciples as His closest companions and was often in the company of many followers. Their bond was so strong that it took betrayal—and a bribe—to single Him out for arrest. Throughout His ministry, Jesus served His disciples, even washing their feet to demonstrate that *"the greatest among you must be the servant of all"*[3]. Though He mingled with sinners and was often underestimated, His power and wisdom were undeniable. Even His enemies could not ignore Him. After His resurrection, He continued to guide His disciples, empowering them to spread His message. Over two millennia later, the gospel of Jesus Christ, which began in a small town in Jerusalem, has reached billions of people across generations and continues to spread to the ends of the earth. Today, the Bible, the book dedicated to His story, holds the Guinness World Record as the best-selling book of all time.

The miracles Jesus performed—healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons—are well-known and widely discussed. His storytelling, transformative messages, and timeless wisdom have been the subject of countless books, podcasts, and sermons. His

3 Matthew 23:11

earthly journey, spanning just over 33 years, was so monumental that the Bible declares: *"…if all His deeds were written down, the world itself could not contain the books."*[4].

Despite having all power at His disposal, Jesus submitted to the humiliation of death on a cross. What the devil intended as a shameful defeat became the ultimate victory. The authority lost by the first Adam through deception was reclaimed by Jesus, the second and Last Adam. Since then, humanity has been freed from the power of sin, death, and the grave.

If we trace Jesus' influence—His childhood, His rapid rise in ministry, His relationships with His associates and disciples, and His ultimate purpose on earth—we find a recurring theme often overlooked: His willingness to *submit* His will and His personal interests for the greater good.

He submitted His Will at the garden of Gethsemane.[5]
He submitted his personal comfort throughout His earthly ministry.[6]

4 John 21:25
5 Matthew 26:36-39
6 Matthew 8:20

He submitted His pride and dignity, ultimately submitting His life by His gruesome death on the cross and taking upon Himself the curse due to all of mankind![7]

Jesus' life taught us that submission is not about inferiority or blind obedience; rather, it is about aligning oneself with God's design for order and love. It shows submission as a strength that builds unity and preserves relationships and brings honor to God's plan. It is through submission that true influence is born—one that elevates, empowers, and endures.

Maybe you think this is Jesus… and it can only be so in a religious setting. Now, let's explore how submitting an idea can lead to elevation and success in the business world.

Here is a real-life story about how an idea grew and became a global influence while following the principle of submission.

In a business world that idolizes disruptors and charismatic leaders, Zubin Karkaria's story stands apart. His journey with VFS Global—transforming a modest visa processing initiative into a $7 billion behemoth—reveals an unconventional truth:

7 Philippians 2:8

real influence often comes not from defiance, but from disciplined submission.

Karkaria's approach was never about bulldozing through barriers. As COO of Kuoni India, he observed a paradox: embassies guarded their visa authority fiercely, yet their systems groaned under inefficiency. Where others might have seen dysfunction to exploit, Karkaria saw an opportunity to serve. His breakthrough came not with a bold pitch, but through patient alignment.

For 18 months, he courted the U.S. Embassy in Mumbai, framing VFS not as a challenger but as a humble partner: "Let us shoulder the administrative burden so you can focus on diplomacy." This posture of submission disarmed skepticism—turning a travel executive into a trusted ally of governments.

Early victories with the U.S. and UK embassies proved his model. But Karkaria's submission wasn't passive; it was strategic. Within Kuoni, he navigated corporate hierarchies with the same deference, patiently educating Zurich-based executives about visa complexities. His willingness to submit to process—presenting data, accommodating scrutiny—earned him a seat at the table and the resources to scale.

Governance became his silent weapon. In an industry riddled with distrust, VFS prioritized 99.9% accuracy, airtight data security, and transparent pricing (charging applicants directly, not governments). This rigor made VFS indispensable—a partner so reliable that by 2021, Blackstone placed billions on its future.

Global expansion tested Karkaria's philosophy further. Relocating headquarters from India to Singapore, then Dubai, wasn't just about tax benefits; it signaled submission to geographic realities. He empowered local teams, allowing regional nuances to shape operations. When South Africa needed residency permits or India sought birth certificate services, VFS adapted—not as a colonizing multinational, but as a servant of local needs.

Today, with 3,500 centers across 158 countries, VFS processes over 100,000 visas daily. Yet its dominance feels almost invisible—a testament to Karkaria's belief that the highest form of power is making others feel in control. His legacy challenges the myth of the lone visionary, offering instead a playbook for influence through alignment: listen obsessively, adapt relentlessly, and let your competence speak louder than your ambition.

In an age of brash disruption, Karkaria's quiet mastery of the art of submission has proven that systems reward those who perfect

this art. The most enduring empires, after all, are built not on shattered gates but on opened doors.

Diligence, charisma, assertiveness, industry knowledge, confidence, vision, leadership, and innovation are often hailed as key elements of influence. However, as demonstrated through the story of Jesus and the business journey of Zubin Karkaria, one crucial yet often overlooked key to influencing the world is submission. This powerful concept, though seldom discussed, plays a pivotal role in shaping lasting impact.

In the following chapters, we will gain a more robust understanding of submission in order to master the art and become the true influencers.

Personal Reflection

Some of the key factors that will play significant roles in my journey to influence the Earth are:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

I will make an effort to submit myself to serve others by doing the following:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

I will consider my present location to serve others by doing the following:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

Practical Application

- If you are understudying someone, evaluate how you are nurturing your own potential.

- If you are a spiritual leader, assess how invested you are in serving other spiritual leaders ahead of you.

- If you are a mentor, consider from today how you can more effectively guide and model submission before your mentees.