

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE

### Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life

#### LESSON 13: WHAT IS THE GOSPEL? AND HOW DOES IT IMPACT MY LIFE?

**What we want students to learn:** That students would grasp the essential nature of the Gospel and how it transforms the way they see their lives.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To begin to identify exactly how God is working in and through them to impact the world around them with the truth of the Gospel.

**Scripture Focus:** Ephesians 2:4-9

**Overview:** The Gospel literally translates as the “good news.” The good news about Jesus. The good news that we who were once enemies of God have become friends. We who were dead have become alive. The Gospel message is about grace, and love, and victory. As followers of Christ, the Gospel message should be central in your teenagers’ lives. Every aspect of who they are should be dripping with the Gospel. This lesson will help you set this standard as something to be pursued in their lives, while at the same time introducing the emphasis of this unit.

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### TEACHER PREP VIDEO

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To access your **LIFE** lesson 13 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 13, and click on the “Background” tab. You’ll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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### BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you’ll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what’s happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by “context”?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you’ll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What’s the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don’t get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God’s plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

### THE DETAILS

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians. Of course we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Time frame:** Ephesians was probably written by Paul from prison in the latter years of his life, sometime around 60 or 61 AD.

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PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
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- **Purpose:** Paul had a very close relationship with the church in Ephesus. It seems as if the motivation for the letter was simply that the church would know how he was faring in his imprisonment. But, true to form, Paul couldn't help but teach. The letter covers general teaching on the work of Christ to redeem believers, unity among believers, and how believers are supposed to conduct themselves.

## THE SETTING

The letter to the Ephesians was part of Paul's efforts to keep the church focused on the true Gospel of Jesus Christ in the midst of false teaching in the area. From prison, Paul continued to fight for sound doctrine. This letter seeks to promote unity among believers through a clear understanding of the Gospel. Chapter 2 picks up after Paul has opened by reminding the church of the privilege it is to be recipients of God's grace through Christ's sacrifice.

## THE MAIN POINT

Living a Gospel-centered life means just that: our lives should be centered on the Gospel. In everything we say, do, and believe, there should be evidence of Christ at work in us and through us. We are saved from sin, for the purpose of glorifying God.

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## LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

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## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To help students see the importance of clear definition.
- **Set-Up:** You're going to want to choose a picture from the Internet to cut up into pieces. The idea is to pick a picture complex enough that students won't easily be able to guess what it is based on their individual piece, but simple enough that they can actually succeed in doing so. Line drawings work best.

FIRST, as students arrive, give one pre-cut piece of the puzzle to each student until they are all distributed. Instruct them that they are not to show their piece or discuss it with anyone. When you're ready, ask for volunteers to take turns guessing what they think the picture is based on their piece. (Even if they successfully guess, don't reveal the answer just yet.) Ask students to explain why they answered as they did.

TEHN, allow students to come together and complete the puzzle. If any students initially guessed right, acknowledge this.

FINALLY, when everyone is back in their seats say something like:

- **Some of you were able to guess what the picture was because you had a piece that was what we might call a "defining characteristic" of the overall image. Others couldn't come up with it because your piece was too abstract. You had no reason to know what you were looking at. Sometimes we think that our lives look "Christian" and assume that others will see Christ in us. But what if our lives are more generic than we think? Today, we are going to look at what it means to live a Gospel-centered life so we can reflect the defining characteristics of a life rooted in Christ.**

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EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

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Transition into the **Main Event** portion of your lesson.

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** For students to grasp the essential nature of the Gospel and how it transforms the way they see their lives.
- **Set Up:** You'll benefit from a dry-erase board, but it's not critical. Make sure students have a Bible or that they are able to look along with a friend.

FIRST, open The Main Event by kicking off a discussion. Ask:

- **What does it mean to be a Christian? (If you have a board, this would be a good time to make a list.)**
  - Answers will vary though should include saved from sin, born again, alive in Christ, obedient to God's Word, serving others, etc. (Be prepared to include answers that may be slightly off point as well – we'll get back to those in a second. Students may include thoughts like: going to church, reading your Bible, being good, not cussing or doing bad things, etc. The goal is to map out all of their thoughts in response to the question.)
- **Which of these things might be true of someone who does not know Christ? In other words, which of these descriptors can be faked?**
  - This is where you can start to sort out the responses. Tell students that while all of these may be good things that can be true of a Christian, some of them may also be true of non-believers. Draw a line through any words or phrases that are not essential to the Gospel. Actions such as being good, going to church, etc. can be filtered out as non-essential to salvation. Try and dwindle the list to descriptors that rest on the work of Christ: born again, redeemed, saved by grace, etc.

THEN, tell students that you have a good list of what a Christian might look like, but that now you are going to look at this a little more closely. Remind them that the question is, "What does it mean to BE a Christian"? Say something like:

- **When we think of being a Christian, a lot of things come to mind that may or may not be Gospel-centered. This is the type of thinking that Paul warned the church at Ephesus to avoid. When we over-complicate the Gospel with rules and cultural expectations, we distract from Christ. When we over-simplify the Gospel by only focusing on the parts we like, we undermine the cost that Christ paid. The only solution is a clear, biblical understanding of salvation. Let's look at this passage to see how you did on your list.**

NEXT, instruct students to turn to Ephesians 2:4-9. While they're finding it, provide some context using the Bible Background. When students have found it, read or have a volunteer read the passage. Explain that there is a lot to process in these verses! Have them focus their attention back to verses 4-5. Then, ask:

- **What is the very first phrase here?**
  - Answer: "But God"
- **Take a minute to skim the verses before this one (Eph 2:1-3) and share what you think God's mercy is being compared with.**
  - Answer: Humankind's sin. Not just our actions, but the very nature of our existence: disobedient, fleshly, children of wrath.

# THE LIFE

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- **Why is it important to keep our sin-nature in mind when we think about God's work of salvation?**
  - o Answer: We don't deserve salvation! We cannot earn it. We are bound by our sin and cannot please God. This is critical in understanding salvation as an act of mercy.

Explain to students that the phrase "But God" is the most critical turning point in all of human history! This phrase sets the stage for understanding the Gospel. Say something like:

- **God's actions are, by definition, in contrast to the actions of humanity. To understand mercy, we must first understand that God's love was expressed, not just during our rejection of Him, but because of it! This is not like human love. It is because we reject Him that He provided a Savior – because we cannot love Him until His love fills us. In His mercy, His love provided what we lacked, the ability to love Him back!**

THEN, continue your discussion by asking something like:

- **So, Paul is teaching here that we are against God. We reject Him by our very nature, but God is different! What words do you see that describe God's character? Let's make a note of them.**
  - o Answer: Rich in mercy and great in love.
- **Because His nature is so different from ours, what does this verse say He did for us through Christ?**
  - o Answer: God made us alive in Christ, giving us the opportunity to be saved from the death our sins rightfully earn for us. Explain that Paul makes it clear here that being a Christian is more than just acting differently. We were dead in sin, and through the loving mercy of God, we have been brought to life! Death and life are about as different as two things can be; shouldn't there be some visible difference in our lives before and after Christ? (If it's not already there, go back to your chart and add "received mercy," "made alive," and "saved by grace" to your list of what it means to be a Christian.)

NEXT, re-read Ephesians 2:6-7 and ask:

- **This characteristic is so obvious that we often overlook it. What does this passage describe as a benefit of the gospel?**
  - o Answer: We get to go to Heaven!
- **Look carefully at verse 6 and someone tell me how we get to go to heaven. Do we earn it?**
  - o Answer: No. We are raised up and seated there by God. That's a big deal! (Add "seat in Heaven" to your list of what it means to be a Christian.)

There is a lot of great news for us in the Gospel. Recap for your students by looking at your list and review: received mercy, made alive, saved by grace, seat in Heaven, and say/ask:

- **With all of this good news for us, it's easy to see why some people get confused and think that the Gospel is about us. But someone read verses 8-9 and share with us what the Gospel is all about.**
  - o Answer: The Gospel may be good news FOR us, but it is the good news OF God and that good news IS Jesus Christ. When we understand this, we can surrender to a Gospel-centered life.

FINALLY, remind students that apart from God, we do not have the power to be a Christian. We can't do it on our own. But God makes of us followers of Christ when we understand and submit to the truth of the Gospel. It is not our doing; it is His. Explain that the good we do as His followers is a reaction to our understanding of what He has done for us. Remind them that living a Gospel-centered life means focusing daily on the immeasurable riches God has shown to us, and making that visible to others.

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Ask if there are any questions, then transition into *the Last Word*.

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** For students to begin to identify exactly how God is working in and through them to impact the world around them with the truth of the Gospel.
- **Set-Up:** You will need paper or note cards and something for each student to write with.

FIRST, ask students if they have ever wondered why you don't go to heaven the moment you are saved. After all, won't it be easier to know and serve God in heaven than it is here on earth? Explain that if we identify with Christ, then we believe that He will come again and bring us to live with Him for eternity. If He hasn't done that yet, there must be a reason!

THEN, ask:

- **How does thinking about that impact how you spend the days that you wait for His return?**
  - Answer: Don't be too hard on students if they respond with blank stares. This question is essentially the biggest question there is: What is the purpose of life? Every day we live on earth has a purpose to reveal God's grace and yet most of us can go days on end without that crossing our minds.

NEXT, encourage students to look at this question in a practical way. Pass out a piece of paper or note card to students with something to write with. Instruct students to draw a line down the middle of the paper and write today's date at the top of the line. This will divide the paper into two columns. If you are using a note card, label one side "before today," and one "after today."

THEN, say:

- **Ephesians 2:9 makes it clear that we cannot boast in ourselves for our salvation. It is the work of God, not of us. We can't earn God's favor through good works, but we can show Him favor by doing the kind of good works that point others to Him.**

NEXT, instruct students to think about their life up to this point, specifically since they gave their life to Christ and accepted His salvation. Ask:

- **What examples can you think of where there has been evidence in your life of God's grace? (You won't have to show this to anyone, but see if you can think of things that others might see in you that would point them to Him.) List as many as you can.**

Give students a minute or two to think about this. Then, tell students that this may be hard depending on how intentional they have been in their walk with God up to this point. Remind them that salvation is a life change, so there should be something different about them that is visible. Those actions do not save them, but reflect the fact that we are already saved!

THEN, instruct students to look at the next column on their paper. Ask:

- **In light of what we have seen in Scripture today, what do you want people to see in your life from this day forward?**
  - Answers will vary.

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- Do you believe God is calling you to live differently? To serve more boldly? If so, in your second column, list some things that you believe God wants you to demonstrate to those around you. Be specific.

When they have had time to jot down some thoughts, ask a few students to share. Summarize by saying something like:

- **The goal here is not to list rules so we can act more “Christian,” but to look in the mirror and see how well we are reflecting the nature of the God we serve. If we are Gospel-centered, our lives should be characterized by grace, peace, love, service, and above all, a desire for holiness.**

Close in prayer by asking God to give His church a gospel-centered focus. Pray for your group to be convicted of specific ways to reflect the life-changing grace that has been poured out by Christ!

FINALLY, allow time for any closing thoughts or questions from your students.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the **Social Media** guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

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## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).

# THE LIFE

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LESSON 14: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SURRENDER TO A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE?

**What we want students to learn:** That being a disciple means living for Christ, not themselves.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To begin to define, in their own words, what it means to live a life with the Gospel at the center and not themselves.

**Scripture Focus:** Galatians 2:20

**Supporting Scripture:** Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 3:3

**Overview:** Being a Christian isn't about being a good person. There are plenty of good people in this world. Being a Christian isn't about your students' individual lives or what God can do for them. Being a Christian is ultimately about surrender. It's about us giving up the control of our lives and letting God lead, as He alone is uniquely suited to lead. In place of a life where students are at the center, they're called to live a life where Christ is at the center, where the Gospel is at the center.

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

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## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Paul, the persecutor-of-Christians-turned-missionary, is the author of the letter to the Galatians (see Acts 7:57-8:3 and 9:1-31). After his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul set out on several journeys to proclaim that salvation is available through Jesus and His death and resurrection. Several churches were



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planted as a result of Paul's leadership, including the church in Galatia.

- **Time frame:** Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians sometime between A.D. 48 and 53, but most likely by A.D. 49.
- **Purpose:** The primary purpose for Paul's letter to the Galatians was to respond to a particular issue: A group of Jews—claiming to also be Christ-followers (many early Christians were Jewish Christians)—had begun to argue that Christians are not just saved by faith, but that they also were required to keep the Mosaic Law. This, of course, went against everything Paul knew to be true about Jesus. The main thrust of Paul's teaching was that there is no work we could accomplish to be saved (Ephesians 2:8), including the keeping of the Law (Galatians 2:16).

## THE SETTING

Paul's letter to the Galatians drives home one of the most important aspects of the Gospel: It is Jesus who saves through faith alone, not through any effort on our own part. In chapter 2 of Galatians, Paul brings up a disagreement that occurred between he and Peter. (For more information on this disagreement, which likely took place after Paul's letter to the Galatians was written, see Acts 15.) This disagreement centered around an important question: Does someone need to first follow and abide by the Jewish religious laws in order to follow Jesus? Paul—through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—argues that requiring any religious works in order to be saved would mean that we are not saved by faith alone. This section culminates in 2:20, where Paul passionately declares that he has surrendered his life wholly to Jesus.

## THE MAIN POINT

The main point is that being a disciple of Jesus requires full surrender of our lives to Christ. It's easy at times to reduce following Jesus into a list of do's and don'ts. While Jesus does make moral demands on our lives, the Gospel is much bigger than that; it's about God's rescue of us. And since God rescued us when we were completely unable to rescue ourselves, shouldn't we willingly hand over our lives to Him? When we become followers of Jesus, a shift happens in our lives: our old "me first" selves die, and our life from that point forward is wrapped up in Jesus. This all happens for a simple but earth-shattering reason: Jesus "loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

## LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about what it means to give someone else control of what you do.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need to set up a space where a student will have to walk from a starting point to an ending point while navigating around obstacles such as chairs, a couch, or anything else they might run into or trip over. Don't make it too difficult or long; it should be something someone could walk through easily in about 15 seconds. You'll also need a blindfold.

WEEK 14: LESSON PLAN  
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# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
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LESSON 14: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SURRENDER TO A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE?

FIRST, start the conversation by saying something like:

- **We've got a little obstacle course here. I need someone to try to walk through it without touching any of the obstacles. Anyone think they can do it?**
  - At this point, you have not yet revealed the blindfold, and the first volunteer should walk through the obstacle course without a blindfold, which will be really easy for him/her.
- **Was that difficult for [the volunteer]? Why not?**
  - Answer: The obstacles were easy to see and move around.

THEN, have the same student who went through the course the first time put on the blindfold. Have students quickly rearrange the course so the volunteer can't do the course by memory. Ask for another volunteer to guide the blindfolded student through the obstacle course using only verbal commands. For this run through the course, allow the student to use his/her hands to find the way as he/she listens to the commands of his/her helper. Afterwards, ask the volunteer:

- **Was that harder to go through the second time? Why?**
  - Answers will vary.

NEXT, have the same volunteer put on the blindfold one more time, and have students rearrange the obstacles again. This time, make sure the student keeps his/her hands behind his/her back the entire time (but don't tie them; that wouldn't be safe!) so that he/she has to rely solely on the verbal instructions of the volunteer helping him/her. Ask:

- **What was different about this third time through?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **How much was [the volunteer going through the course] in control of what happened to himself/herself the third time through compared to the first time through?**
  - Answers will vary. As you hear their responses, push the discussion toward the idea that the student had to surrender almost complete control of where he/she walked to the friend helping him/her.

FINALLY, let students know that you'll be talking about this idea of surrendering control to God in today's study. Say something like:

- **I don't know about you, but surrendering control of anything in my life to someone else is really difficult. It can be super difficult to surrender control to God, but as we'll see today, that's a part of following Jesus.**

Transition into **The Main Event** portion of the lesson.

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** Students will understand that being a disciple means living for Christ, not themselves.
- **Set-Up:** You may benefit from a dry erase board, but it's not critical. Make sure each student has access to a Bible or that they are able to look along with a friend.

FIRST, start off a discussion by reminding students of the fact that God's offer of salvation is a gift. Instruct students to

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
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LESSON 14: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SURRENDER TO A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE?

turn to Ephesians 2. Then, read or have a student read Ephesians 2:8-9. Then, ask:

- **What is the “gift” that Paul is talking about in these two verses?**
  - Answer: Being saved solely through trusting in God’s gift of grace, which is given through Jesus.
- **We’ve talked a lot in this series about the Gospel and how being a disciple of Jesus begins by accepting God’s gift of salvation. In your own words, what does it mean to say “yes” to that gift?**
  - Answers will vary. Give your group time to share in their own words what it means to accept God’s grace.
- **So what happens after you say “yes” to this gift? Or, to ask it another way, after you decide to follow Jesus, what does the rest of your life look like?**
  - Answers will vary. The purpose of this question is to set the stage for the rest of the study, so simply allow students to share their thoughts here.

NEXT, explain that you’ll spend most of the study trying to find an answer to that last question. Read or have a student read Galatians 2:20 and then ask something like:

- **This is a really short passage, but it has three packed statements that we’ll look at. The first one is: “I have been crucified with Christ.” We’re pretty sure that Paul was alive when he wrote this, since it’s usually helpful to be alive in order to write a letter. So if Paul’s not dead, what does he mean by “I have been crucified with Christ”?**
  - Answer: This question requires some abstract thinking, so give some time for students to wrestle through it. Point them to the idea that Paul had died to sin and to himself.
- **Why do you think Paul uses the image of dying to describe what it means to follow Jesus?**
  - Answers will vary. Again, this is a pretty abstract question. Help students wrestle through the idea that in many ways, a decision to follow Jesus means that we die to our old way of living, which was living without God.

THEN, unpack the next statement in Galatians 2:20. Ask:

- **The next statement is: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” Just like the last statement, Paul is still alive when he writes it, so what is he getting at here?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **What do you think it means for Christ to live in us?**
  - Answers will vary. Try to point students to the idea that it is Jesus who directs our lives when we follow Him, rather than our own desires.
- **What is the difference between a life where I’m in charge and Christ living in me?**
  - Answers will vary. Direct the conversation so that students see the contrast between living for ourselves vs. Jesus being Lord of our lives.

NEXT, move to the third statement in this verse. Say something like:

- **The last statement in this verse is: “And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” What do you think Paul means when he says he lives “by faith in the Son of God”?**
  - Answer: He trusts in Jesus for his salvation rather than trusting in himself and that he trusts in God to direct his life.
- **When Paul says, “The life I NOW live in the flesh,” he’s talking about a difference between his life**

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

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LESSON 14: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SURRENDER TO A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE?

before and his life now. Based on just this verse, what are the differences between the life he used to live and the life he now lives?

- o Answer: He lives by faith in Jesus (trusting Jesus); he allows Jesus to direct his life; and he has died to sin.
- Notice the very end of this verse. Paul sort of gives the reason why this new life can happen at all and why he can trust Jesus to guide his life. What is that reason?
  - o Answer: Jesus loved him and gave Himself for Paul.

THEN, help students think through what the entire verse says as a whole. Read or have a student read Galatians 2:20 again, and then ask:

- We've kind of picked this verse apart looking at the three statements Paul makes. We just heard it again. In your own words, what is Paul communicating to us in this verse about what it means to follow Jesus?
  - o Answers will vary. Let students work through what this verse is saying. Make sure the following four things are highlighted in some way before you move on:
    - When we put our trust in Jesus, we die to sin and ourselves.
    - We hand over or submit control of our lives to Jesus.
    - We trust Jesus to guide us as we follow Him.
    - We do this all because Jesus loves us and gave His life for us.
- So basically, to be a disciple of Jesus is to live for Christ and not for ourselves. How is this definition of discipleship—or following Jesus—different from “a Christian is basically someone who goes to church a lot and maybe reads the Bible”?
  - o Answers will vary. The purpose of this question is to help students reflect on the idea that following Jesus is more about surrendering our life to Jesus rather than what we want to do.

FINALLY, wrap up the study by looking at a verse from another letter Paul wrote that sums up what you've been discussing. Read or have a student read Colossians 3:3. Then, ask:

- Paul brings up the same kind of theme here. What does he mean when he says, “For you have died”?
  - o Answer: To follow Jesus is to die to our sin and to our former selves.
- What do you think Paul's trying to tell us when he says our life “is hidden with Christ in God”?
  - o Answers will vary. Let students wrestle with this for a minute, but point them to the idea that we were crucified with Christ and, therefore, are safe in God's care because of what Jesus did for us.
- In what way does this verse communicate that God is in charge of our lives?
  - o Answer: When we say that God is Lord of our lives, we often think of it in terms of us being obedient to God. But there is also the angle that God is in charge of our care, like a parent is. Help students consider the idea that putting God in charge of our lives means that we let Him direct our steps and allow Him to care for us.

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into The Last Word.

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 14: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SURRENDER TO A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE?

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students begin to define, in their own words, what it means to live a life with the Gospel at the center and not themselves.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a copy of the "Dying to Myself/Living for Christ" handout and something with which to write for each student.

FIRST, explain to students that they'll have a chance to define on a practical level what it means to live for Christ in their own day-to-day lives. Say something like:

- **This conversation has been really good, but it honestly doesn't matter much if we don't ever think on a practical level about what it means to actually surrender our lives to Jesus. Everyone has a handout and something to write with. We'll take a few minutes to fill it out. Don't overthink your responses; just trust that God will bring to mind what He wants you to write down.**
  - Make sure that students understand the instructions before they begin filling out the handout.

NEXT, allow students to share something about what they wrote down. Honor students who don't feel comfortable sharing, but try to model vulnerability to get the conversation going. Ask something like:

- **What was it like to answer these questions on a personal level for your own life?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **If you feel comfortable sharing, what did you answer for the first question?**
  - Thank students who were willing to share. Ask the same question for the next two questions on the handout.
- **Which of the three questions do you think God is working on in you the most right now?**
  - Allow students time to answer. Where appropriate, follow up one-word or short answers with "Tell me more about that."

FINALLY, help students reflect on the idea that for them, following Jesus is about surrendering their lives to Jesus rather than just going through the motions, going to church, or trying to be a good person. Say something like:

- **What we've talked about today might be a new way of looking at what it means to follow Jesus. How is what you wrote down different from just "I'm a Christian so God wants me to go to church or be a good person"?**
  - Answers will vary. Where appropriate, push students in their thinking on this question.

FINALLY, allow time for any closing thoughts or questions. Then, close in prayer.

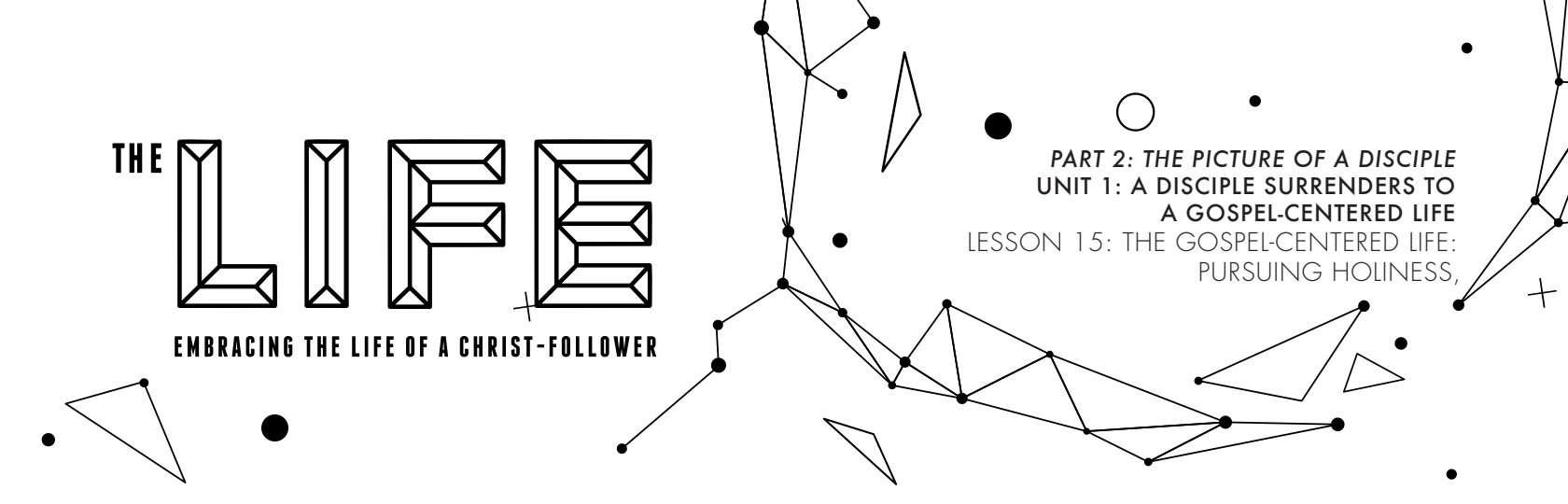
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- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

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WEEK 14: LESSON PLAN  
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# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 15: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
PURSUING HOLINESS,

**What we want students to learn:** That as followers of Christ living Gospel-centered lives, we must strive to be people that imitate the holiness of God.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To identify areas of our lives that resemble the world and surrender these areas to God.

**Scripture Focus:** 1 Peter 1:13-19

**Overview:** Holiness. It makes us shiver. It can seem so far from being attainable, especially when we're in moments of honesty with ourselves and we truly accept how sinful we are. Well, there's good news! The good news of the Gospel is that if we've come to saving relationship with Jesus, God sees us as holy, not because of what we do, but because of what Jesus did on the cross. It doesn't stop there. Because of Christ, we have been set free from the chains of sin to pursue holiness. And while we'll never achieve it this side of heaven, the call of every Christ-follower is to strive to live holy lives. This lesson will help your students catch this vision.

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## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

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To access your **LIFE** lesson 15 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 15, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

The *Bible Background* is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** 1 Peter was written by Peter, one of Jesus' most trusted disciples and one of the key leaders of the growing movement of Christ-followers.
- **Time frame:** 1 Peter was likely written between 54-68 AD.

# THE LIFE

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UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 15: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
PURSUING HOLINESS,

- **Purpose:** 1 Peter was written to a people under persecution, likely under the reign of Nero. Peter calls the Church to persevere under trials because eternal life awaits them. He encourages them that God's promises to His people will endure and should be the basis of their hope.

## THE SETTING

Peter wrote this letter to believers that had been dispersed in cities that reside in modern day Turkey. The letter was likely written between A.D. 54 and A.D. 68 during the reign of Emperor Nero, whom we know was no friend to Christians. Many, if not most, of these believers were the first in their families to claim Jesus as Lord.

## THE MAIN POINT

Peter writes a letter of encouragement to believers facing immense persecution. He admonishes them on how to live and reminds them of the hope that we have in Christ Jesus that makes their present difficulties worthwhile. Because God is holy, all believers are to pursue holiness.

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## LESSON PLAN

The *Lesson Plan* contains three elements: An introductory activity called ***The Lead In***; the Bible study section called ***The Main Event***; an application-focused segment called ***The Last Word***.

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## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To introduce the concept of holiness, specifically that to be holy is to be set apart.
- **Set-Up:** You have two choices for how you want to facilitate this activity. One is to bring physical objects in. The other is to do a Google image search and display your images visually, by either printing or displaying them digitally. Either way, you'll want to find examples of groupings of objects where one object is obviously different from the others. (For example, you may choose a grouping of three pieces of fruit and one vegetable. Or three pieces of sporting equipment and a mop. The goal is to have a few of these groupings that are easy and maybe one or two where the different object is harder to pick out.)

FIRST, explain the activity to your students. Explain to them that you are going to show different groupings of objects. The goal of the activity is for students to identify which of the objects is different.

THEN, display your groupings of objects. For each grouping, allow students to identify which one is different from the rest. When you have finished, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **How did you know which objects were different than the rest of the group?**
  - o Answers will vary. Lead students deeper than the "you just know" level of responses. Ask them HOW they just know. Lead them to understand that essentially, what they are doing is making a judgment based on the essential nature or characteristics of an object.
- **Were some of them easier than others? What made the difficult ones more difficult?**
  - o Answers will vary. Lead students to see that in these cases, there was something about the nature of

# THE LIFE

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UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 15: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
PURSUING HOLINESS,

the object that was similar to the nature of the other objects. There was confusion about the identifying factors that led to being able to easily distinguish between the objects.

FINALLY, explain to students that this lesson is going to be about the idea of being different. Say something like the following:

- **As we continue our discovery of what it means to live our lives as Christ-followers, we're going to apply this concept of being "different" to our faith. Just as the objects in the groupings we looked at stood out as different, we're called to do the same thing. In fact, it's an essential part of who we are as Christ-followers. Let's take a closer look and see what we find out.**

Transition into *The Main Event* portion of your lesson.

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** For students to learn that followers of Christ are to strive to imitate God with their lives.
- **Set Up:** Make sure each student will have access to a copy of the Bible. Use of a dry-erase board is helpful in this activity, though you could certainly facilitate it without one.

FIRST, explain to students that you're going to explore this concept of being different by looking at a specific word in Scripture. Write the word "holy" on the board. Then, ask:

- **What is the first definition of the word "holy" that pops into your mind?**
  - Answers will vary. If any of your students answer with "set apart," this is awesome. But most likely, someone will say "perfect," or something similar.

Explain that while we often think of the word "holy" as meaning perfect, which it does, there is another definition that you're going to focus on today. Write the phrase, "set apart; different; other" on the board. Explain that this is the definition of holy that you're going to be considering today. The kind of "holy" we're talking about today is being set apart specifically for use by God.

THEN, read or have a student read 1 Peter 1:13-19. Point out that the first command in this passage is to "prepare your mind for action." Ask something like:

- **Is it easier to be successful at something, say, taking a test, or performing in sports, if you're prepared?**
  - Answer: Of course it is.
- **Knowing this, what do you think Peter was instructing believers to prepare their minds for?**
  - Answers may vary. Explain to students that the believers Peter was writing to were dispersed among the cities of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The people of these cities worshiped various pagan gods and would have often been hostile toward Christians. This would have required the believers to take action to share the Gospel with those around them who had never heard it. It may have very well included that the believers be mentally prepared for persecution as a result. Actions could also include any steps that needed to be taken so that the believer more closely resembled Christ.
- **Peter then urges his audience to be sober-minded. What does it mean to be sober-minded?**
  - Answer may vary. Sober-minded generally refers to one taking reality seriously, or being intentional



# THE LIFE

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UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 15: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
PURSUING HOLINESS,

about how they approach the world around them.

- **Why was it important for Christ-followers to prepare their minds for action and be sober-minded?**

- o Answers may vary. The rest of the verse reads, “set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” This is what they were getting their minds ready for. Following God is not always easy, but it is always worth it.

NEXT, ask a student to reread 1 Peter 1:14-16. Explain to the students that here Peter contrasts the “passions of your former ignorance” to “holy in all your conduct.” Ask something like:

- **Let’s review: What is our definition of “holy”?**

- o Answer: “Holy” means “set apart,” or “different,” with an eye toward being used by God for His purposes.

THEN, draw a line down the middle of the white board. Have students help you list some examples of “passions of your former ignorance,” i.e. sins you committed before salvation. Write them on one side of the board. On the other side list ways to be “holy in all your conduct,” i.e. attributes of God. It may help students to think in terms of opposites. For each example of sin, list an attribute of God that shows how He is altogether different from that sin. Examples could include: Cheating – Truth telling; Criticizing others – Encouraging other people; Greed – Generosity, etc.

NEXT, read or have a student reread 1 Peter 1:17-19. Ask something like:

- **Why did Peter encourage Christ-followers to “conduct yourselves with fear?” What do you think he meant? Does it sound weird to think about “fearing” God? Explain.**

- o Answers may vary. It may help to lead your students in a discussion of a healthy fear of the Lord. Many Scripture passages discuss a proper fear of God. Examples include Proverbs 9:10 and Psalm 103:17 Help them understand that “fear” in this context is more about reverence and awe than it is about being scared or frightened.

Explain to students that God is powerful, all knowing, and in complete authority over creation; He should be respected and revered. These believers were surrounded by pagans that had no fear of God. It was important they remember that what God thought of them was more important than what others thought of them. This is an important lesson for us to remember too!

THEN, have the students find Hebrews 9:15 in their Bibles or on their app. Ask something like:

- **What is an inheritance? Have you ever heard this word? What does it mean?**

- o Answers will vary. Students may be unfamiliar with this. An inheritance is something people often receive (money, house, land, etc.) after a parent or other older loved one passes away. Inheritances were very important during this time period. It was the main means of passing on money and land to the next generation.

NEXT, read or ask a student to read Hebrews 9:15. Explain to the students that because of Jesus, Christ-followers will receive an eternal inheritance. Ask something like:

- **What do you think that means? How is it different than the kind of inheritance we talked about just a minute ago?**

- o Answers may vary. This is greater than getting money when a parent or grandparent passes away. Money is temporary. Because of Christ’s death and resurrection, we can receive an eternal inheritance of salvation.

# THE LIFE

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FINALLY, bring together all of what you have been discussing. Say something like:

- **As Christ-followers, we're called to live sin-free lives. We are called to be holy. But we're also called to embrace the other aspect of holiness. We're called to live differently than the world around us. We're called to live lives that are set apart for God's purposes. And while so much of this is about us and the choices we make, we're reminded that the truth about what sets us apart is tied up in who God is and what Jesus did for us on the cross. We are holy because, through His work on the cross, Jesus has made it possible for us to be seen as holy. Through faith in Christ, we are set free from the punishment of our sins. But we are also set free to live in such a way that we have an impact on the world for the sake of Jesus. It's our inheritance, both in the future, and for today.**

Ask if there are any questions, then transition into *The Last Word*.

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** For students to identify areas in their lives that look more like the world than Christ and strive to pursue holiness.
- **Set-Up:** Notecard for each student; something for students to write with; dry-erase board.

FIRST, distribute notecards and something to write with to students. Instruct them to write the word "World" on the top of one side of their card. Below it, instruct them to draw a circle. Do the same thing on the dry-erase board. Then, explain to students that this circle represents the world. Say something like the following:

- **The word "world" is a word we toss around a lot in church world. When we say the word "world," we are essentially talking about everything that is in opposition to God. The world is the culture that surrounds us, the sin in people's hearts, and so on. It's what we would call "secular," as opposed to God and His ways which are "sacred." Got it?**

THEN, remind students that when we talk about being set apart, we're talking about being set apart from the world. Have students take a moment and think about their lives. Think about their thoughts and actions. Think about the things they care about. Instruct them to think of the circle on their notecard as the world's influence in their lives. Have them take a couple of minutes and write down any areas or actions in their lives that they know are way worldlier than godly. Have them be perfectly honest with themselves. No one else will see their responses.

NEXT, have them turn their card over and write the word "Christ-like," then draw a circle underneath. Explain that as Christ-followers, the key to living lives that are set apart is to live as those who imitate Jesus. Encourage them to prayerfully take a few moments and consider areas in their life where God is calling them to be more Christ-like. Encourage them to write these down on the notecards.

FINALLY, remind them that being a Christ-follower is a life-long commitment. Because of the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we are in an ongoing process to look more and more like Jesus. It doesn't happen overnight. Say something like:

- **However, we are involved in our own journey of becoming more like Jesus. We have the power to make choices that continue to set us apart from the world. By striving to live holy lives, which is the call of every**

# THE LIFE

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UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 15: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
PURSUING HOLINESS,

**one who seeks to follow Jesus, we identify ourselves with Jesus. And we draw others to Him.**

Encourage students to spend time this week meditating on what it means to live set apart. Allow time for any closing thoughts or questions from your students. Then, close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
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# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life  
LESSON 16: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
PRACTICING HUMILITY

**What we want students to learn:** That as a follower of Christ living a Gospel-centered life, we must be people of humility.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To look around them and identify real ways they can put other's needs above their own.

**Scripture Focus:** Matthew 18:1-4

**Supporting Scripture:** Philippians 2:3-9

**Overview:** Humility is, for the most part, counter cultural. Sure, there are feel-good moments every now and then on the news or online. But for the most part, it's a "me first" world where people look out for their own needs first before ever thinking about others. The only problem is that this is pretty much the opposite of what Christ has called His followers to do. This lesson will help your students understand how humility and service separate them from the world and identify them as Christ-followers.

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## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

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## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE

### Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life

#### LESSON 16: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE: PRACTICING HUMILITY

- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

### THE SETTING

The main passage for this lesson is Matthew 18:1-4. This passage begins a long section where Jesus will explain what it looks like to be a part of His Kingdom. These verses begin with a question from the disciples and Jesus' answer. This type of conversation happens all throughout Jesus' ministry, and here, He sets the disciples straight on how they are to view their position in His Kingdom.

### THE MAIN POINT

The disciple's question is one of standing. They are wondering if they, being the closest followers of Jesus, will be privy to special treatment in God's Kingdom. They're probably hoping all their hard work is going to pay off in some way. They're hoping that they will get special privileges because of all they've done for Jesus. Jesus answers with a visual object lesson: a child. Jesus brought the child in the middle of the group as the goal for their attitude. Essentially, Jesus is showing them that, just as a child knows that they are dependent on others, they must be dependent on God and not themselves. The disciples must flip their thinking on its head. God's Kingdom prizes humility: looking to others before yourself.

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### LESSON PLAN

The *Lesson Plan* contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; and an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

### THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To help students begin to see that God's Kingdom does not work the way we think it does: there is no pecking order.
- **Set-Up:** On a dry-erase, write out a list numbered 1-5 with blanks. Print the "Food Chain" clue cards, located with your Lesson 16 files, and cut them out. Place the five clue cards in a paper bag.

FIRST, set up the game by explaining that you're going to have students draw a card out of the bag, and then have them place it where they think it goes on the food chain. Say something like:

- **We're going to build a food chain together. Once you draw a card out of the bag, choose where you think it ranks on the food chain and I'll write it there.**

Ask for five volunteers and have them choose a clue card and place it in the food chain. Ham it up if things get off. (The difficulty with this game will be getting the first several clues right. If they draw the "grass" card and don't place it on the bottom, the food chain will not be correct.)

NEXT, once the five clues have been chosen and placed, correct the food chain. Ask your students why this is the correct order. (The eagle eats the snake, the snake eats the frog, etc.) Make a connection to our lives. Ask:

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE

### Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life

#### LESSON 16: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE: PRACTICING HUMILITY

- **How many of you feel like your school is divided up into groups? What are they?**
  - You will inevitably get a 'yes' answer from this question. Allow students to list the groups, but encourage it to be done in a way that isn't judgmental or mean. The groups will vary, but may very well be something like "athletes, band kids, smart kids," etc.
- **Does it feel like some people want there to be a pecking order for these groups?**
  - Answer your own question here . . . you don't want to make anyone feel uncomfortable. The answer is yes – there will always be people who want their "group" to be "first." Many people feel like one group of people or one person is on the top, and there's an order in our lives whether it's based on money, popularity, success, or so on. (You may even help them see that this doesn't change when it comes to some adults!)

FINALLY, transition to *The Main Event* by saying something like this:

- **It's easy for us to believe that this same type of system exists within God's family. (We're about to see that some of the disciples felt this way.) Sometimes it feels like some people are "better" Christians than others. Maybe we think that's us! We can become convinced that we're such good people that God only cares about us. What we're going to look at today shows us that that's not true.**

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students see that as a follower of Christ living a Gospel-centered life, we must be people of humility.
- **Set Up:** You may benefit from a dry-erase board, but it's not critical. Make sure students have a Bible or that they are able to look along with a friend.

FIRST, start with telling your students about the passage you're going to look at. Say something like:

- **We're going to look at a passage where the disciples ask Jesus a question. This question shows us who they think they are on the food chain.**

NEXT, read or have a student read Matthew 18:1-4. While students are finding it, provide some context using the Bible Background. When students have finished, lead them in a discussion of this passage. Ask:

- **What question are the disciples really asking? What do they mean when they ask, "Who is the greatest?"**
  - Answer: They're not really asking who is the greatest, they're actually asking Jesus, "Are we the greatest?"
- **Why do you think they would ask that? What had they done to be great?**
  - Answer: These were Jesus' closest friends and disciples. They had left everything to follow Jesus. They were really wondering if that was going to pay off. Would they be treated differently by God because of everything they had sacrificed for Jesus? The disciples valued their own sacrifice. They thought their following Jesus made them better than other people and worthy of special treatment. They thought they deserved to be on top.
- **Jesus was about to turn their values upside down. He brings a child in the middle of the group. What does He say about the child?**
  - Answer: Jesus said that they must turn around from their way of thinking. They weren't ranking themselves on some sort of list or pecking order. Jesus wanted all of them to humble themselves like children.
- **What does it mean to be humble?**

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE

### Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life

#### LESSON 16: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE: PRACTICING HUMILITY

o Answers will vary. Students usually struggle with this word. Sometimes it is helpful to ask them, "What is the opposite of being humble?" Help them see the core of humility: not seeing yourself as the center of the universe. Humility is realizing that we're not on top. Humility is counting other people as more significant than yourselves.

- **Jesus uses a child as the example. How are children humble?**

o Answer: Children are humble because they are dependent. They realize their need for others. They look to parents for direction, provision, and love. We must be the same way with Jesus. We cannot provide everything we need for ourselves. We need Jesus!

THEN, explain that you're going to look at something the Apostle Paul wrote about this exact same idea. Read Philippians 2:3-9 and ask:

- **Who is the best example of humility?**

o Answer: Jesus.

- **OK so, this was an easy answer. But why would you say that?**

o Answers will vary. Lead students to see that Jesus not only told the disciples that they had to turn around their way of thinking, He demonstrated that. We would think that when God would come to Earth it would be with huge celebration and fanfare. Everyone would know God was there. But in reality, Jesus came quietly as a baby in a forgotten stable. He humbled Himself even to the point of dying for us, because we needed it.

- **Look back at the passage. Can you find a definition of humility?**

o Answer: Look at verse 3. Humility is counting "others more significant than yourselves." This is what Jesus wanted His disciples to understand. We're not operating in a system where we're trying to earn our way to the top. If we're really following Jesus, we will count others more significant than ourselves. We will (verse 4) not only look to our own interests, "but also to the interests of others."

Make sure students know that an important thing to see is the example that Jesus set in humility. Jesus showed us first hand what is valuable in the Kingdom of God. We are not working our way to the top, but we are responding to the amazing love of Jesus by living likewise. Paul is addressing in us the same problem that Jesus was addressing with His disciples. Continue the discussion by asking:

- **Look at verse 3. What are the two things the Paul says we shouldn't be doing?**

o Answer: Paul encourages us to do nothing from rivalry or conceit. He sets these two motivations in contrast to humility. They are the opposite of humility.

- **Do you feel like the disciples were asking their question from rivalry or conceit? How?**

o Answer: The disciples were jockeying for position. They wanted to be valued in God's Kingdom. They were looking at each other as rivals to outwork for Jesus. Their conceit is on display in their question as they ask, "Who is the greatest?" They want to be on top, the greatest.

- **How did Jesus demonstrate the opposite of this?**

o Answer: Jesus actually was the greatest. But, He died for us. He became the least, even though He was God, so that we (sinners) could be righteous and with God.

- **How did Jesus show humility?**

o Answer: Our definition of humility from this passage is counting others as more significant than yourself and looking to their interests. On the cross, Jesus was paying our penalty – He was dying our death. Jesus was looking to our interests above His own. He suffered, not because He had to, but because He loved us enough to give Himself up for our forgiveness. Jesus chose to give His life so that we could be forgiven.



# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE

### Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life

#### LESSON 16: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE: PRACTICING HUMILITY

NEXT, help your students begin to think about how we live humbly in our own lives. We're not following God to work our way up in the pecking order, but because of what Jesus has done for us. Say something like:

- **We know that there are things that we are called to do for Jesus. If we're not working our way to be better than other people, why do we do things for Jesus?**
  - Answers will vary. This is the most important question in this lesson. It's easy for us to mistake our lives as Christians as being about working for God's love or a better status in God's Kingdom. A lot of religions work this way, but Christianity turns this concept on its head. We are accepted by God, not because of our deeds, but because of the work that Jesus has done on the cross. We are valued, not because of our worth as a worker, but because of God's love for us. We live in response to what Jesus has done. We are humble because of the humility that Jesus showed us.

FINALLY, transition to *The Last Word* by explaining to your students that you're going to close the lesson by looking at how we actually live out humility in our lives. Transition by saying something like:

- **When we talk about humility, it's easy for us to talk about what not to do, but harder for us to realize what we should be doing in our lives. As we close the lesson we're going to look at how we can really live out humility in different areas of our lives. How can we count others as more significant than ourselves and not just look to our own interests? How can we respond to the humility that Jesus showed us on the cross?**

Ask if there are any questions, then transition into *The Last Word*.

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students look around them and identify real ways they can put other's needs above their own.
- **Set-Up:** You'll want to use a dry-erase board, or some other means to help students visualize the three areas of their life that you will consider. You'll also need a piece of paper and writing utensil for each student.

FIRST, explain to your students that you're going to look at three areas of their life. Draw a circle on the board. Divide it into these three areas (proportional to how much time you, the teacher, spend there): Home, Work/School, Play.

NEXT, explain that these three areas will always be there for anyone, no matter what stage of life you're in. Say:

- **These three areas represent your family, the places you have to go, and the places you want to go.**
  - For these students, most of their job is just to be a student right now!
  - "Play" represents the places you want to go. These may be friend's houses, sports teams, hobbies, etc.
- **The amount of time that you spend in these different areas may change at different points in your life, but they will always be there.**

THEN, give your students time to draw out their own chart and divide it up according to how much time they spend in each place. Ask some of your students to share what their circles look like. Help your students challenge themselves to look for the needs of others. Say/Ask:

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- Write the names of two people that you know well in each of these areas. It may be Mom and Dad, a friend from school, a teacher or a neighbor, but come up with six people that you interact with regularly in these different areas of your life.
- Now comes the hard part. Think of a specific way that you can put this person before yourself.
  - Really challenge your students to think this through. It should be more specific than just "do the dishes for mom," or something like that. Really, how can they count these people as more significant than themselves? Maybe it's studying with a friend who needs help, working hard to respect your parents, or taking a shift for someone at work so they can go to a concert.
  - Ask some of your students to share. Guide their responses toward real expressions of a humility that counts others as more significant.

Close by helping your students see why. Say something like this:

- **The reason that we help in this way and practice humility in our relationships is because we are not living for ourselves. We are living for Jesus. Because of what He has done for us, we're looking for any opportunity to show others what Jesus was really like!**

FINALLY, close in prayer, asking God to lead all of you to follow Jesus by counting others as more significant than yourselves. Pray something like this:

- **God, we're asking you to give us the courage to live like Jesus. Help us to identify real moments in our lives where we can count others as more significant than ourselves. Give us the courage to look to the interests of others and not just our own. Jesus, thank you for the humility you showed on the cross, and help us to live in response to that!**
- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the **Social Media** guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

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# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 17: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
LOVE COVERS ALL

**What we want students to learn:** That as a follower of Christ living a Gospel-centered life, they are called to live a life defined by their love for others.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To evaluate their attitude toward others as it pertains to how they demonstrate love to the world.

**Scripture Focus:** Colossians 3:8-10, 12-14

**Overview:** It would be foolish to attempt to boil God's nature or character down to only one of His attributes. He's far too complex for that. But so much of His activity that involves us, especially His work of redemption and reconciliation through Christ, is motivated by His love. And so it should be no surprise that God views love as one of the primary attributes of His followers. As you wrap up this three-session look at examples of what a Gospel-centered life looks like, you'll challenge your students to be people who exude a Christ-fueled love to others.

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## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul identified himself as the author of Colossians.
- **Time frame:** Most people believe Colossians was written sometime between A.D. 61 and 63, during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:17-31).
- **Purpose:** Ultimately, this letter's purpose is to emphasize the supremacy of Christ over everything. Paul was

# THE LIFE

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PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 17: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
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writing to combat the spread of false teachings among the church at Colossae. The exact heresy being refuted is not certain and may have been a blend of multiple influences. The legalism, mysticism, and asceticism corrupting the pure faith in Colossae were moving attention away from Christ, placing it instead on self-discipline and the awe of other spiritual things.

## THE SETTING

Paul wrote this letter to the church at Colossae during his imprisonment in Rome. He reminds them of the truth of who Jesus is and the powerful Gospel that has saved them. Paul explains how disciples of Jesus are to live because the Gospel has forever changed their lives. Beginning in chapter three, Paul explains that disciples of Jesus should be focused on the Kingdom of God, not the kingdom of this world. Christ-followers should have lives that are marked by holiness rather than the things of this world.

## THE MAIN POINT

A disciple becomes like the one he follows. Those who follow Jesus should live lives that are marked by love, because we have been changed by His love for us through the Gospel. Jesus perfectly loved others and calls us to do the same. If His life on earth was marked by love, ours should be too. In fact, Jesus said that one way people will know that we are His disciples is by our love for one another. Our love for one another is proof that we have been radically changed by Christ's love for us.

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## LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

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## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about love.
- **Set-Up:** Bring some sort of timer to class (cell phones work great). Have a way to keep score (white board, pencil and paper, note section of your phone, etc).

FIRST, divide the students into two teams. Explain that you will be playing a game of Buzz Word. Say something like:

- **Each team will have a buzzword. Your team will have one minute to solve the clues I give. The answer to each clue will contain the buzzword. Answers can be a single word, a phrase or an expression. For example, if the buzzword is "apple," I will give the clue "New York's nickname." The answer is "The Big Apple." I may give the clue "A popular restaurant chain" and the answer would be "Applebees." If a clue is too difficult, your team may decide to pass, but you will not get an opportunity to come back to the clue. Also, at the end of your time, the other team will have one chance to "steal" the point of any passed clue if they solve the clue correctly. Each team will play one round. The team with the most points at the end wins.**

THEN, make sure both teams understand the rules and enlist someone from each team to keep score. Explain to the

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UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 17: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
LOVE COVERS ALL

students that the Buzz Word is "love." Then give Team 1 the following clues:

- **Clue:** Christian radio station; **Answer:** K-LOVE
- **Clue:** Those three little words; **Answer:** I love you
- **Clue:** Extra weight on a person's midsection; **Answer:** Love handles
- **Clue:** Not able to see the faults of the one you admire; **Answer:** Love is blind

NEXT, give Team 2 a chance to steal any "passed" clues. Then let them know that the Buzz Word is still "love." Give Team 2 the following clues:

- **Clue:** John 3:16; **Answer:** "For God so loved the world."
- **Clue:** Nickname for the city of Paris; **Answer:** City of Love
- **Clue:** To completely fall for someone; **Answer:** Head over heels in love
- **Clue:** Affection between siblings; **Answer:** Brotherly love

THEN, give Team 1 a chance to steal any "passed" clues. Tally up the points and declare a winner.

NEXT, explain that love is a very important idea in our culture. We have numerous dating websites where people hope to find love. Hollywood is always rolling out a new romantic comedy. Romance novels line shelves at bookstores. And we even have a holiday devoted to love. Ask something like:

- **Why do you think love is so important to us?**
  - o Answers will vary.

THEN, transition to *The Main Event* by saying something like:

- **In our lesson today we are going to talk about living a life defined by love for others. As we seek to be people who live as followers of Jesus, it's one of the most important concepts we can discuss. And that's not just my opinion. The Bible is FULL of places that back this up. Let's look at a few right now.**

Transition into *The Main Event* portion of your lesson.

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** Help students understand that as a follower of Christ living a Gospel-centered life, they are called to live a life defined by their love for others.
- **Set Up:** Make sure each student will have access to a copy of the Bible.

FIRST, ask students to turn to Colossians 3. As students find Colossians, take a moment to provide context for this passage using information from the Bible Background. Say something like:

- **When you become a follower of Jesus, your entire life changes. Not only are you saved from an eternity in hell, but you are also given a new heart, a new mind, and a new life through the Holy Spirit. You aren't who you used to be. Because all of these things have changed, your lifestyle should no longer look like that of someone who is separated from Christ, living in sin. You are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).**

THEN, explain that in your passage today Paul uses the phrases "old self" and "new self" to talk about a person's life before Christ (the old self) and then the person's life after surrendering to Christ (the new self). The things that are char-

# THE LIFE

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UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 17: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
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acteristic of the “old self” should not be true of someone who is Christ’s disciple. Instead, our lives should be marked by the characteristics of the “new self.”

NEXT, read or have a student read Colossians 3:8-10, and 12-14. Say something like:

- **When you read this passage, it is actually really helpful to think about changing clothes. Picture yourself taking off your dirty, wrinkled outfit and throwing it into the laundry hamper, never to be put on again. Just as you would not put on a dirty outfit to go to a super important event, you should not clothe yourself with the characteristics that mark a life without Christ.**

THEN, ask something like:

- **Looking at this passage, what are the characteristics of the old self that we must put away?**
  - o Answer: Anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk, lying.

NEXT, say something like:

- **Now, picture yourself putting on a fresh set of clothes. The outfit has no wrinkle or spot. You are ready to go to that super important event and engage others because you are dressed in clean clothes. This is like the new self that we are to put on, made holy and clean through Christ.**

THEN, lead your students in a brief discussion by asking something like:

- **Looking at this passage, what are the characteristics of the new self that we put on?**
  - o Answer: Compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, love.
- **What characteristic is to be put on above all?**
  - o Answer: Love
- **Why do you think love is above all? What is so important about love?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **According to verse 14, love binds everything together in perfect harmony. How do you think love does this? What does love have to do with the other characteristics of the new self?**
  - o Answer: Love gives us the ability to show compassion, kindness, humility, meekness patience and forgiveness. We show love to others when we treat them in these ways. Compassion is a demonstration of love because you are sympathizing with another person in his pain with a desire to take that pain away. Kindness displays love in the gentle treatment of others. Humility says that you love another more than yourself. Meekness is gentle power that is controlled by love. Patience is loving another enough to slow down and wait for what is best. Lastly, love empowers you to forgive others as Christ has forgiven you. Extending forgiveness also displays your love for Christ and trust in Him to make all things right.
- **How can having a heart-attitude marked by these characteristics affect the way we interact with others?**
  - o Answers may vary.

NEXT, direct students to look at verse 10. Explain that the new self we are to put on is being renewed in the image of its creator. The creator of the new self is Christ. He created new life for us by dying on the cross as a payment for our sins and rising from the grave, defeating death on our behalf. The characteristics of the new self are the characteristics of Jesus, our creator, and we should continually look more and more like Him. We are to put on love above all things because He showed us what perfect love looks like when He laid His life down for us and gave us new life.

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

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UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 17: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
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THEN, direct students to John 13. While students are turning there, explain that we put on love above all because it reflects the character of Christ, but also because Christ commands us to love one another. Read or have a student read John 13:34-35. Ask something like:

- **According to Jesus, how are we to love one another?**
  - Answer: Just as He has loved us.
- **What do you think Jesus meant when He said that we are to love others just like He has loved us?**
  - Answer: Jesus was speaking about His willingness to lay down His life for His disciples. He displayed His perfect love by willingly giving up His own life and facing God's wrath on our behalf so that we can be made right with God. Jesus commands us to show love for others by being willing to lay our lives down for them.
- **What does it look like to love others by laying your life down for them?**
  - Answer: We must be willing to sacrifice our own comfort and selfish desires for the benefit of others. This type of love puts the needs of another person before your own.
- **According to Jesus, how will people know that we are His disciples?**
  - Answer: By the love we have for one another.
- **How does loving one another in the way Christ loved us show people that we are His disciples?**
  - Answers may vary. It shows that we are following His model for our lives. It shows that we take His words and commands seriously.
- **How does the way Jesus commands us to show love for others look different from the way the world shows love?**
  - Answers may vary. Jesus' love involves commitment, dedication, and sacrifice. It isn't built on emotion or a feeling.

Ask if there are any questions, then transition into *The Last Word*.

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To have students evaluate their attitude toward others as it pertains to how they demonstrate love to the world.
- **Set-Up:** Print and distribute a copy of the Lesson 17 "Attitude Meter" handout to each student. You'll need to make sure you provide something to write with.

FIRST, give students a few minutes to evaluate their attitudes toward the various groups of people mentioned on the handout.

NEXT, encourage your students to look at the groups of people on their handout and think about the love they demonstrate to people in each group. Ask something like:

- **How does your attitude toward certain people affect the way you treat them?**
  - Answers may vary. Explain that our attitudes toward others often direct how we treat them. Sometimes the attitudes of others can also affect our attitude and our desire to show them love. Although there are some people who are more difficult to love, Christ commands us to put on love and show



# THE LIFE

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UNIT 1: A DISCIPLE SURRENDERS TO  
A GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE  
LESSON 17: THE GOSPEL-CENTERED LIFE:  
LOVE COVERS ALL

His love to everyone.

- **How does your attitude demonstrate Christ's love to the world?**
  - o Answers may vary. Certain people are easier to love than others. When we are committed to loving all sorts of people, it shows that the source of our love is greater than ourselves. It points to Christ.
- **How can we redirect the attitudes of our heart to show love to others?**
  - o Answers may vary. The more we grow deeper in our love for Jesus, the more we'll love others. The key to loving other people more is loving Jesus more and more.

THEN, challenge your students to think of one way they can show love to someone in each of these groups this week. Remind students that as disciples of Jesus, we are called to live lives defined by love for others. People will be drawn to Jesus when we show them genuine, Christ-centered love.

FINALLY, allow time for any closing thoughts or questions from your students.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
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# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life LESSON 18: THE GOSPEL ISN'T JUST BASIC CHRISTIANITY

**What we want students to learn:** That as followers of Christ, the Gospel is something we never grow out of, or something we move beyond.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To articulate in their own words what it looks like to boldly live out the Gospel in their everyday worlds.

**Scripture Focus:** Romans 1:11-17

**Supporting Scripture:** 2 Peter 1:12-15

**Overview:** In Romans 1, we see Paul eager to preach the Gospel to the Romans. But wait! They're already Christ-followers, right? So why would Paul be so eager to preach the Gospel to people whom already know it? Precisely because Paul knows something that we should all hope to internalize . . . The Gospel is not just introductory material. It's not just basic Christianity. It's not just Christianity 101. You don't EVER graduate from the Gospel. You never move on from it. This lesson, the final one in this unit, will help your students grasp this truth and see how it impacts their life.

### TEACHER PREP VIDEO

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### BIBLE BACKGROUND

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- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

### THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Paul is the author of Romans.
- **Time frame:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.
- **Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition,

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life LESSON 18: THE GOSPEL ISN'T JUST BASIC CHRISTIANITY

since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a level playing field be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.

### THE SETTING

This passage is directly related to the foundation for the entire book of Romans. As was customary for most ancient biblical letters, the apostle Paul asserts his authority as an apostle of Jesus (vs. 1-6) and addresses his audience (vs. 7-10). Following these forms of introduction, the apostle launches directly into the theme of all the chapters that are to come, namely, the Gospel. In describing his goal to visit the believers in Rome, Paul explains his plan to encourage and remind this growing church about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its implications in their life. The theology and manifestation of the Gospel is then explained in chapters 1-16.

### THE MAIN POINT

The main point we want to make is that as followers of Christ, the Gospel is something we never grow out of, or something we move beyond. In fact, it informs our decisions, actions and even our thoughts as we seek to follow Jesus and get to know Him better and better. This lesson will help your students understand that they will never move beyond the truth of the Gospel and its implications in their life, as well as challenge them to think about how this truth impacts their world.

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### LESSON PLAN

The *Lesson Plan* contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; and an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

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### THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To help students begin to process how they view the Gospel's role in their own lives.
- **Set-Up:** You will want to make sure you have a laptop or tablet that is connected to Internet to look up the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXOdL7YJRN8>

FIRST, ask your students the following question. Allow time for discussion.

- **Have you ever seen full-grown adults play with kid's toys? Describe your experience.**

NEXT, tell the students that you are going to watch a video of adults playing with kid's toys. Then play the video included in the link above. Once the video is over, ask the following questions:

- **What does this video make you think about these adults?**
  - Answer: Answers will vary.
- **Do you think it is immature for adults like these to play with kid's toys? Explain.**
  - Answer: Answers will vary.
- **You most likely wouldn't want to be seen playing with Barbie dolls or Hot Wheels cars (especially around your friends). What other items besides toys are "too young" for students your age to use? (Suggest TV shows, movies, and other items that would seem too immature for students.)**
  - Answer: Answers will vary.

# THE LIFE

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THEN, explain that in the lesson today you are going to be talking about a common mistake that many Christians make as they grow into more mature disciples of Jesus. Say something like:

- **To most of you, the idea of playing with a kid's toy seems immature and even embarrassing. We don't want others to think that we are not as mature or grown-up as the world tells us we should be. In many Christian churches, followers of Christ view the Gospel in the same way. Many Christians think that the Gospel is for beginners who are new followers of Jesus. But the truth is, the Gospel is the most important part of our growth as Christians, and one that we will never outgrow or move beyond. We're going to see today that as followers of Christ, we will always need the Gospel.**

FINALLY, transition into *The Main Event* portion of the lesson.

### THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help students understand that as followers of Christ, the Gospel is something we never grow out of, or something we move beyond.
- **Set Up:** You'll benefit from a dry erase board. Make sure students have a Bible or that they are able to look along with a friend. Paper and pencils will also be needed.

FIRST, have the students take a moment to define the word "Gospel" individually. Some of the students may not fully understand what all is included in this word, so feel free to give some help to newer students or guests.

- **Gospel: literally means "good news," specifically the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.**

Explain to your students that the word "Gospel" is a common word that we use in church life, but one which we commonly misunderstand or misuse. Allow a brief time for them to share their definitions of the word. Once some have shared, right down the definition above on the board.

NEXT, explain that although the majority of them have heard and trusted the Gospel, many of them may think that the Gospel is only for beginner believers. Say something like:

- **The Gospel of Jesus is the most important and central part of being a Christian. In fact, it's not only important for young Christians but for the most mature Christians in the church. The Gospel of Jesus is the reason you and I are here today, and it is the foundation of our walk with Jesus. Without Jesus dying on the cross and arising from the grave, we would be separated from God forever.**

THEN, explain that in the lesson today you're going to be looking at the book of Romans to help guide their understanding of why they will never move beyond the Gospel and how it should affect their world. Ask students to turn in their Bibles to Romans 1. While they turn, explain the context of Romans using the Bible Background provided at the beginning of this lesson. Be sure they understand the situation in which the apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Romans.

NEXT, read or have a student read Romans 1:11-17. When students have finished reading, lead them in a short discussion. Refer back to verses 11-13. Ask something like:

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life  
LESSON 18: THE GOSPEL ISN'T JUST BASIC CHRISTIANITY

- **Why was the apostle Paul longing to see the church that was in Rome?**
  - Answer: So that he could encourage them and be encouraged by their faith.
- **What was Paul hoping to give to the church in Rome so that he could be an encouragement to them?**
  - Answer: Paul wanted to give to them "some spiritual gift" of encouragement.
- **What are some ways that we encourage one another in the church today?**
  - Answer: Allow a variety of answers.

Say something like:

- **Paul had been longing to encourage the church that was in the city of Rome. He wanted to impart to them some spiritual gift. But the gift that Paul would mention is probably not the first gift that you would think of when we think of mature believers like Paul and the church leaders in Rome. These were not new Christians; they had been following Jesus for some time. Some of us may think that they would encourage each other in some deep and mature way. But Paul roots his encouragement in something else.**

THEN, tell students to keep this thought in mind as they continue studying this passage. Direct students' attention to verses 14-15. Ask the following questions:

- **What is the encouragement that Paul is so eager to share with the believers in Rome?**
  - Answer: The Gospel which was for all people
- **If the people in the church in Rome were already Christians, why do you think Paul wished to speak the Gospel to them?**
  - Answer: The Gospel is not just for those who are not Christians, but for all believers at all times in their walk with Jesus.

Explain to students that in these verses the apostle Paul reveals something that we sometimes miss as Christians. Say something like:

- **Instead of encouraging the believers in Rome with wise words of his own, or with advice from his years of following Christ, Paul is eager to share the Gospel with them! The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are not truths that only apply when we first become followers of Christ; they apply to both our relationship with God and with others at every stage of our life.**

NEXT, direct your students' attention to verses 16-17. Remind them that you are looking for how the Apostle Paul applies the Gospel to his life even as a mature believer in Jesus. Ask a student to read these verses aloud again. Ask something like:

- **What is the power of the Gospel in this verse?**
  - Answer: It is the power of salvation to everyone who believes
- **What do you think the power that Paul talks about enables us to do?**
  - Answers will vary. Help students see that the Gospel applies to our lives as mature Christians by reminding us of our need for a Savior and motivating us to live in righteousness by faith. Just as the apostle Paul acknowledges, the Gospel doesn't just save us when we decide to follow Jesus; it helps us live saved lives as well. When we continually preach the Gospel to one another we are constantly reminding each other of the saving grace of Jesus and how much we need Him day-by-day. This motivates us to live lives committed to God.

THEN, explain to the students that the Bible has several passages that instruct Christ-followers to constantly remind each other of the good news of the Gospel. Read 2 Peter 1:12-15 as an example. Say something like:

- **Peter also saw the value in preaching the Gospel to all of his readers. He encourages them to always**

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PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life  
LESSON 18: THE GOSPEL ISN'T JUST  
BASIC CHRISTIANITY

remind each other of the qualities of the Gospel so that they will always remain steady in their faith in Jesus Christ. Peter wanted his readers to understand that the very foundation for every believer, mature and new, is in the Gospel.

Explain that Paul instructed the church at Rome not to simply remind one another of the Gospel, but also to live it out in their lives. Then, ask them these questions:

- **What do you think it means to “live out” the Gospel in our daily lives?**
  - o Answer: Allow students time to answer. Use an example from your own life to illustrate what it means to live out the Gospel.
- **What are some places you consistently go in your life where you can live out the Gospel?**
  - o Answer: Try to get the students to see that every relationship and interaction they have is a time when they can live out the Gospel and remind fellow believers of its power in their lives.

FINALLY, remind your students that the Gospel has great power: the power to save. It not only brings new life to new believers, but it also forms the foundation of a growing faith for mature believers. Help them to understand that as Christians, they are called to live out the Gospel in their worlds each and every day. Say something like:

- **The truth for you and me today is that we need the Gospel each and every day. We need to remind fellow believers of its power as well as be reminded ourselves of its saving truth. The Gospel is never something that you will outgrow; instead it is the very glue and motivation for living a Christian life and for growing in a deeper faith. We must always preach the Gospel to ourselves and live it out in our lives!**

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *The Last Word*.

## THE LAST WORD

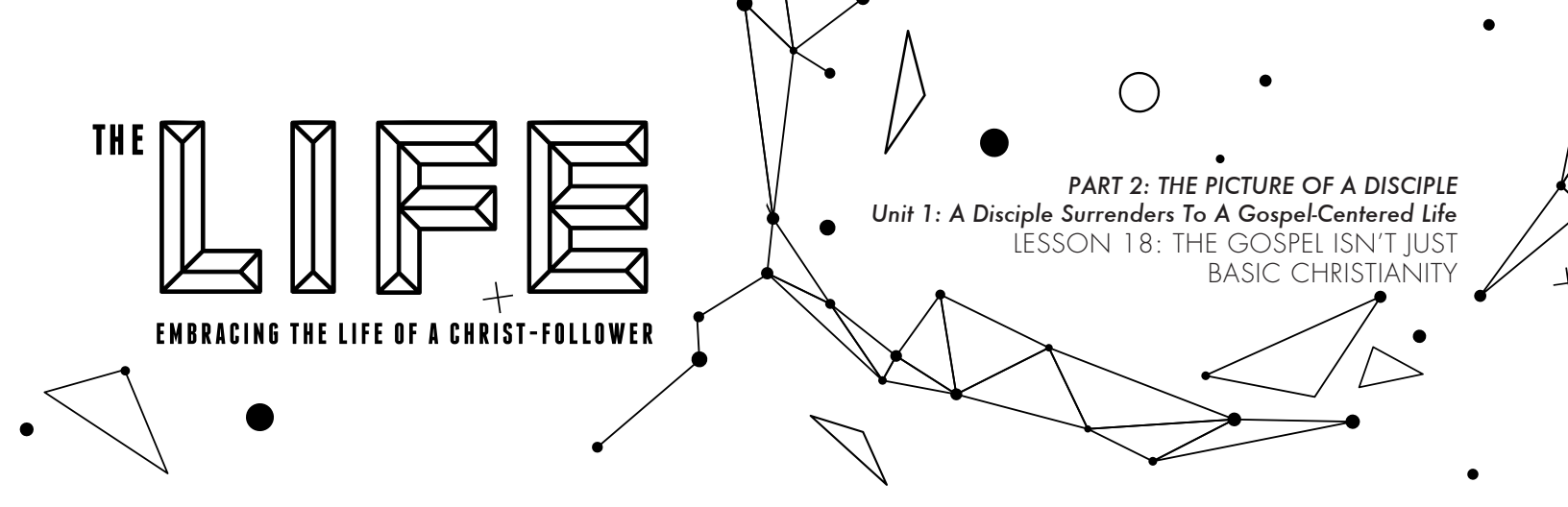
- **Goal:** To articulate in their own words what it looks like to boldly live out the Gospel in their everyday worlds.
- **Set-Up:** Pencil or pen and notecards (one for each student).

FIRST, set the stage for the activity by saying something like:

- **Living out the Gospel in daily life isn't always the easiest thing. In fact, many times in our lives when we choose to follow Jesus, people will ridicule us and look down on us. But just as the Apostle Paul says, the Gospel has the power to save us and the power to enable us to live lives that are radically different from the world.**

NEXT, ask your students to think of examples where living for Jesus in their worlds might cause conflict or ridicule. Keep in mind that you are not trying to deter your students from living out the Gospel; you want them to understand the possible reaction when they do, and that the power of the Gospel will help them to overcome that opposition. Ask the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

- **What are some examples that you have experienced in your own life when you or someone you know**



# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 1: A Disciple Surrenders To A Gospel-Centered Life  
LESSON 18: THE GOSPEL ISN'T JUST  
BASIC CHRISTIANITY

lived out the Gospel and faced opposition? How did they overcome that opposition?

THEN, give an example of this in your own life. Then, say something like this:

- Throughout our time together today we have been talking about the power of the Gospel for every believer. We are going to do an activity where I want you to think of places and ways that you can live out the Gospel in your own world. It could be at school, on a team, wherever you spend your time. Be specific and write those places down. Next, right down the ways that you plan to live out the Gospel in those areas.

FINALLY, ask the students if they've grasped the concept that the Gospel is never something that they will grow beyond. Allow some time to share the action steps that they have laid out for themselves as they seek to depend on and live the Gospel in their world. Be sure to encourage students and remind them that you too need the Gospel every day.

Challenge your students to follow through on their action steps and let them know that they will have a chance to share these before the lesson next week.

Make sure there are no closing thoughts and then close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the **Social Media** guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

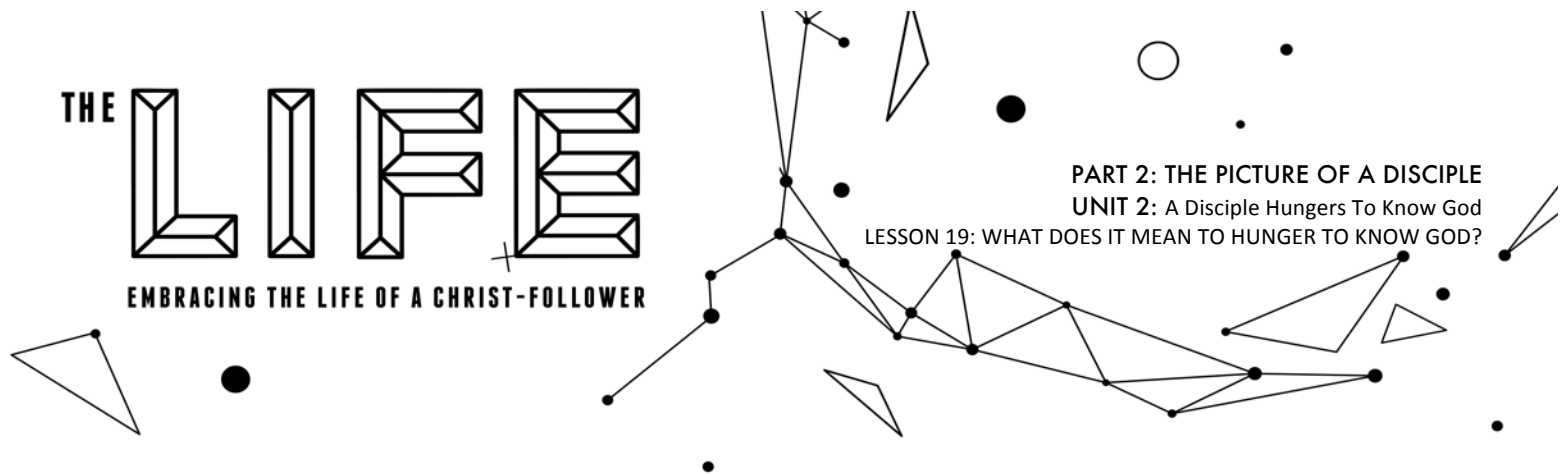
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- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
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**What we want students to learn:** That as Christ-followers, we should have a strong desire, deep within us, to know more and more of God.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To begin to be aware of their desire, or maybe even their lack of desire, to increase their knowledge of God.

**Scripture Focus:** Psalm 63:1

**Supporting Scripture:** Psalm 42:1-2; John 4:13-14; John 6:35

**Overview:** As you've already studied this year, in Ephesians 5 Paul called us to be God-imitators. We've said that in some ways this is what discipleship is all about. But the tough reality is that our teenagers can't imitate God if they don't know what He looks like. One of the main attributes of disciples is a hunger for knowing God. This is something we can't manufacture; the Holy Spirit gives birth to this in us. BUT, it is definitely something that we can foster. The goal of this lesson is to introduce this concept to your students and to challenge them to become aware of how they are approaching getting to know God more.

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## Teacher Prep Video

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To access your *LIFE* lesson 19 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 19, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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## Bible Background

The *Bible Background* is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. *The Details* gives you background info for each book. *The Setting* informs you of what's happening in and around the passage. *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible Study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know *who* wrote the book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the *Bible Background* to help summarize the context.

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 19: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HUNGER TO KNOW GOD?

## The Details

- **Author:** God inspired various authors to write a majority of the Psalms in the same era, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Korahites and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other Psalms remains unknown.
- **Time frame:** The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel's history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e. Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e. Psalm 119).
- **Purpose:** The Psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly - even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e. Psalm 51).

## The Setting

The heading of this psalm tells us that David wrote this "when he was in the wilderness of Judah." We can assume that this most likely refers to his time spent fleeing from King Saul, documented in 1 Samuel 21-31. He and a band of loyal followers fled Saul's palace under the threat of death and traveled throughout the land seeking sanctuary and support from the murderous king. Their time on the road was plagued with difficulty. They were met with reluctant allies and the hardships of wilderness living. In this psalm, David's spiritual journey reflects his physical reality. Just as he physically thirsts in the desert, his soul thirsts for the relief of God's presence.

## The Main Point

David hungered and thirsted for God's comfort as intensely as he did for food and water. God's role in his life wasn't just a supplemental part of his existence; it was as essential to him as physical sustenance. David had many pressing needs while living in the wilderness, but his devotion to God remained steadfast. Discipleship is a hungering, a deep desire satisfied only by the presence of God. It's not a part-time hobby, but a life-long commitment, an essential provision. In this lesson, we'll talk about how we are seeking God. Are we following Him as casual observers, or are we pursuing Him with intention, need, and sincere longing?

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## Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called *The Lead In*; the Bible study section called *The Main Event*; and an application-focused segment called *The Last Word*.

## The Lead In

- 
- **Goal:** To get students thinking from the perspective of David in the wilderness, as well as introduce the concept of "hungering and thirsting" for spiritual essentials. And to have fun!
  - **Set-Up:** None.

FIRST, explain to your students that you're going to look at a few scenarios that are meant to help us see what we really long for in life. Give them the first scenario by saying something like:

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE UNIT 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God LESSON 19: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HUNGER TO KNOW GOD?

- We were on the church yacht headed to summer camp in the Bahamas when the storm struck. We were tossed about on the water like rags in a dryer! When the storm finally cleared, we found ourselves shipwrecked on the shore of a small island. There wasn't a lot to it, just a few square miles and some vegetation. There was nobody else living there. All of our cell phones and communications equipment were damaged beyond repair. Fortunately, we all were able to save one item from our luggage to help us survive before the ship was destroyed. What did you get?

THEN, go around the room and have each student say what they brought and why. Be sure to remind your especially "witty" students that there's not much use in bringing their cell phones, because they were destroyed, or their video game consoles, because there's no electricity. As students give their answers, here are a few questions to throw out to them to consider:

- What are we going to eat?
- How are we going to get fresh drinking water?
- Are we going to try and make a distress signal or find rescue in some way? How?
- Where are we going to sleep? How are we going to make shelter?
- What kind of wildlife is there on the island? Is it dangerous?
- Who's going to struggle the most with island life? Who is going to survive the longest?

NEXT, as you near the end of outlining your survival plans, steer the discussion towards food and water. While it's fun to imagine these types of scenarios, get them talking about how hard it would actually be to survive in such conditions. Without access to food whenever we like, or clean water running from a faucet, the novelty of being stranded on an island would wear off quickly. As the discussion takes a more serious tone, ask them something like:

- What do you think would be the hardest part about living on a deserted island?
  - Answers will vary.
- What would you miss the most?
  - Answers will vary.
- How hungry or thirsty do you think you'd get? How hard would you work to satisfy those feelings?
  - Answers will vary. However, in survival mode, we'd all work pretty hard for food and water.

FINALLY begin wrapping up the activity by saying something like:

- Now that we've let our imaginations run wild, let's consider David's "deserted island" in today's Scripture passage. Along the way we're going to learn something about an essential aspect of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

Transition into *The Main Event* portion of your lesson.

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE UNIT 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God LESSON 19: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HUNGER TO KNOW GOD?

### The Main Event

- **Goal:** To help your students understand what it means to hunger and thirst for God.
- **Set Up:** You may benefit from a dry-erase board, but it's not essential. You'll want to make sure students have a Bible or a Bible app.

FIRST, explain to your students that while David wasn't physically on a deserted island, he was on one in a metaphorical sense. He would have felt very alone in this scenario. Though he had some loyal soldiers with him, he had been recently betrayed by someone who was like a father to him. Explain that David was thrust from the life of comfort he had come to know and forced to live in the wilderness to survive the king's death sentence. Explain that there wasn't a lot of help available to him. Also, in many ways his physical conditions mirrored that of a deserted island. For more information on David's predicament, check out the *Bible Background* section, or read 1 Samuel 21-31.

THEN, read or have a student read Psalm 63:1 aloud. Ask something like:

- What does it mean to "earnestly seek" something?
  - Answer: It means to passionately, sincerely, and boldly look for something. David is saying that his search isn't just passive or casual. His hunt for God is serious.
- Why do you think he says "my soul thirsts for you"?
  - Answer: It's clear that David sees his relationship with God as something more than supplemental. He could have said something like "my soul wants you" or "my soul enjoys you," but instead he said "thirsts." Just like the human body thirsts for water, David thirsts for God. It's essential to him.
- How important is water in a "dry and weary land"? So what does that mean about David's need for God?
  - Answer: Obviously, it's of the utmost importance. A dry and weary land desperately needs relief. David, just like a dry and weary land, needed God to bring relief, as only God can.
- How do you think David was feeling when he wrote this? Can you relate to that type of feeling?
  - Answers will vary.

NEXT, read or have a student read Psalm 42:1-2. Explain that this is another psalm where David yearns for God's fulfillment. This wasn't just a one-time thing! Say something like:

- David's 63rd psalm was more than a desperate response to his current afflictions; it was the reflection of a life-long commitment to God. In the desert, in the fields watching sheep, at war, or in the palace, David's soul thirsted for God. This isn't to say he was without his mistakes and failures— he was still very much a flawed man. But he knew that even in his sin, God's presence was the only thing that could satisfy his soul's longing.

Ask something like:

- Does your desire for God's presence in your life shift with life's circumstances? If it does, explain why you think that is the case.
  - Answers will vary.

THEN, read or have a student read John 4:13-14 and John 6:35. Explain that these passages have a fascinating contrast with David's psalm. On one hand, we have David begging for God's presence, like "a dry and weary land

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE UNIT 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God LESSON 19: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HUNGER TO KNOW GOD?

where there is no water.” And then, we have Jesus promising that those who come to Him “shall not hunger” and “never thirst.” He says that He is the “bread of life” and the “living water.” Ask something like:

- What does it mean that Jesus is the “bread of life” and “living water”?
  - Answer: It means that Jesus is a life-giving source. Just like bread and water keep us alive, Jesus brings life eternal into those who trust Him.
- Is Jesus exactly like bread and water, then? Explain.
  - Answer: No! He’s much more. When we eat and drink, we do so knowing that very soon we’ll hunger and thirst again. But Jesus eternally fills. When we partake of Him, we’ll never need any other fulfillment.
- So does that mean our experience with Jesus is “one-and-done”? Can those who have accepted Jesus give up and not pursue Him anymore?
  - Answer: Absolutely not! Jesus is all we’ll ever need, and when we have tasted the life He provides, it leaves us craving more. The life of the disciple is all about seeking God in all things.

NEXT, say something like this:

- Discipleship is a continuing process. David experienced God in many different ways throughout his life. He never reached a point in his faith journey where he decided he’d had enough. Instead, he was always wanting more. Psalm 63 shows us that he still earnestly sought after God even during the hard times! When we come to know Jesus as our Living Water, then we thirst for Him daily. Just as David “thirsted” for God, we should be seeking God as our spiritual sustenance.

FINALLY, explain to your students that we all know that sin leads to death, and the cure to our fatal sin is Christ Jesus! Salvation is a free gift for all! Explain that as the Bread of Life and the Living Water, we know that Jesus will sustain us when we are suffering in the desert. But, for some reason, we don’t always treat our relationship with Christ like the life-saving gift that it is. Explain that instead of hungering and thirsting for His presence in our life, we sometimes shrug off the vital aspects of discipleship that draw us closer to Him. Ask something like:

- Why do you think that’s the case? Why don’t we seek after Christ like we would a meal or glass of water in our deserted island scenario earlier in the lesson?
  - Answers will vary.

Let the question linger for a bit, then transition into *The Last Word*.

### The Last Word

- Goal: To help students consider how they are hungering and thirsting for God in their spiritual lives.
- Set-Up: None needed.

FIRST, begin by leading your students through a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- Do you know what it’s like to “hunger and thirst” for God in your own spiritual journey?
  - Answers will vary.

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE UNIT 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God LESSON 19: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HUNGER TO KNOW GOD?

- Should someone who calls themselves a disciple of Christ “hunger and thirst” for a deeper relationship with Him?
  - Answer: Of course. If we’re truly following Jesus, we should want to grow and be more and more like Him.
- What are some practices that show if you’re earnestly seeking God?
  - Answer: A desire to grow in your relationship with the Lord, a desire to turn from sin and follow Jesus and so on.
- How do we go about satisfying that hunger and thirst?
  - Answer: The hungering within us is something stirred by the Holy Spirit. But we can foster this desire by submersing ourselves in prayer and scripture. As we actively seek God, our desire for His presence grows.

THEN, lead your students in a discussion about some practical ways we can grow and satisfy this hungering for Christ within us. Explain to them that desiring to know God is an essential mark of a disciple. The Holy Spirit’s work within us pushes us to know Him as deeply as we can. However, stress to your students that this isn’t something that just happens. It’s not an accidental event. Hungering for God is an intentional process that begins with humbly seeking Him in every area of life. Ask something like:

- What are some practical ways we can foster our hunger for God? Talk about each one and let’s discuss how we can go about putting it into practice.
  - Answers will vary. Write their answers on the board and pause to discuss how they could be practically applied in their lives- cover the when, where, what, why, and how often. Some possible answers include: daily prayer, Scripture reading, fasting, meditation, and journaling.

NEXT, if time permits, open a time of prayer. If you want, have students take turns praying for the group. Or, you may want to simply have students pray silently. Consider walking your group through the following prayer prompts, or something similar:

- Pray that God would lead your students closer to Him this year through this look at what it means to live the life of a Christ-follower.
- Pray that your students would commit to living out the Gospel in powerful ways.
- Pray that God would work through your group to bring the Gospel to life through the actions and attitudes of your students.
- Pray that God would use your group to make the Gospel known in your community and throughout the world.

FINALLY, allow time for any closing thoughts or questions from your students.

- Don’t forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you’re posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
  - Use the *Social Media* guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.
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# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

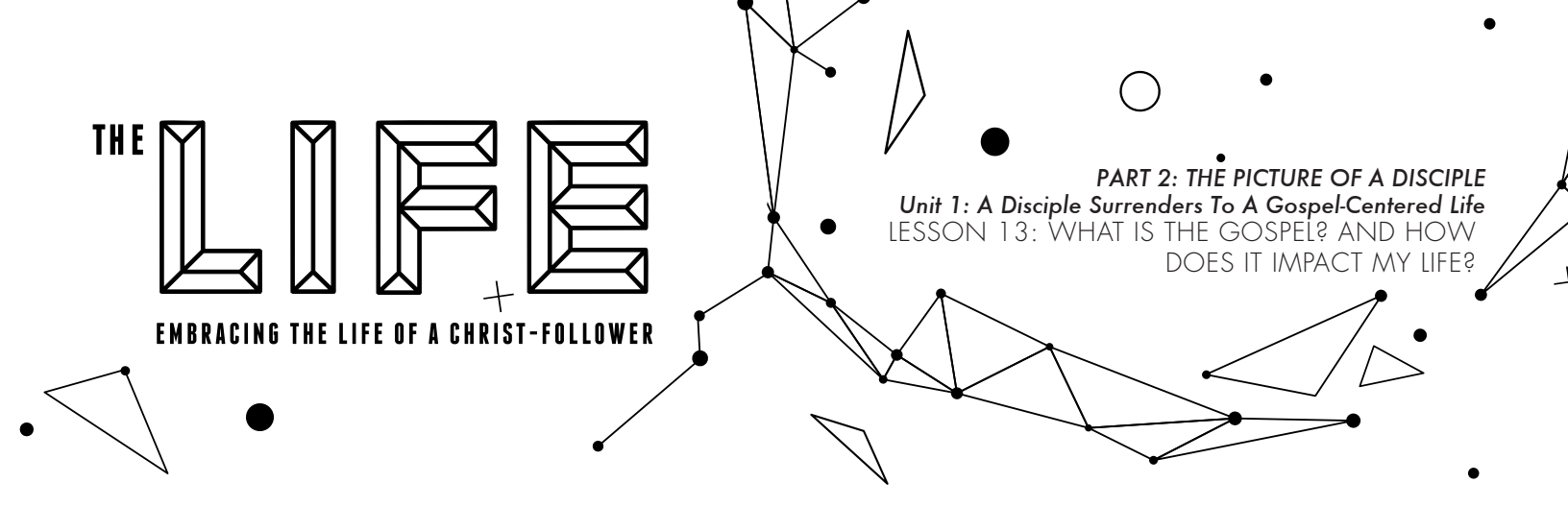
PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
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# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD LESSON 20: KNOWING GOD IS AT THE HEART OF DISCIPLESHIP

**What we want students to learn:** That as Christ-followers, knowing God should be one of the primary pursuits of their lives.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To evaluate how well they know God and to be able to identify anything in their lives that comes between knowing God more.

**Scripture Focus:** Philippians 3:8-10

**Supporting Scripture:** Jeremiah 9:23-24

**Overview:** You could make the argument that growing in your knowledge God may very well be the primary goal in the life of a Christ-follower. There are other aspects of our discipleship, to be sure. But knowing God is at the heart of what it means to follow Him. Paul got this. And in his letter to the Philippians he expresses this in a really powerful way. Paul said that NOTHING compares to knowing God. Nothing. If we're honest, many of our students, and many of us, can't quite say this. And so this lesson helps challenges all of us to reconsider our priorities and re-commit to a passionate pursuit of knowing God more.

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### TEACHER PREP VIDEO

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### BIBLE BACKGROUND

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- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

### THE DETAILS

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians. Of course we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Time frame:** Philippians was one of the last letters Paul wrote before he was martyred, sometime around A.D 62.

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD  
LESSON 20: KNOWING GOD IS AT  
THE HEART OF DISCIPLESHIP

- **Purpose:** Philippians was written to Paul's close friends at the Philippian church, thanking them for their kindness and prayers while he was in prison. And he was encouraging them not to lose their faith because of his persecution.

## THE SETTING

This passage is found in a letter from Paul to the church at Philippi. Paul loves this church, but they are fairly young in their spiritual maturity. In the verses leading up towards our key Scripture, Paul has just addressed the issue of pride. He explains to them that they should find their confidence in Christ instead of their own flesh. Paul was an extremely qualified religious man according to the world, but without Christ he was nothing.

## THE MAIN POINT

The goal of this lesson is to teach students the importance of knowing Christ. According to Paul there is NOTHING that is more important than the knowledge that we have of Jesus Christ. We are going to highlight the fact that if we don't spend intentional time learning about God, it becomes increasingly difficult to follow God. We want to identify the factors and things that are standing between our students and their pursuit of learning more about God.

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## LESSON PLAN

The *Lesson Plan* contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; and an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

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## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To show students how difficult it is to identify something that you are unfamiliar with.
- **Set-Up:** Select four to five students from your class before it begins, telling them that you are going to use them for a game. Make sure that your aisles or chair set-up is conducive for people to walk between the rows while students are sitting in chairs.

FIRST, explain to the students that you are going to play an old but a classic game, Heads-Up-Seven-Up. Explain that some volunteers are going to come up front, and that everyone else will put their heads down, close their eyes, and put one of their thumbs up in front of them. The volunteers that have been preselected will then go throughout the room and push down one person's thumb of their choosing. When they have done so, the volunteers will come to the front.

Once all of your volunteers have returned to the front, tell everyone to look up, and that the people whose thumbs have been pushed down must stand up. You will then ask them to, one at a time, guess who they believe pushed down their thumb. If they get it right, then they switch places with the volunteer and come to the front. If they guess incorrectly then they sit down and lose their chance.

Say something like this before the first round begins:

- **Now this game revolves around honesty. If I catch anyone cheating or peeping I will disqualify you from the game. Volunteers, also be honest about whose thumb you pushed down, and make sure that you only push down one person's thumb. When your thumb gets pushed down make sure you keep it down so that someone else doesn't press your thumb again. It would be a good idea to also not push down your best friend's thumb; branch out.**

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD LESSON 20: KNOWING GOD IS AT THE HEART OF DISCIPLESHIP

You can play this two or three rounds depending on how long the rounds take, but make sure that you are watching for cheating eyes. Also be asking questions about why they thought a certain person picked them.

THEN, once the game has ended, ask students the following questions:

- **What were some of the things you focused on when your thumb got pressed down? What did you try to remember?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **Could you tell if it was a boy or a girl? Did you hear any thing that would have been a give away to who pushed your thumb down?**
  - Answers will vary.

FINALLY, get students thinking about the subject of the lesson. Tell them that it is difficult to guess who pushed their thumb down because they had not studied the subtle signs of that person. They haven't studied how they walk, with heavy footsteps or light footsteps, and so on. Say something like:

- **When we don't spend time studying someone, it becomes a lot harder to identify them. We can know a little bit about the person. But the more time we spend learning about someone the easier it becomes to spot them. The same is true for many of us when it comes to Jesus. We know about Him through church or time in small groups. But not everyone spends as much time as they should learning about Jesus outside of church. Today we want to talk about the importance of spending time learning about Jesus on our own.**

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To show students that one of the most important things they can do in their lives is to know God.
- **Set Up:** You may benefit from a dry-erase board, but it's not essential. You'll want to make sure students have a Bible or a Bible app. You may also want to pass out Scripture reading assignments to students to have three students involved in reading. Ask each student to read a single verse from Philippians 3:8-10.

FIRST, ask students what they spend a majority of their time doing. (If you have a dry-erase board you can write some of these activities out on it.) Some of the common things could be: school, sports, homework, family time, video games, reading, sleeping, etc. Then ask:

- **Why do you do some of these activities?**
- **What do you enjoy about those activities?**
- **If you had a completely free day, would you spend more time doing any of these things than you currently do?**

THEN, explain to students that these things are not bad. It's completely normal to have hobbies and interests; the Bible doesn't say that those are inherently bad things. Say something like this:

- **Paul was a man who had hobbies and things he was good at. In fact, Paul was extremely good at what he did before he became a Christian. In today's passage though Paul has some thoughts about what those hobbies and achievements mean in light of knowing God.**

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD LESSON 20: KNOWING GOD IS AT THE HEART OF DISCIPLESHIP

NEXT, have a student read Philippians 3:8. Explain that when Paul states that he counts it all as loss, he is referring to the reasons that he could have to boast in himself from previous verses. He states that if anyone has any reason to have pride in themselves, it would have been him because of his accomplishments as a person. Yet Paul still states that he counts everything as loss. Ask some of the following questions:

- **What does it mean to count something as loss?**
  - Answer: It means that it is less valuable. There is something as an alternative that was worth more value.
- **What does Paul compare the loss to? What replaces the loss?**
  - Answer: Everything in the world is a loss compared to the win that is knowing Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has a "surpassing worth" according to Scripture.

Talk to students about what Paul says in the latter part of the verse. Paul states that he has suffered the loss of all things, but that he counts them as rubbish so that he may gain Christ.

- **What is rubbish in the first place?**
  - Answer: Trash. Garbage. Worthless stuff.
- **Why do you think Paul uses the word rubbish to describe the things of this world?**
  - Answer: There is no natural value to the things of this world without God. The greatest treasures of this world are considered rubbish in comparison to God.
- **Contrast between two objects is a common tool of Scripture. Why do you think Paul is using contrast for this verse when discussing loss and rubbish?**
  - Answer: He wants to open the eyes of the Philippian church to where they are placing their value. He wants them to see that the things they are valuing have minimal value in comparison to Christ.

THEN, explain to the students that Paul was using some pretty extreme language here to open the eyes of the church. It is not until we realize the value of earthly things and deny them that we can be found in Christ. Say:

- **Paul is setting the framework that we must have mentally when it comes to Jesus: Jesus is the greatest treasure we can have. Paul then goes on in verse 9 to explain what happens when we begin to understand that mindset.**

NEXT, have a student read Philippians 3:9. Explain that Paul tells us that everything is rubbish in comparison to Christ, and that we must embrace this mindset if we are to be found in Christ. Paul also mentions righteousness in this verse. Ask the students to dive into what righteousness means. Ask:

- **What does the word righteous mean?**
  - Answer: It means free from guilt or sin.
- **Paul describes two types of righteousness here, where do these two types of righteousness come from?**
  - Answer: The Law and faith.
- **Is there a modern equivalent of the Jews in Paul's audience who tried to gain righteousness by following every bit of the Law?**
  - Answers will vary, but the idea is that some people believe that by "keeping all the rules" they can somehow be a righteous person.

Explain to students that a person who seeks to be righteous by following all the rules can look like a great person on the outside. They seek to define themselves by all of the outwardly good things they do, and that may make them look awesome. But Paul points out the futility of trying to live this way. Paul describes wanting his righteousness through faith in Christ. Ask some of these questions:

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD  
LESSON 20: KNOWING GOD IS AT  
THE HEART OF DISCIPLESHIP

- **Why should we value righteousness through faith in Christ over the world's standards?**
  - Answer: The world's standards are rubbish in comparison to faith in Christ. We live in a sinful world whose expectations and standards are tainted with sin. Christ stands above sin and struggle.
- **What does it mean to have faith in Christ?**
  - Answer: To believe in and follow Jesus.
- **How do we grow in our faith in God? What are some practical things that we do to grow in our faith?**
  - Answers will vary among students, but some common examples are: prayer, reading our Bibles, going to church, talking about Jesus with others.

THEN, explain that when we look at ways to grow in our faith in God, every single one of them takes time. Time is invested towards getting to know God, and we make choices every day on where we spend our time. This is the point where we want students to start reflecting as we address our final verse before heading into the Last Word. You can say something like this:

- **Paul wants to be identified for being found in Christ. He wants his righteousness and worth to be known for his identity in Christ. The means in which he obtains this identity is dependent on his faith in Christ. For us to grow in our faith we must spend time with Christ, and the more we spend time with Jesus the more we desire to be like him. Let's see how Paul closes this part of his message.**

NEXT, have a student read Philippians 3:10. Explain to students that there are three things that Paul talks about because of having faith in Christ. Paul had a transformational experience that came with his faith in Christ. When we come into a relationship with Christ there is a mindset shift that should occur, and Paul is describing this shift in verse 10. Ask:

- **What are the three things that Paul talks about because of faith in this passage?**
  - Answer: Know Jesus and the power of His resurrection, share in Jesus's sufferings, and become like Jesus in his death.
- **What does Paul mean by saying he wishes to know Jesus and the power of His resurrection?**
  - Answer: Paul was dead in his sin, and by knowing Jesus he is born again as a Christian. Paul experiences freedom from sin through Jesus.
- **Why do you think Paul wants to share in the sufferings of Jesus?**
  - Answer: When Paul suffers for Christ, he knows that he is doing the right thing. Jesus suffered for doing what was right in a world full of wrong, and so when Paul suffers for Jesus, his identity is becoming even more like Christ.
- **Paul says that he wants to become like Jesus in his death referring to Jesus's attitude. What attitude did Jesus take to the cross that Paul wants to become like?**
  - Answer: Jesus died knowing that He had lived for God's glory. If Paul was going to suffer, he must embrace the comfort that is pursuing Christ and being like Christ.

Talk to students about how powerfully Paul describes being in a relationship with Christ. There is great comfort that comes from being in a relationship with Jesus, but we only know that comfort when we spend time getting to know Jesus.

FINALLY, explain to students that Paul isn't telling us not to have stuff. And He also isn't telling us that if we follow Jesus it is permanent suffering. Did Paul suffer? Absolutely. Paul also did an incredible amount of good for the Kingdom of God, because he constantly pursued learning about Jesus so that he could be like Jesus. Say something like:

- **Paul described everything the world has to offer as rubbish because he had his eyes constantly focused on Jesus. Whenever Paul's eyes came off Jesus due to the world's temptations, he realized how miniscule they are in comparison to Jesus. It's not bad to have things, hobbies, or achievements. The problem**

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD LESSON 20: KNOWING GOD IS AT THE HEART OF DISCIPLESHIP

is that when we spend more time chasing after those things instead of our relationship with Jesus, our focus gets messed up. Paul calls everything else rubbish because he spent most of his time pursuing Jesus. Where or what do we spend our time in pursuit of?

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *The Last Word*.

### THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To evaluate how well they know God, and to identify things in their life that are taking priority over getting to know God more.
- **Set-Up:** Be prepared to show the following YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahg6qcgoay4>

FIRST, explain to the students that you are about to show a video. Ask them how good they are at counting, and that this video is designed to test that. Show the video. When you've finished, allow students who saw the bear to raise their hands. You'll most likely want to play the video again so students who missed it can see it the second time around.

THEN, explain that it's very easy to stay focused on one thing and miss the world around it. When they were focused on counting they missed the bear, but once they focused on the bear the counting falls off. Say something like:

- **Although it is a silly example with the video, we often do the same thing in our spiritual lives. As people, we are often unable to focus on two important things at the same time. And even if you claim to be a good multitasker, you are still splitting your efforts. Paul's message from our passage today is simply to make sure that the primary focus of our lives is on knowing Christ.**

NEXT, explain to the students that this isn't just a struggle for students. The struggle of distractions from Christ remain for our entire lives, and we must choose daily to follow and pursue Christ. Ask:

- **What are some things that we spend a lot of time focusing that aren't our relationship with God?**
  - Answers will vary depending on age. The key is for them to understand that when we only have so much attention, and the attention that we give to something else takes it away from God.
- **Did Paul describe his life as being better or worse when he made Jesus the primary pursuit of his life? Why?**
  - Answer: Better, because in comparison to Christ everything else is rubbish. Which means that investment into his relationship with Christ would always be more valuable.

FINALLY, remind students of the activity that happened at the beginning of the lesson. When their thumb was pushed down they started focusing on the different things about that mystery person: what did they sound like walking? How hard did they push down the thumb? They focused because they wanted to know as much as they could so that they could guess who the person was. Say something like this to close:

- **The distractions in this world are many, and they are often a tailored fit for us. But when Christ enters our lives, there is a transformational change for the better, and the more we learn about Jesus the more comforted we are. Where are your priorities? Let's recommit ourselves today to a passionate pursuit of Jesus as our top priority.**

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD  
LESSON 20: KNOWING GOD IS AT  
THE HEART OF DISCIPLESHIP

Encourage them that this journey is truly worth it, and challenge them to encourage each other to stay focused and free of rubbish distractions.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the **Social Media** guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

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## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).



# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD  
LESSON 21: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 1

**What we want students to learn:** That the primary way God has chosen to make Himself known to us is through His Word.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To evaluate their practices as it pertains to regularly meeting God in the Bible.

**Scripture Focus:** Psalm 119:1-10

**Supporting Scripture:** Jeremiah 29:13

**Overview:** Having a hunger to know God is a mark of a disciple. And this hunger is most fully satisfied when we meet God in the pages of His Word. Seeking to know God more through studying Scripture is a primary way in which we draw closer to Him. This lesson is the first of two where you will challenge students to consider their behaviors and attitudes toward spending meaningful time with God in His Word.

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## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **LIFE** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **LIFE** lesson 21 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 21, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

The *Bible Background* is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** God inspired various authors to write a majority of the Psalms in their era, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Korahites and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other Psalms remain unknown.
- **Time frame:** The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel's history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e. Psalm 119).

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD  
LESSON 21: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 1

- **Purpose:** The Psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly, even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e. Psalm 51).

## THE SETTING

The book of Psalms is sometimes known as the "songbook" of the Bible. While we don't know the author of all the psalms, we believe that David wrote more of them than anyone else. We can imagine David sitting by a tree, singing the words we are reading. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the entire Bible. And, it's all about the Bible. This is not unintentional. God's Word is absolutely crucial to our lives as believers.

## THE MAIN POINT

The main point of this lesson is that having a hunger to know God is a mark of a disciple. And this hunger is most fully satisfied when we meet God in the pages of His Word, because it is one of the primary ways God has chosen to reveal Himself to us. In this psalm, David celebrates the richness and value of God's Word in the life of those that trust and follow the Lord.

## LESSON PLAN

The *Lesson Plan* contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; and an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about how they respond to certain subjects, and how much they know about subjects and various categories.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need the list of various subjects and categories below.

FIRST, explain to students they will be playing a game called "Name It." Then explain these game rules. Have 4-5 students come up in front of the large group. (In a small group setting, simply go around the circle.) Begin by naming a category out loud. Then go to each participating student and give him or her a brief moment to name someone or something that is related to that particular category. Students cannot repeat what someone else has said. They cannot say "Um, uh, etc.," or pause for longer than five seconds without responding. If they do any of these, they are out. This is an elimination game.

Here are some categories that can be used. You could also place the categories in a hat or bucket so you don't even know which one is being used until you draw it out of the hat or bucket.

1. Disney Princesses
2. NFL teams
3. Different types of soda
4. TV shows
5. Musical instruments
6. Boy names that start with M
7. Girl names that start with L

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD  
LESSON 21: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 1

8. Dog breeds
9. Ice cream toppings
10. Colors
11. Chip flavors
12. Fast food restaurants
13. One Direction (or another bands) songs

\*Whether you use all of these or not, be sure and end with this category: Books of the Bible.

THEN, say something like this:

- **A game like this is usually exciting for some and can be frustrating for others. Your experience with the different categories will dictate how well you responded, and if you were interested in certain categories more than others. Disney princesses are exciting for some and irrelevant for others. Some of the categories you knew well. With others, after a turn or two, you may have struggled to say another answer. Today one of our main goals to consider our behaviors and attitudes toward spending meaningful time with God in His Word. Typically, saying "Turn your Bibles to . . ." doesn't get the same excitement as asking "How about those (fill in with a sports team)!" You might be able to tell me every single NFL team and their starting quarterback, but might not know much about books of the Bible.**

FINALLY, explain to students that one of the primary ways God has chosen to make Himself known to us is through His Word. Explain that as those who are seeking to live as disciples of Jesus, we must consistently evaluate our practices as it pertains to regularly meeting God in the Bible.

Transition into *The Main Event* portion of your lesson.

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students see that seeking to know God more through studying Scripture is a primary way in which we draw closer to Him.
- **Set Up:** Make sure students have a Bible or a Bible app that they are able to look along with a friend. They will also benefit from having something to write with and on.

FIRST, lead students to read Psalm 119:1-10 quietly to themselves. To get students really diving into the passage have them highlight or underline any phrases that stand out to them. Right before students begin reading, make sure you take a few moments to provide the context for the passage using the Bible Background.

THEN, explain and reiterate one of the main goals of this session. Say something like:

- **Having a hunger to know God is a mark of a disciple. And this hunger is most fully satisfied when we meet God in the pages of His Word.**

NEXT, read or have a student read Psalm 119:1-3 aloud. Then, lead them in a short discussion. Ask something like:

- **What do you think it means when someone is "blameless"?**

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD  
LESSON 21: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 1

o Answer: According to the dictionary, the word blame means “innocent of wrongdoing.” Does this mean we are perfect or more spiritual than others? Absolutely not! In this context, walking blamelessly is a matter of character and of the heart.

- **What are some ways we can pursue walking blamelessly in our everyday lives?**

o Answers will vary. Notice the end of verses 2 and 3. Verse 2 ends with “seek Him with their whole heart.” Verse 3 ends with “walk in His ways.” While the practical ways of walking blameless might be shown in various ways, we know this for sure: it is impossible to walk blameless if we are not seeking God in His Word.

THEN, read or have a student read Psalm 119:4. When students have finished, lead them in a short discussion. Ask something like:

- **Think about the idea of God’s Word being “fully obeyed.” If we want to “fully obey” His Word, how should we approach spending time in Scripture?**

o Answers will vary. Some potential answers could be: consistently, actively, intently, persistently, or with determination.

- **Why is it so important for Christ-followers to seek to fully obey God’s Word? What does it communicate to a lost a dying world when we’re inconsistent in this?**

o Answer: Christ-followers should seek to consistently and confidently keep the commandments of Christ. Simply, we must do what He says. In order for us to do what He says, we must know and care about what He says. When we’re inconsistent in this, we confuse an already confused world. Remember, a primary way God has chosen to make Himself known to us is through His Word.

NEXT, read or have a student read Psalm 119:5-8. Lead them in a short discussion by asking something like:

- **Why do you think David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, put an emphasis on praising with “an up-right heart?”**

o Answer: The heart is the heart of the matter. Remind students that having a hunger to know God is a mark of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. And this hunger is most fully satisfied when we meet God in the pages of His Word. Reading God’s Word should be done out of passion not duty and obligation.

- **Why can it be so easy to slip into lazy or apathetic attitudes toward engaging with the Bible?**

o Answer: God desires for us to live lives of passion for Him. When we start to treat spiritual disciplines such as reading our Bible as a “checklist” then it is easy to slip into a lazy, apathetic mode. To fight this temptation we must constantly crave the things of Christ, and praise Him for what He has done and continues to do in our lives.

THEN, read or have a student read Psalm 119:9-10. This is the heart of this passage. Have students underline verses 9 and 10 in their Bibles or highlight it on their phones. Say something like:

- **Most Christ-followers would probably tell you with their mouth that they desire to live pure lives and want to fully seek after the things of Christ. However, when you follow that up by asking them how much time they spend in God’s Word in order to make this a reality, you might get a blank look. We can’t really try to live pure, holy lives outside of God’s Word. We can’t say we desire to know God, but not engage with Him in His Word. It doesn’t make sense.**

FINALLY, explain to students that living pure lives is a difficult task in our culture today, no doubt. It is difficult but it is not impossible. Help them again see the connection between living pure lives and time spent in God’s Word. Then ask something like:

- **What is danger in living “half-hearted Christianity?”**

o Answer: It is not biblical Christianity. In the New Testament, Jesus has strong words about lukewarm Christianity. We must seek God with all of our heart.

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD LESSON 21: KNOWING GOD THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 1

- **Why can it be easy to “stray” as verse 10 speaks to?**

- Answer: It is easy to wander because we are fallen human beings that are susceptible to all of the distractions that come our way. However, this cannot be and should not be an excuse.

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *The Last Word*.

### THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students step back and evaluate the actual time they spend in God’s Word.
- **Set-Up:** You’ll want to use a dry-erase board, or some other means to help students visualize this activity.

FIRST, explain to students that as you begin to wrap up your lesson, you want to give them an opportunity to evaluate the time they spend in God’s Word.

NEXT, read or have a student read Jeremiah 29:13 out loud. While it’s being read, write the verse on a dry-erase board for them. Then, say something this:

- **Notice the phrase “with all your heart.” Having a hunger to know God is a major part of what it means to follow Jesus. The main way we grow and cultivate this hunger is by meeting God in the Bible.**

THEN, have students write down on a sheet of paper (or have it typed out on a sheet of paper for them), “In the past 7 days, I have read God’s Word \_\_\_\_\_ times. In this time frame I read approximately \_\_\_\_\_ verses/passages. One of the main things, a takeaway or two, I learned while reading God’s Word was \_\_\_\_\_. As a result of reading God’s Word I had a heart of \_\_\_\_\_.”

Encourage the students to be honest in their evaluation. This isn’t intended to shame them if they haven’t been spending time in Scripture. They don’t have to show or talk about their answers to anyone if they don’t want to.

THEN, ask something like:

- **What was revealing about this exercise? What was hard about it? What, if anything, came naturally to you?**
  - Answers will vary. Spend some time walking through their answers and considering practical steps to get them more on track with spending time reading God’s Word.

FINALLY, remind students that it is crucial to evaluate their practices as it pertains to regularly meeting God in the Bible. Say something like:

- **Jesus desires for you to know Him on an intimate, personal level. It is impossible to know God apart from His Word. It is that simple, yet hard to pursue consistently.**

Encourage students that all believers, at times, struggle with having consistent, meaningful time in God’s Word. Life happens and we all get busy. Satan would love for us to be so busy that we forget often to engage God in His Word. Spend some time this week making a great effort for this to not be the case.

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD  
LESSON 21: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 1

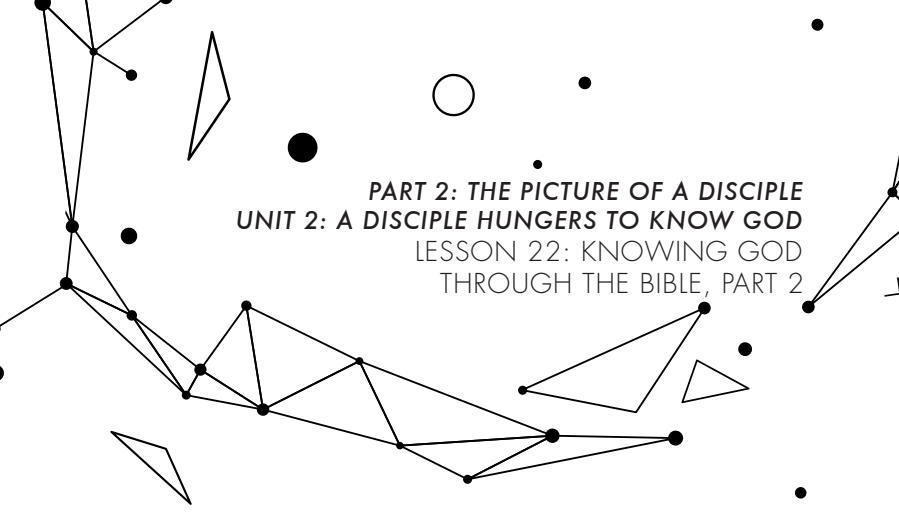
- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
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# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

## PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD LESSON 22: KNOWING GOD THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 2

**What we want students to learn:** That one of the key traits of Christ-followers is “storing up” God’s Word in their hearts.

**What we want students to do with what they’ve learned:** To understand the importance of knowing God’s Word, personally, and committing to know it even better.

**Scripture Focus:** Psalm 119:11-16

**Supporting Scripture:** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**Overview:** As people who strive to live as disciples of Christ, being intimately familiar with God’s Word is essential. And yet, few teenagers (and dare we say few adults) make memorizing Scripture a key practice. The only problem with this is that the Bible is full of examples of people who knew God’s Word personally and put it to great use. The challenge of this lesson is to help your students understand the **VALUE** of knowing God’s Word by heart, and then to move them to practically commit to an increased effort at memorizing Scripture.

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### TEACHER PREP VIDEO

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To access your **LIFE** lesson 22 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 22, and click on the “Background” tab. You’ll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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### BIBLE BACKGROUND

The *Bible Background* is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you’ll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what’s happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by “context”?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you’ll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What’s the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don’t get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God’s plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

### THE DETAILS

- **Author:** God inspired various authors to write a majority of the Psalms in their era, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Korahites and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other Psalms remain unknown.
- **Time frame:** The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel’s history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e. Psalm 119).



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PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD  
LESSON 22: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 2

- **Purpose:** The Psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly, even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e. Psalm 51).

## THE SETTING

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible and one that is full of rich truths. While a certain tradition holds that David authored it and used it to aid his son, Solomon, in learning the Hebrew alphabet, this account is largely apocryphal, and the psalmist is unidentified in this chapter. Psalm 119 is one of the few acrostics in the Bible. It's broken down into 22 subsections, each starting with a specific Hebrew letter. It was used as a mnemonic device to help the hearer retain the incredible truth it lays out. The theme of the chapter revolves around the importance of the Word of God and how fundamental it is to daily life.

## THE MAIN POINT

The main point we want to make in Psalm 119:11-16 is that it is incredibly important to know the Word of God personally and deeply. We live in a world where so many of the "black and white" moral distinctions seem to have eroded, and we are left to make difficult choices every day. The Word helps us to navigate this difficult terrain, but that is not the only thing it does. It reveals the heart and character of God Himself. The more we store the Word in our heart, the more we become like Him, which is the aim of the Christian life. Knowing the Word gives us a shield against the tactics of the enemy and allows us to grow deeper in our love and knowledge of the Lord.

## LESSON PLAN

The *Lesson Plan* contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; and an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To help students understand the value of their memory and how they can use it redemptively.
- **Set-Up:** Print enough copies of the "Name That Movie Quote" PDF (located in your Lesson 1 folder) so that each group of three to four students can have a copy.

FIRST, explain to students that they will divide into groups of 3-4 students and distribute one activity sheet per group. Let students know that they are doing some entertainment trivia using quotes from a variety of movies. Inform them that they will have 3-5 minutes to work as a group to come up with the name of the movie from which the quote is taken.

THEN, at the end of the time limit, go through and give the answers listed below and let each group grade their work. If you are able, distribute some candy to the winners or any type of reward will do.

Here are the quotes with the given answers.

1. "With great responsibility comes great power."- Spider-Man
2. "Why so serious?"- The Dark Knight
3. "Oh, no, it wasn't the airplanes. It was Beauty killed the Beast."- King Kong
4. "There's no place like home."- The Wizard of Oz

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5. "They may take our lives but they'll never take our freedom!"- Braveheart
6. "The seaweed is always greener in somebody else's lake."- The Little Mermaid
7. "You did it! Congratulations! World's best cup of coffee! Great job everybody! It's great to be here."- Elf
8. "If you wear a dress and have an animal sidekick, you're a princess."- Moana
9. "The Force is with me. I am one with the Force."- Rogue One: Star Wars
10. "You're gonna need a bigger boat."- Jaws
11. "My precious."- Lord of the Rings
12. "If you build it, he will come"- Field of Dreams
13. "Every great love starts with a great story..."- The Notebook
14. "Give me some of your tots!"- Napoleon Dynamite
15. "You'll shoot your eye out, kid!"- The Christmas Story
16. "Mama always said life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get."- Forrest Gump
17. "You're lucky. No memories, no problems!"- Finding Dory
18. "We may be evolved, but deep down we are still animals."- Zootopia
19. "You get hurt, hurt 'em back. You get killed, walk it off."- Avengers: Age of Ultron
20. "I'll be back."- The Terminator

FINALLY, once you have gone over the answers, say something like this:

- **I hope you all enjoyed this activity! Our memory is a fascinating thing. We have the power to not only remember quotes from movies, but also quote entire sections of movies! We do the same with songs as well. I bet if your favorite artist came on the radio right now that you would be able to sing all of the lyrics. Want to hear something amazing? Orthodox Jewish children are expected to memorize the Torah (first five books of the Bible) by the age of 12. Let that sink in for a moment. Our memory is a God-given tool that we should serve Him with. Would you agree that the things we fill our mind and our memory with have an effect on us? You see, we become like the things that we behold. That's why it's so important to fill our minds with God's Word. In times of temptation or confusion, it provides comfort and wisdom for us. It is the path that leads to life. So today we are going to talk about the importance of knowing His Word and committing it to memory.**

Transition into *The Main Event* portion of your lesson.

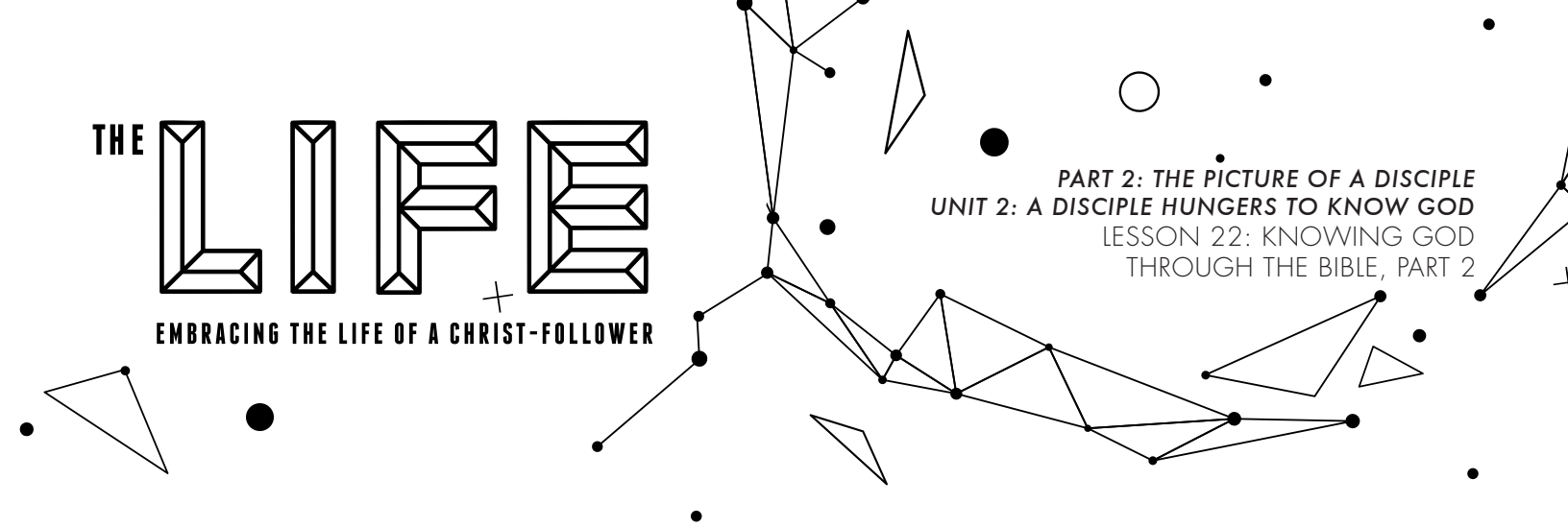
### THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help students identify the need of knowing God's Word and storing it in their hearts.
- **Set Up:** You'll benefit from a dry-erase board, but it's not critical. Make sure students have a Bible, or that they are able to look along with a friend.

FIRST, lead students to brainstorm a definition for the word "delight." Write the word on a dry-erase board, and record their definitions. When they've slowed down supplying answers, or if they get stumped, write the following answer on the board:

- **Delight: a high degree of pleasure or enjoyment.**

NEXT, ask them, "What are some things that you delight in?" Record their answers.



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After they have taken a minute to think and give their answers, take a minute to explain to them that we naturally gravitate to the things we delight in. Say something similar to the following:

- **God has given us temporary pleasures and delights on earth such as a good meal, sunshine, a warm friendship, sports, good music, an engaging film, etc. These are all really great things that should be enjoyed, but they are all momentary. We have to keep coming back to those things to receive the delight they bring. However, Jesus says in John 6:51, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." Jesus says that if we put our trust in Him and in His Word, then we will never hunger again. Knowing Him and His Word reaps eternal benefits. When His Word becomes our ultimate delight, we are transformed more into who we are called to be.**

THEN, explain that you're going to start by looking at what the psalmist had to say concerning God's Word. Instruct students to turn to Psalm 119. While students are looking, make sure you take a few moments to provide the context for the passage using the Bible Background.

NEXT, read or have a student read Psalm 119:11-16. When students have finished, lead them in a short discussion. Instruct them to look back at verse 11-12. Ask something like:

- **What does it mean when the psalmist says that he stored up God's word in his heart?**
  - Answer: First, he believed His Word. Then, he took in God's Word, i.e., he read it, and he dwelled on it.
- **How does storing God's Word in our heart help us to fight against sin?**
  - Answer: The problem with our sin battle is that too often we think we can defeat it with our own will power. However, we fall short every time. It's only by storing the Word up in our heart, and trusting God to make it come alive within us, that we can contend with sin.
- **In verse 12, the psalmist asks God to teach him His statutes (which means God's rules, or ways). What does that show about the psalmist?**
  - Answer: He acknowledged that he didn't know everything, and that God still had things to teach him. It also showed his earnestness to take this knowledge and obey God with it!

THEN, turn their attention to verses 13-14. Ask:

- **Why is it important to declare God's commands with our mouths? What benefit did this bring to the psalmist?**
  - Answer: We are forgetful creatures that need to be reminded of what God calls us to each and every day. It reminded the psalmist of his commitment to love the Lord, and it also held him accountable to other people.
- **Do you find it easy or hard to talk about God's Word with others?**
  - Answers will vary.

NEXT, take a minute to ask your group to name off some of the items that the richest people in the world buy with their money:

- **Answers will vary but may include mansions, planes, islands, nice cars, swimming pools, etc.**

Then, draw upon the idea that the psalmist understood the importance of not placing his delight in material things. Verse 14 shows that he decided to delight in God's Word instead of in his riches. For those who think this psalm was written by King David, this adds even more meaning to the text. Explain that David would have been in a position to have any material thing that he wanted. If these words are his, it shows that he understood what it meant to be satisfied in God. Ask:

# THE LIFE

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PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD  
LESSON 22: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 2

- **Regardless of whether it was David who wrote this psalm or not, why do you think the author wrote what he wrote in verse 14?**
  - o Answer: The psalmist understood that to have the Giver was much better than just the gifts. Knowing God's Word was the opportunity to strengthen his relationship with God.

THEN, direct students' attention to the last two verses of our section, vs. 15-16. Ask:

- **In verse 15, the Psalmist says that he meditates on God's precepts. What does this look like?**
  - o Answer: This is not the type of meditation propagated in eastern religions or yoga. This simply means to give in-depth, focused, meaningful attention to the Word.
- **How does meditating on the Word help us to better live it out?**
  - o Answer: Just like studying for a test, the longer you sit with the material, look over it, and allow it to settle into your memory bank, the better you're able recall it and apply it. The same goes for the His Word! The more we dwell on it, the more we delight in it. And God ultimately shapes and transforms us through it.
- **Looking at verse 16, what is the psalmist's view of God's Word?**
  - o Answer: It's something to delight in! It brings us joy to truly know His Word and live it out.
- **How does the mentality of delighting in the Word compare with others' mentality of it?**
  - o Answers will vary. However, many people view knowing and taking to heart God's Word as a chore. David wants us to hear that knowing His Word is delightful and fun!
- **What are some ways God uses the Word that we have stored away in our hearts?**
  - o Answer: There are a variety of ways but there are two common ways. 1) He constantly brings it to our minds when we are presented with a decision to either serve the flesh or walk by the Spirit. 2) He brings it to our minds to encourage our brother and sister in their faith.

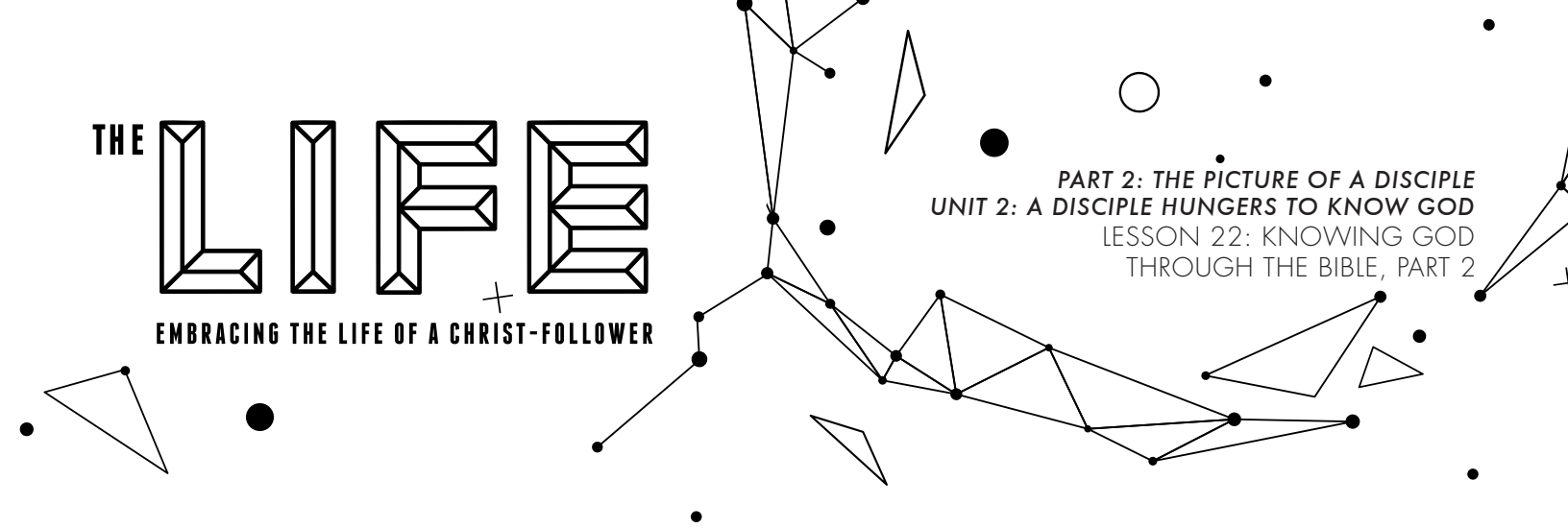
NEXT, explain to students that absorbing the Word of God has a multitude of benefits! Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and ask the following questions:

- **Why can we have confidence in Scripture and know that it's true?**
  - o Answer: The Bible attests that God was the one who inspired and directed its composition. Even though it has multiple different authors and writing styles, it is totally cohesive and does not contradict itself.
- **As verse 17 attests, in what way does the Word equip us for every good work?**
  - o Answer: It lays out God's mission for our lives and shows us how to live. Not only that, but it is the power source of every Christian to be rejuvenated in their faith.

FINALLY, explain to students that wherever they are in their knowledge of the Word of God, they are called to expand it. Say something like this:

- **A large percentage of seniors graduate from student ministry and don't come back to church. Some think that one of the reasons why is because they never took learning the Word to heart. At some point our faith can't be reliant on our parents' faith anymore, and that can only happen when we commit to grow in the knowledge of God through the Word of God. It might sound tough right now, but I promise if you commit to studying and memorizing it, it will make an incredible impact in your life and take your faith to a whole new level.**

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *The Last Word*.



# THE LIFE

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THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 2

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** For students to understand the importance of knowing God's Word, personally, and committing to know it even better.
- **Set Up:** None needed

FIRST, explain to students that as you begin to wrap up your lesson, you want to talk about how the practice of Scripture memory is a fundamental discipline to their Christian life.

Ask the question, "Does anyone know the best way to eat an elephant?" If one of your students has heard this question, they'll know the answer. But the rest will probably think it's gross.

- **Answer: The best way to eat is one bite at a time!**

Say something like this:

- **A lot of times we can view memorizing Scripture as an insurmountable task because it contains so much. But just like the elephant, I think we should approach memorizing it in small chunks. Maybe you don't let your first Scripture memory task be to memorize the book of Hebrews. Shoot to memorize one or two verses a week from a book that you are currently studying.**

THEN, talk about how with any discipline we want to cultivate in life (working out, studying, eating right), there are always excuses we can make. Follow that by asking:

- **What are some practical things you can do to make sure you commit to Scripture memorization?**
  - Answers will vary. There are two practical things: 1) Write out memory verses that we can put before our eyes often: on bathroom mirrors, carry around index cards, use an app, etc. 2) Also, partner up with a friend and create a Scripture memory game-plan. This will provide accountability and keep us going when we want to give up.

NEXT, drive home the point of perseverance and accountability by using this illustration:

- **Have you ever been on a long hike with friends so that you could get to a beautiful view? I'm not just talking about a 1-2 mile hike, but one in which your calves burned and sweat poured down your face. If you're normal, then there's probably a time in the midst of the hike where you wanted to give up and turn around. At that moment the view was too far out of sight, and the struggle was an all too present reality. But your friends wouldn't let you give up. The only reason you got to your destination and gazed upon the immaculate view was because of the brothers and sisters you had to uphold you. Much like this, the Christian walk has its ups and down. That's why we need faithful friends around us to encourage us in the spiritual disciplines, especially meditating on the Word and memorizing it. When we commit to this, the Lord transforms our lives into a beautiful view that glorifies Jesus and others take notice of.**

Encourage them to evaluate where they are at in their devotional life and to take the next step to implement this spiritual discipline.

FINALLY, allow time for any closing thoughts or questions from your students. Then, close in prayer.

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# THE LIFE

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PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 23: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 1

**What we want students to learn:** That you can't live as a true follower of Christ if you don't commit to prayer.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To identify ways in which they can draw even closer to God through prayer.

**Scripture Focus:** Jeremiah 33:3

**Supporting Scripture:** Luke 5:16; Mark 1:35; Philippians 4:6

**Overview:** You might say that prayer is the language of our relationship with God. If one of the primary descriptions of us as disciples is a hunger for knowing God, we cannot hope to come anywhere close to accomplishing this without prayer. And yet, a lifestyle of prayer is something that many teenagers find challenging. This lesson, along with the next one, will help you encourage students to begin to understand the value of prayer in the life of a disciple.

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

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## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Though there has been some disagreement over the years, there is no compelling reason to doubt that the Prophet Jeremiah is the author is indeed the author of the book that shares his name. He was accompanied by his scribe, Baruch.
- **Time frame:** Best estimates have the book completed sometime around 550 BC.



# THE LIFE

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PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 23: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 1

- **Purpose:** Jeremiah and Baruch wrote the book to capture the turmoil that faced them and to cast a vision for the hopeful future God had in store for Israel.

## THE SETTING

The verses in this lesson provide multiple perspectives on prayer. First, we see God's instruction to pray in Jeremiah. Then, we see the example of Jesus' prayer habits recorded by Mark and Luke. Finally, we receive Paul's instruction to pray.

## THE MAIN POINT

In our call to discipleship, we recognize that we are to learn to imitate Jesus. There are many defining characteristics of Jesus' character, but none are as intimate as His prayer time with the Father. If disciples are defined by following Jesus' example, then Jesus' disciples will pray.

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## LESSON PLAN

The *Lesson Plan* contains three elements: An introductory activity called ***The Lead In***; the Bible study section called ***The Main Event***; and an application-focused segment called ***The Last Word***.

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## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To help students see the importance of communication in a healthy relationship.
- **Set-Up:** Students will need paper and pens.

FIRST, give a piece of paper and pen to each student. Then tell them to think of the person (or handful of people) that they consider their best friend or confidant.

THEN, say something like:

- **Think of the main person, or people, that you would say you have the strongest relationship with. Who is the person that you go to when you have a problem or the first person you call or text when you have good news?**
- **Write that person's name on the top of your paper.**

NEXT, say to your students something like the following:

- **There are probably a lot of reasons why you are close with this person, but there is one thing for sure; if you never talked with this person, you wouldn't stay very close.**
- **Try and brainstorm in the past month all of the ways and times that you have communicated with this person. Write down as many as you can think of on this piece of paper. You have one minute!**

THEN, call on some students to share the ways in which they communicate with those closest to them. Emphasize the frequency and compelling feeling that they may have to contact them. When students have had a chance to share, say/ask something like:

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THROUGH PRAYER, PART 1

- That urge that you have to talk to your friend or family member is a sign of the health of your relationship with them. When you care about someone, you want to share your life with them. You want them to know when you are hurting and celebrate with you when life is great. Hopefully, you also want to listen to them, hear their heart, and celebrate what makes them happy too. Let's apply this same logic to our faith. If we say we have a relationship with Christ, why do we sometimes neglect communicating with Him?

- Allow students time to share various answers. Don't worry about feeling like you have to land on an answer here. The goal is to get students thinking about the concept of prayer as communication.

FINALLY, begin to transition to the Bible study portion of your lesson by saying the following:

- **If our relationship with Christ is to be a healthy one, if we are to embrace the life of a disciple, then we have to spend time communicating with Him to stay close to Him and learn His heart. Today we will look at a simple truth: you can't follow Christ if you don't know where He's going. We will discuss the fact that prayer is our way to communicate with God and keep an open relationship with our Savior so we can walk in His steps.**

Transition into *The Main Event* portion of your lesson.

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** For students to accept that you can't live as a true follower of Christ if you don't commit to prayer.
- **Set Up:** Make sure students have a Bible, or that they are able to look along with a friend.

FIRST, have students turn to the book of Jeremiah. As they are finding it, provide them with some of the context for the book by referencing the Bible Background section of your lesson plan. Then, read or have a student read Jeremiah 33:3. When you have finished, lead students in a short discussion. Ask something like:

- **Who is speaking in this passage?**
  - Answer: God
- **What is God saying here?**
  - Allow students to answer as they will. If they give a surface answer at first, that's fine. You're about to dig in a bit deeper.
- **This is one short verse. But there are two very important concepts implied here. Can you identify them?**
  - Answer: The first is that God wants our prayers. He wants to be in communication with us. The second is that God essentially promises that He will respond to our prayers. He basically tell us that He will engage with us if we reach out to Him.
- **What if God didn't want us to pray to Him? Would it change His character any at all? Would He be less God? Explain your answer.**
  - Answers will vary. The purpose of this question isn't to come up with a concrete answer either way. The goal is really to set up your next point, and to help your students think a little about God's character and nature. Encourage students to hash this out a bit.

Explain that God could have created a relationship with us where prayer wasn't necessary. After all, He made the

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LESSON 23: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 1

rules! He knows what we need. He could have simply crafted relationship between Himself and people in such a way that He just gave us what He knows we need without ever having to worry about us praying to Him. But remind students that God didn't do that. God set it up so that there would be lines of communication open between Him and us. Encourage them to think for a moment about how amazing this is: the God of the universe, the creator of all things WANTS to hear us call out to Him! Furthermore, He promises to engage with us in communication as well. That is totally remarkable stuff.

THEN, explain to students that if we doubt the importance of prayer, we can look to Jesus as a model (which, as far as models go, is a pretty good one). Instruct students to turn to Luke 5. Once they have found the passage, read or have a student read Luke 5:16. When you've finished, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **The descriptive words in this passage are very important. What words do you see that describe the manner and place of Jesus' prayers?**
  - Answer: He "withdrew" to "desolate" places.
- **Why do you think it was important that Jesus withdrew from others so He could pray?**
  - Answer: His prayers were an intimate time between Him and the Father. There is a time for public prayer, but it does not replace time alone in conversation with God. He made a conscious effort to let others know that this time was important and He desired to be alone with God.
- **How do you withdraw from others so that you can pray? Are you intentional about that?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **Why do you think Jesus found "desolate places" to pray?**
  - Answers will vary, but may include His desire not to be interrupted. Jesus also was a busy person, in high demand to meet the needs of those He encountered. He needed to remove distractions so He could focus on the Father's will and hear from Him.
- **Are you able to find or create "desolate places" where you can protect your prayer time? How?**
  - Answers will vary. Share how you have found success guarding your prayer time with fewer interruptions. Encourage them to brainstorm ideas such as going outside or putting up a sign on their door.

Say something like the following to your group:

- **It can be difficult to find time in our busy schedules to be still and quiet so that we can have uninterrupted time with God. We live in a fast-paced, high-demand society where people don't always understand the value of silence, much less prayer. We have to be intentional to create and protect our time with God. Jesus knew this and had a plan.**

NEXT, have students turn to Mark 1:35, and have a student read the verse aloud. When you've finished, ask:

- **What descriptive word do you see repeated from our previous passage?**
  - Answer: Desolate
- **How was Jesus able to find this desolate place away from interruptions?**
  - Answer: He got up early while it was still dark.
- **How many of you would consider yourself a morning person?**
  - Allow for some brief responses.
- **Why is it harder to find time alone when you get up after the day is underway and bustling with other people?**
  - Allow for responses.
- **When we talk about creating and protecting time with God, it requires an intentional action to with-**

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 23: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 1

draw from others to desolate places. Most people don't get up earlier than they have to. With that in mind, why is the early morning a good time for prayer?

o Answer: No one else will be up. You can be alone.

- Can you think of any other reasons why the morning is a good time to hear from God and focus your heart on Him?

o Answers will vary. Steer students toward the idea that we need to seek Him first! If we begin our day seeking God, we can spend more time praising Him and less time confessing a wasted day!

FINALLY, help students understand that prayer is the language of our relationship with God. As disciples, we should hunger to know God. And we can't accomplish this without prayer. Say something like:

- A lifestyle of prayer is something that many of us find challenging. But we have to understand that its absolutely essential as Christ-followers that we cultivate a constant posture of talking with and listening to God.

Ask if there are any questions, then transition into *The Last Word*.

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To identify ways in which they can draw even closer to God through prayer.
- **Set-Up:** Paper for each student or a class poster board and a marker board.

FIRST, lead students in a discussion. Ask:

- **Have you ever stopped to take inventory of your prayer life? Let's do that now. First, let's take stock of how often we pray. Raise your hand if you pray daily. Weekly? Monthly? Less?**
  - o Without names, keep a running tally on the marker board with categories: daily, weekly, monthly, less.
- **Second, let's look at WHEN we pray. Raise your hand if you pray in the morning when you first wake up. At bedtime? Only at meals? Random times throughout the day?**
  - o Without names, keep a running tally on the marker board with a new column for the categories: morning, evening, meals, random
- **Last, let's look at WHAT we pray. Take a minute and talk with the person next to you and brainstorm the things you have prayed for in the last week or month. When you have a good list, be ready to share some with the group.**
  - o When they are ready, make a list on your board of the types of things that have been prayed for. (Save some room for the next part of the discussion.)

THEN, explain to your group that oftentimes, our prayer life consists only of our "want list," where we make our requests known to God. This is certainly an important part of prayer. God tells us to pour out our requests to Him. But explain that this is not the main purpose of prayer. Say something like:

- **Imagine if you had a friend who only spoke to you to ask you for favors. Would you consider that a healthy relationship? We don't only pray to God to ask Him what He can do for us. We pray to**

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 23: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 1

commune with God and align our hearts with His.

NEXT, read Philippians 4:6-7 and discuss the following questions Ask:

- **What is Paul instructing Christ-followers to do with their concerns?**
  - o Answer: He tells them to let go of the stress by taking their concerns to God through prayer.
- **What do we stand to gain when we surrender our needs and fears to God in prayer rather than attempting (hopelessly, by the way) to control them ourselves?**
  - o Answer: The peace of God. God tells us that when we come to Him we can be anxious about less, and that He will guard our hearts and minds. This is how we align our lives with God's purpose.
- **Prayer is the language of our relationship with God. To seek this kind of closeness with God, we go beyond making requests. Aside from our wants, what are some things that should be included in our prayers?**
  - o Try to steer them toward the ideas of thankfulness, praise for who God is, or even less immediate requests like a desire for wisdom or participation in God's work on earth. The idea is to take the focus off themselves, and to see the bigger picture of prayer.

FINALLY, close by saying something like:

- **You can see by our list that there are a lot of good reasons to talk to God. But this list can't contain the best part of prayer: the things that God wants to say to us! When we focus more on God than on ourselves, we learn to hear His voice. There are things He wants to say to each of us, and we all have to learn to listen. When you spend time in prayer this week, add in a little bit of quiet time to just listen and ask God to speak to you. You'll be surprised the ways He will use to do it.**

Allow time for any closing thoughts or questions from your students. Then close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
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# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 24: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 2

**What we want students to learn:** That Jesus gave us the blueprint for what God-honoring prayer looks like.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To begin to use the Lord's Prayer as model to grow closer to God in prayer.

**Scripture Focus:** Matthew 6:5-15

**Overview:** Even people who are not particularly religious are most likely familiar with the Lord's Prayer. However, the interesting part of the Lord's Prayer isn't just the words He taught His followers to pray. It is the context in which He spoke. You see, Jesus was concerned with His disciples praying in the wrong way or with the wrong motivation. His giving of the Lord's Prayer was a way to teach the His followers a model of prayer, one that uniquely drew them to the Lord in the relationship of discipleship. Jesus was concerned with His followers praying to God in a manner that was appropriate for the nature of their relationship. As Christ-followers seeking to draw near to God, we can learn much from adopting the Lord's Prayer as model for communicating with God.

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## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **LIFE** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **LIFE** lesson 24 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 24, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

The *Bible Background* is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there

# THE LIFE

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PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 24: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 2

are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.

- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

## THE SETTING

This teaching from Jesus on prayer is right in the middle of what is known as “The Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew chapters 5-7). Though delivered in public, this message seems to have been directed specifically to those who had chosen to follow Jesus (Matthew 5:1). Jesus instructs His followers about how a disciple of Jesus should live and act in this world, touching on subjects such as anger, lust, loving our enemies, serving the poor, worry, difficult relationships, and of course, prayer. In short, the Sermon on the Mount is a description of what a life transformed by Jesus should look like on a very practical level.

## THE MAIN POINT

The main point is that prayer—the way Jesus instructs us to do it—is characterized by a personal relationship with our Heavenly Father where we recognize our dependence on Him. Prayer is not a formula that can get us what we want if we say the right things (Matthew 6:7) or a competition to see who is the most spiritual (Matthew 6:5). Rather, the kind of prayer Jesus teaches reminds us that not only are we desperately in need, but that our Father is a good father who has already provided for those needs. The specific prayer Jesus leads His followers in, known as the “Lord’s Prayer,” is not meant to simply be memorized as the only way to pray, but rather it is a blueprint for how we approach our loving Father in prayer.

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## LESSON PLAN

The *Lesson Plan* contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

## THE LEAD IN

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- **Goal:** To get students thinking about how we sometimes aren’t really sure how to pray.
- **Set-Up:** You’ll need a way to show a YouTube clip, “Greg’s Dinner Prayer.” The clip is a scene from the movie *Meet the Parents*. You can find the clip at <https://youtu.be/IKE1IXvJB9Q>.

FIRST, show the clip to your group, explaining that in the movie, Greg is meeting his girlfriend’s parents for the first time. Then ask:

- **What do you think was going through Greg’s mind when he was asked to pray?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **What kind of language did Greg use? How did he speak?**
  - o Answer: He used very formal language such as “thee” and had a very religious tone. The whole thing felt pretty impersonal.



# THE LIFE

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PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 24: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 2

THEN, lead a short conversation on the connection between how we pray and what we imagine God to be like.

- **Based on his prayer, what do you think Greg believed is the “right” way to pray?**
  - Answers will vary; he seems to think that you have to use the right words and sound very spiritual.
- **Based only on his prayer, what do you think Greg imagines God is like?**
  - Help your students think through this question; the goal is to help them begin to see that how we view God and how we approach prayer is connected.

FINALLY, let your students know that you’ll be talking about prayer and how God wants us to approach prayer. Say:

- **Prayer is kind of a mysterious thing, isn’t it? Has it ever struck you as flat out amazing that God Himself hears our prayers? Many of us, if we’re honest, will admit that at times prayer makes us just as uncomfortable as Greg seemed in the clip. I hope that as we dig in, we’ll see how God views prayer. And once we understand this, hopefully it will seem a little less unusual by the end of our study.**

Transition into *The Main Event* portion of your lesson.

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** Students will understand that Jesus gave us the blueprint for what God-honoring prayer looks like.
- **Set Up:** You may benefit from a dry-erase board, but it’s not critical. Make sure students have a Bible or that they are able to look along with a friend.

FIRST, start off a discussion by getting students to think about their own presuppositions about prayer. Ask:

- **What do you think the point of prayer is?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **There are a lot of opinions about what the point of prayer is; people from different cultures may view prayer differently. We saw in the movie clip how Greg’s prayer was different from what his girlfriend’s father expected to hear. Why do you think there are so many different views on prayer?**
  - Possible answers: People have different experiences with God; people have different beliefs about God.

NEXT, explain that you’ll spend most of the study hearing from Jesus about prayer. Have a student read Matthew 6:5-8. While students are finding the passage, provide some context using the Bible Background. Then, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **What is the first thing Jesus says about prayer?**
  - Answer: To not be “like the hypocrites.”
- **Why does He warn against approaching prayer like the “hypocrites” do?**
  - Answer: The hypocrites’ goal in prayer is to impress other people, rather than to be in a relationship with God.
- **Give me an example of what you think one of these prayers that impress others would sound like?**
  - Answer: Encourage your group to actually think of some examples.

THEN, unpack how Jesus does want His followers to pray. Ask:

- **So—based on these four verses—what does Jesus want His followers to do when they pray?**



# THE LIFE

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PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 24: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 2

- o Answer: Literally, He said to go into a room by ourselves. Help students go deeper.
- **Do you think Jesus means that we can only pray when we're all by ourselves locked in a room?**
  - o Answer: The short answer is no. After all, Jesus Himself prayed in front of His followers just a few verses later. Press your group to think through Jesus' statement. Jesus is emphasizing that prayer is based on a personal relationship with God.
- **Why do you think Jesus warned against "babbling" when we pray?**
  - o Answer: Prayer isn't about impressing God with our words. In fact, there's no way we can, because He already knows what we need before we ask. Again, Jesus is stressing the idea that prayer is based on a relationship with God.

NEXT, have a student read Matthew 6:9-15. Then, ask:

- **Jesus then gives His followers a prayer they should pray. Though Christians for thousands of years have been praying this prayer, the point isn't that this is the only pray we can pray; it's kind of a blueprint for God-honoring prayer should look like. Before we talk about the prayer in detail, what do you notice about it?**
  - o Possible answers: It's fairly short; it uses simple language; it covers all the basic "needs," and so on.
- **What does Jesus communicate about God in His prayer, especially at the beginning?**
  - o Possible answers: That God is our Father; that He is in heaven (and therefore in command of the universe); that He has a Kingdom.
- **By saying "Our Father in heaven," Jesus communicates that God loves us deeply, and that He is in command of the universe and able to answer prayer. Are those two things difficult to believe at times?**
  - o Allow students space to answer this question honestly. Feel free to be vulnerable with examples from your own life.

THEN, look at the things that Jesus invites His followers to pray for. Ask:

- **In this prayer, what specific things does Jesus tell His followers to pray for in verses 10-13?**
  - o Answer: That God's Kingdom would be a reality on earth; that we would have the food and necessities for daily living; that God would forgive our debts (or trespasses/sins) as we forgive others; that we would be delivered from temptation and the evil one.
- **What do you think about the fact that the first personal request Jesus mentions in the prayer is for a physical need (bread) rather than what we would think of as a spiritual one?**
  - o Answer: God cares about all our needs. Help your group think through the idea that when it comes to God caring for us as Father, we don't really need to make a distinction between the spiritual and non-spiritual; God is a loving father who loves to take care of His children.
- **We've learned in this series that all of our sins—past, present and future—were forgiven by Jesus' work on the cross when we surrendered our lives to Him. Why do you think Jesus wants His followers to ask for forgiveness in this prayer?**
  - o Answer: When we put our trust in Jesus, the eternal consequences for our sin were taken on by Him through the cross, and our relationship with God was restored. But though our relationship with God can no longer be destroyed by our sin, our sin still can impair that relationship. When we ask for forgiveness daily, we recognize that we are still sinners saved only by God's grace. Make sure your group understands this important distinction.
- **Why should we pray for God to not lead us in temptation? Shouldn't we just not do the stupid stuff**

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 24: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 2

that leads us to sinful choices?

- o Answer: Just as God's grace saves us from our sin, His grace and His presence, through the Holy Spirit, also empower us to choose to be obedient to Him.

FINALLY, finish up this section on prayer and have a student read Matthew 6:14-15. Ask:

- **I'm a little confused here. I thought our salvation was based only on God's grace. We don't earn anything, we just trust in what Jesus did for us on the cross. Is God's forgiveness of us dependent on how we treat others?**
  - o Allow your students time to wrestle with these two verses. Jesus is communicating two important truths: 1) Followers of Jesus—who have accepted God's forgiveness—will be characterized by forgiving others; 2) Just as in Matthew 6:12, Jesus is likely referring to the fact that our sin can still impair our personal relationship with God. When we are unforgiving toward others, it hinders our ability to come before God and admit our need of forgiveness to Him.
- **Why is it sometimes so hard to forgive others?**
  - o Answers will vary.

Ask if there are any questions, then transition into *The Last Word*.

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## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To begin to use the Lord's Prayer as model to grow closer to God in prayer.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a copy of the "Praying Like Jesus" handout for each student and leader.

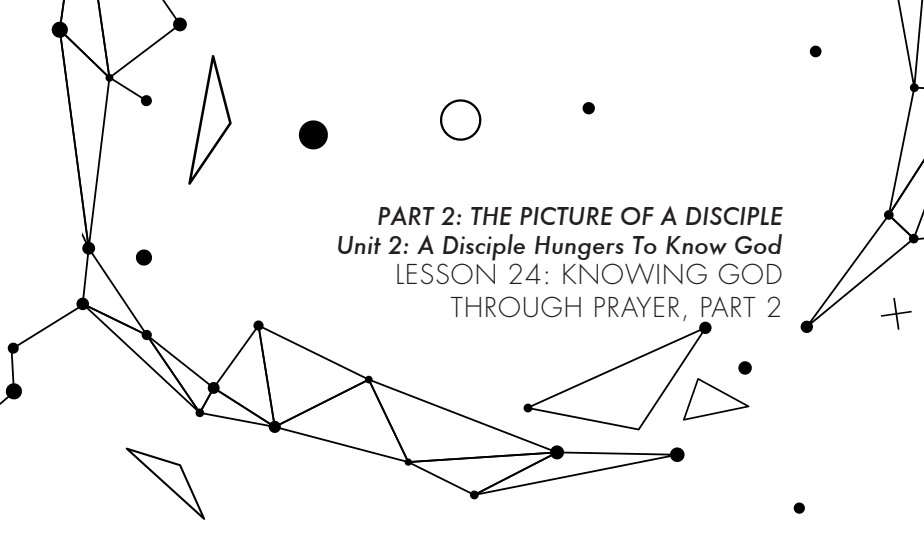
FIRST, explain to your group that they'll have an opportunity to put into practice what Jesus taught His followers about prayer. Give everyone the "Praying Like Jesus" handout and say:

- **Here's the thing about prayer. It's kind of silly to spend more time talking about prayer than actually praying. We're going to use the prayer Jesus taught His followers as a guide for our own prayer. And since Jesus said that prayer should be first and foremost a personal thing between us and God, we're going to do it on our own, and only share what we feel comfortable sharing.**

Make sure that your group understands the instructions before giving everyone about five minutes to fill out the handout.

NEXT, give students two or three minutes (more if you have enough time left) to pray through what they wrote down. Say:

- **Now, we're going to take a few minutes and silently pray through everything that we wrote down. There's no right way to do this, but a good place to start is just start at the top and pray to God about what you have written down.**
  - o Give your students a few minutes of silence before moving on to the next question.
- **What was that like for you?**
  - o Answers will vary.
- **Did it feel easier to pray by just answering the questions?**



# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 2: A Disciple Hungers To Know God  
LESSON 24: KNOWING GOD  
THROUGH PRAYER, PART 2

o Allow space to answer. Where appropriate, follow up one-word or short answers with "Tell me more about that."

FINALLY, encourage your group to use the form as a blueprint this week for their own prayer times. Say:

- **Spending time with Jesus in prayer is something just about everyone has a hard time doing at some point or another. To put into practice what we talked about today, try to spend about five minutes each day just praying with this handout in front of you. If something happens this week that you can add to it, feel free to do that.**

Close your Bible study in prayer, perhaps ending with a version of the prayer Jesus taught His disciples.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
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