

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?

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.

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 14 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 14, 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, 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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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

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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**

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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.

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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.

- 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.

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