

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.

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 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.

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.

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- **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.

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 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

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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

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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.

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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**

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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.
- 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.

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.