

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 2: SALVATION EMPOWERS DISCIPLESHIP

What we want students to learn: That through a saving faith in Jesus, we are no longer separated from God by our sins, but are instead reconciled to be in relationship with Him.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To evaluate where they are in their faith relationship with God.

Scripture Focus: Romans 10:9-13; Romans 5:6-11

Supporting Scripture: Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23

Overview: The purpose of this lesson is to reinforce the notion that discipleship is a moot point unless you have a saving relationship with Jesus. For students who have trusted Christ for salvation through faith, this lesson will be a chance for them to evaluate where they are with Christ. For other students, this is a chance to enter into a saving relationship with Jesus, thus beginning their discipleship journey.

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 2 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 2, 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:** Paul is the author of Romans.
- **Time frame:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of A.D. 56-57.
- **Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and

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other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, 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

Paul's letter to the Romans provides one of the most in-depth explorations in the New Testament of how God saves us from sin. Paul details the problem of sin and describes how God both judges sin and lavishes His grace and mercy on us through Jesus. In Romans 10, Paul contrasts the impossibility of being justified by following God's law with the simplicity of being justified by our faith in Jesus. Romans 10:9-10 is one of the classic passages of Scripture that succinctly proclaims that salvation is obtained not by works, but by trusting in what God has accomplished for us through Jesus and surrendering our lives to Him.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point is that we are saved through faith in Jesus and by surrendering our lives to Him. The Gospel is multifaceted and can be viewed through many different angles, such as God rescuing us from death, God forgiving a debt we could never repay, or Jesus taking on God's wrath for us and giving us His righteousness in exchange. At the beginning of the study, you will help students understand from Romans 10 that saving faith is about trusting God that Jesus' death and resurrection is enough to save them. Then in Romans 5, you'll unpack the concept of salvation through the lens of how we, who were enemies of God through our sin, were reconciled to God through Jesus.

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 looks like when two enemies are reconciled.
- **Set-Up:** None needed

FIRST, start the conversation by asking something like:

- **Have you ever had an enemy? Someone who you were always at odds with and, no matter what, it seemed like you would never get along?**
 - Answers will vary. Allow students time to answer.

THEN, explain that you are going to read a story of two people who were enemies. One of them did things to the other that most of us would think would be impossible to forgive. Read the following account of Eva Mozes Kor:

- **Kor and her sister, Miriam, were 10-year-old twins when they arrived at Auschwitz, one of history's most notorious concentration camps. She and Miriam became one of 1,500 sets of twins enrolled in**

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the Nazi's horrific "human experimentation program." In addition to living in sparse rat- and lice-infested quarters on a near-starvation diet, the girls were routinely subjected to humiliating and often harmful studies. Their body parts were measured so the Nazis could compare them to each other and to the other twins. Their blood was drawn and tested. They were injected with what Kor can only speculate were germs or viruses.

Kor survived the concentration camp and was liberated in 1945. In the 1990s, Kor was given a chance to meet one of the doctors at her concentration camp, Hans Munch. Kor took an incredible next step: she decided to forgive Dr. Munch. This is what she said about forgiving him:

"And immediately I felt that I was no longer a victim of Auschwitz. I was no longer a prisoner of my tragic past. I was free of Auschwitz, and I was free of [the Nazis]. I realized that I, the victim of 50 years, had the power even over the Angel of Death. So if I could forgive [the Nazis], I decided I could forgive everyone," she said. (SOURCE: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/news/ct-sta-holocaust-survivor-st-0925-20160926-story.html>)

NEXT, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **What sticks out to you about this story?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Do you think that you could have forgiven that man if you were in Eva Mozes Kor's place? Why, or why not?**
 - Answers will vary. Give your group space to answer, encouraging students with different views to elaborate.

FINALLY, let students know that you'll be talking about how God repaired His relationship with us. Say something like:

- **I think all of us have experienced what it's like to have a broken relationship with another person. Today we're going to talk about our relationship with God and what God did to reconcile us to Him. In the process, we'll encounter an example of forgiveness that's truly remarkable.**

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

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help students understand that through saving faith in Jesus, we are no longer separated from God by our sins, but are instead reconciled to be in relationship with Him.
- **Set Up:** Students will need a Bible or a Bible app, and you will need a whiteboard or flip chart to write on during the discussion.

FIRST, set up the discussion by helping the group wrap their minds around the weight of our sin. Say something like:

- **"Sin" is one of those church words that we don't use a lot in our day-to-day lives. I mean, when you get in trouble with a teacher, they don't write you up for "sinning," do they?**

THEN, ask something like:

- **Let's start here: when was the last time you were hurt by a friend or maybe even a family member?**

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o Answers will vary. Give them some time to answer. The point is to get the conversation started, so don't feel like you have to prod too much.

- **What did that hurt do to your relationship with that person?**
 - o Answers will vary. Again, allow some time for answers.
- **Have you ever been in a situation where you were the one that hurt someone and it changed your friendship or relationship?**
 - o Answers will vary. Since this is a vulnerable question, model vulnerability for your group by answering first.

NEXT, transition the discussion into exploring what sin does to our relationship with God. Say something like:

- **What you just described is how relationships are broken when we are "me-centered." That is a picture, in a small way, of how our relationship with God is broken by sin.**

THEN, ask something like:

- **Agree or disagree: most people would much rather think of themselves as making mistakes rather than committing sins.**
 - o Answers will vary. Make sure you follow up one-word answers with "Why do you think that?"

NEXT, have a student read Romans 3:23 and another read Romans 6:23. Ask something like:

- **What does Paul specifically say about "sin" in these two verses?**
 - o Answer: He says that everyone has sinned; that one way to think of "sin" is to fall short of God's glory; that the wages of sin is death.
- **Which one of those statements is the easiest to see in our everyday lives?**
 - o Answers will vary. Try to push students to think through this question. You might point out that we can see how sin does kill things, such as trust, relationships, etc.
- **Why do you think we usually think of our own sin as not as big of a deal as Paul makes of it here?**
 - o Answers will vary.

THEN, explain to the group that though we may not always understand the gravity of our rebellion against God, God planned for and provided a rescue before we ever knew we needed one. Have a student read Romans 10:9-13. Ask something like:

- **In verse 9, Paul makes an "if...then" statement. What is the "if" and what is the "then"?**
 - o Answer: The if is "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead." The then is "you will be saved."
- **So does this mean that if we just say the right things, like "Jesus is Lord," we'll be saved? What is Paul getting at here?**
 - o Answers will vary. Try to help students wrestle through this idea. Don't spell it out for them, but lead them in the direction that saying "Jesus is Lord" is about handing over our lives to Jesus and declaring that He is the leader of our lives, not our own selves.
- **Why do you think Paul says "believe in your heart" in verse 9 rather than just "believe"?**
 - o Answer: Believing in our heart indicates the kind of belief that changes our lives and compels us to act, rather than just saying, "Yeah, I guess that's true."

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NEXT, unpack this idea that the beginning and the foundation of following Jesus is trusting in what He has done for us. Ask something like:

- **"Believe," "faith," and "saved" are also churchy words that we don't usually take the time to understand. Let's look at what Paul says about believing, having faith, and being saved. In these five verses, what statements does he make about these things?**
 - As the group responds, write their statements on your whiteboard. At the end, you should have a list that says:
 - If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
 - ...it is with the heart that one believes and is justified.
 - ...it is with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
 - Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.
 - Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

THEN, give students a quick challenge by saying something like:

- **Here's our challenge for the next few minutes: let's reword these five statements into one simple sentence without using some of normal "church" language.**

The goal is to help the group internalize and understand what it means to begin to have a saving relationship with Jesus. Write their new version on the board. An example might be: "When we trust that Jesus rescued us by dying and rising again from the dead, He gives us new life."

NEXT, begin a discussion around understanding what it means that trusting in Jesus is the beginning of a relationship with God. Have a student read Romans 5:6-11. Ask something like:

- **Remember when we talked earlier about how relationships can be broken? What does this passage say about how our relationship with God was broken?**
 - Answer: We were ungodly (verse 6) and sinners (verse 8), rebelling against God; we were God's enemies (verse 10).
- **According to this passage, what did God do to repair our relationship with Him?**
 - Answer: Christ died for us (verses 6-8); God saved us from His wrath (verse 9); God reconciled us to Himself (verse 10).
- **According to this passage, what did we do to repair our relationship with God?**
 - Answer: Absolutely nothing. Verse 8 stresses that Christ died for us "while we were still sinners."

THEN, help students understand that discipleship (following Jesus) includes a personal relationship with God. Ask something like:

- **What does it mean to be "reconciled" to someone?**
 - Answer: Two people who were at odds with one another are reconciled when their friendship is restored.
- **Paul says that because we are reconciled to God through Jesus' death, we can "boast" (some translations say "rejoice") in God, which is another way to say we can rejoice in a relationship with God. What are some things we should celebrate about being in a relationship with God?**
 - Answers will vary. Try to coax answers from the group beyond just "We get to go to heaven," such as the fact that God is for us, that He cares for us, He listens to us, He guides us, etc.

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

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students evaluate where they are in their faith relationship with God.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need to either write on the dry erase board or arrange to print or otherwise display the following phrases so the group can see them: "Not really interested;" "Ready to ask some questions;" "Ready to say 'yes' to Jesus;" and "Imperfectly following Jesus."

FIRST, explain to the group that God desires to have a relationship with each person in the group. Have someone read Romans 5:7-8 again. Say something like:

- **No matter what you think of yourself, there is no doubt that God wants to be in a relationship with you. When you were at your lowest point and had your back turned to God, He loved you enough to die for you. In front of you, you see four statements: "Not really interested," "Ready to ask some questions," "Ready to say 'yes' to Jesus," and "Imperfectly following Jesus." We are going to have about two minutes of silence to give us some space to consider which of these four statements best describes where you are with God. At the end of two minutes, I'm going to ask you to choose one statement that best describes you. Whether you share that statement or not will be up to you. If you want, you can keep it between you and God.**

NEXT, give students who are willing to share time to share their response. Ask follow-up questions as you see fit. Then, ask something like:

- **No matter where you are in the journey, it's good to just be honest with God and yourself about it. Does anyone want to share which card they chose, and why?**
 - Answers will vary. Have a leader model if needed. Make sure you thank students who are willing to share.
- **Has your response to this exercise changed recently? If we did this just a few weeks or months ago, would your answer have been different?**
 - Answers will vary. Allow space to share.
- **Does anyone want to share that they chose "Ready to say 'yes' to Jesus"?**
 - Answers will vary. If anyone does, celebrate! Make sure you help that student with their next step, such as talking with a pastor or their parents.

THEN, open the floor one more time for anyone to ask questions about a relationship with God. Say something like:

- **No matter where you are in a relationship with God, know that He is crazy about you! The reason we can be in a relationship with Him is simple: He wants to be in a relationship with us. Does anyone have anything else to share about their relationship with God or questions about what it means to begin a relationship with God?**
 - Answers will vary. Allow space for students to speak up if they want.

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

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- 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.