

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 10: THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP,
PART 1: DISCIPLES INFLUENCE CULTURE

What we want students to learn: That Jesus expects His followers to dramatically impact the world around them in His name.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To be intentional about how they can be "salt and light" in their immediate, day-to-day contexts.

Scripture Focus: Matthew 5:13-16

Supporting Scripture: 1 Peter 2:12

Overview: When we ask what the purpose of discipleship is, there are quite a few answers. Not the least of which is the concept of us impacting culture for the sake of Christ. As disciples, we are called to influence the world around us, all for the cause of Christ. We do this when we live as disciples in a world in dire need of Christ.

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 10 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 10, 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:** 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.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 10: THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP,
PART 1: DISCIPLES INFLUENCE CULTURE

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

Our passage comes from one of the most famous sermons in history, The Sermon on the Mount. Jesus has just finished talking about the idea of “the beatitudes,” and He has challenged what were the social norms of the time with this portion of the sermon. Jesus told the audience that there is blessing that awaits those who are in need, and this is vital for what Christ is about to teach in our passage. Jesus delivers the message of comfort to His audience before He brings this challenge in our passage today.

THE MAIN POINT

Today we are going to look at Matthew 5:13-16 to understand the challenge that comes from being salt in a world lacking godly flavor, or light in a dark place. Students will see the dramatic impact that Christ should have on our own lives so that we may influence the world for Him. They are called to live in a manner that is noticeable, but to highlight Jesus instead of themselves. This lesson will help them understand the need for intentional Christian living, as well as some practical ways in which they can begin to live intentionally.

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 help students see how easy it can be to spot a difference in something, as well as how difficult it can be to spot differences at times.
- **Set-Up:** If you are using presentation software, then go online and Google search “Spot the Difference Pictures”. Head to images and select five to six images that range in difficulty. Insert these images into the beginning of your presentation. If you are not using presentation software, then print off your images and divide your class into smaller groups to look over each image.

FIRST, divide your students into two teams (guys vs. girls, left side vs. right side of the room, etc.) and tell them that you are going to begin with a little competition this morning. If you have printed the pictures, then make sure that they are timing themselves to spot differences for the sake of the competition. Explain to them that there will be two images placed on the screen that look similar, but that they have one or two differences. Once a team identifies the difference they can raise their hand and tell the class what difference they noticed.

Tell the group that this is going to get more difficult as the round goes on, but that there are differences in every picture. It would also be a helpful idea to go ahead and know the differences yourself before you begin this activity as the teacher.

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 10: THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP,
PART 1: DISCIPLES INFLUENCE CULTURE

NEXT, put the pictures up one by one until the difference is spotted. Once you have cycled through the images, declare the team that got the most right in the fastest time the winner.

FINALLY, ask the students how difficult it was to spot the differences on each of the pictures. Ask them if it got more difficult over time as the pictures got harder. Explain to them that today's lesson is about being different from the world around us and that according to Scripture, we should look different than those right next to us. Say something like:

- **It is amazing how difficult it is sometimes to spot the differences between two pictures like the ones we looked at today. Today's lesson talks about how Scripture challenges us as Christians to be different from the world around us. This difference is not meant to highlight how good you are; it's to highlight Jesus in your life. Today we are looking at what it means to be salt and light for the Kingdom of God.**

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

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To show students that Christ calls us to be dramatically different from the world so that we may highlight the impact of Christ in our 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 can look along with a friend.

FIRST, have students begin by brainstorming what the word influence means. If this is too difficult or they are struggling, then have them think of people that are influential in the world. Once they have compiled a list of people, ask something like:

- **What makes these people influential?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **So, if that's the case, what does the word "influence" mean?**
 - Answers will vary. The definition of influence is: "the action or process of producing effects on the actions, behavior, opinions of others."¹

Explain that every person has influence in life, whether it is on family, friends, or even strangers. The actions and decisions that we make have an impact on our surroundings whether we realize it or not. As Christ-followers our influence is not to be for our own gain, but for the kingdom of God. Say something like:

- **The question is not whether you have influence or not, but rather who or what are you using your influence for. People can often use their influence for personal gain, but we find in Scripture that Jesus challenges us to use our influence for something much greater than ourselves.**

THEN, tell your students that you are going to be looking in the book of Matthew where Jesus laid out this challenge for influence. Ask your students to turn to Matthew 5:13-16. While students are finding the passage, be sure to give them some background on the passage they are about to read using the Bible Background portion of the lesson. Be sure to include that Jesus understood the difficulty of this challenge, but that He offers comfort before the challenge.

NEXT, read or have a student read Matthew 5:13-16. After the passage has been read, have a short discussion with

¹ Definition from merriam-webster.com.

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 10: THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP,
PART 1: DISCIPLES INFLUENCE CULTURE

students using questions like the ones below:

- **When looking at verse 13, what do you think of when you think salt?**
 - o Answer: Something that adds flavor to something else.
- **Have you ever had an experience biting into something that didn't have enough salt? What was it like?**
 - o Answer: It can be very bland and can sometimes leave a bad taste in our mouth. It often leaves us wanting something more.
- **What does Jesus mean when He says that un-seasoned salt is good for nothing and it should be thrown out?**
 - o Answer: When salt it loses its flavor, it loses one of its main purposes.

Tell the students that salt was essential for the people Jesus was speaking to because it was used to preserve meat as well as add flavor. Have them re-read verses 14-15 and then follow up with some questions like:

- **Why do lighthouses keep their light at the top of the house?**
 - o Answer: The range and impact of the light is strengthened the higher up the light is placed.
- **What good is there for a light that is hidden under a basket?**
 - o Answer: A hidden light is pointless because the light is contained and kept away from its surroundings.
- **What effect does light have in dark places? What happens to darkness when light is present?**
 - o Answer: The light removes the darkness. It stands in drastic opposition to darkness. As darkness conceals a place, light reveals the place.

NEXT, instruct students to think about how these two images of light and salt stand together. Ask something like:

- **What do salt and light have in common?**
 - o Answer: They are both difference makers on the places in which they are found.
- **Why did Jesus use these images as examples?**
 - o Answer: Jesus used real examples that were relevant to the people so that they would understand the message He was trying to teach.
- **Why does Jesus want us to be salt and light in the world?**
 - o Answer: Because we are to be difference makers for the world in which we live as Christ-followers.

Explain to students that both images Jesus used stand in dramatic opposition to their surroundings. Re-read verse 16 in the passage. Tell them that Jesus wants us to stand as a dramatic difference to the world around us, but not for our sake. Jesus is granting us influence so that we may have an impact for His Kingdom and His glory. Ask the students something like the following questions:

- **What are some ways that we are supposed to be different than the world around us?**
 - o Answers may vary. This can be showing kindness to people that don't normally receive kindness, forgiving friends when they have done something wrong, or even asking for forgiveness from someone when we have messed up.
- **What are some ways that we can have our light shine before others?**
 - o Answers may vary. We must seek out ways to show the difference in our lives that is Christ. We should look for opportunities to care for others through kind words, helping hands, or even by not partaking in things that others think are cool such as bullying, cursing, etc.
- **What are some ways that we can give glory to God through our good deeds so that we do not draw attention to ourselves?**

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 10: THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP,
PART 1: DISCIPLES INFLUENCE CULTURE

- o Answers may vary. The key to this portion is that our actions and light do not come from ourselves. This difference in us is Christ, and that is the difference that we are to show to others. We need to help people understand that we are doing good things not because we are good, but because Christ is good in us.

THEN, tell students that the activity that we used at the beginning was not simply for fun. The differences between each picture became harder to spot over time because the pictures became more similar. Explain that the same thing can happen in our lives as Christ-followers if we are not careful. If we do not keep ourselves rooted in the word of God and prayer, then we also might lose our salty flavor for the Lord.

NEXT, tell students that you are going to look at another place in scripture that talks about living a different life than those around us in 1 Peter 2:12. Explain to students as they turn to the passage that Peter is doing ministry about 20 years after Christ's resurrection and the truth from Matthew 5 is repeated here.

THEN, read or have a student read 1 Peter 2:12. Ask the students something like the following questions:

- **What words do Peter use to describe the actions and conduct of Christ-followers?**
 - o Answer: Honorable, good, and bringing Glory to God.
- **Why would people be speaking against Christ-followers as evildoers?**
 - o Answer: Because the Christ-followers are living their lives in a way that is drastically different than culture. If the Christ-followers were living the same way as non-believers, then there would be no difference for them to call evil or different.

NEXT, explain to students that Christ and Scripture clearly call us to live differently than the world around us so that we may use our influence for Christ. This influence for Christ can be hidden when we choose to not be lights for Christ, but instead we highlight ourselves. We want to explore some practical ways that we can be "salt and light" in our day-to-day lives.

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

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students understand that their lives can look different and have an impact for Christ even in their normal activities.
- **Set-Up:** We are going to highlight three main activities that can be used to start having an influence for Christ today. Divide the board in half with two titles at the top of each half. The first half will say Salt and Light, and the other half will say Bushel.

FIRST, tell students that this activity is designed to show them that to be salt and light we must be intentional about how we live our lives every day. Explain to them that we are going to talk about three areas that they partake in every day that could be used as an influence for Christ.

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 10: THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP,
PART 1: DISCIPLES INFLUENCE CULTURE

NEXT, tell them that as we talk about each area we are going to put examples of how we can be Salt and Light in those areas, and how we can just hide our influence under a bushel in those areas. Say something like this:

- **We have a choice as believers when we partake in any activity to just be ourselves, or we can use it as an opportunity to be an influence for Jesus. We are going to talk about a few different things that you do every day that could be used as an influencing opportunity for Christ. We are also going to show how the temptation exists to not be an influence for Christ in those areas as well so that we know how to not hide our light under a bushel.**

The first area that you are going to ask students about is conversations with friends. Ask the students:

- **What are some ways that we can just hide our light under a bushel with friends in our conversations?**
 - Answers will vary. Some possible answers include gossip, course language, and even talk about how much we are upset with our parents.
- **What are some ways that we can make our conversations with friends an influence opportunity?**
 - Answers will vary. Some possible answers include inviting our friends to church, telling them about something cool that you have read in your Bible lately, telling them let's not gossip because the Bible tells us not to, speaking kindly about others because Jesus loves them as well.

The second area that you can discuss is through humor. Ask the students:

- **What are some ways that we hide our light under a bushel when using humor?**
 - Answers will vary. Possible answers include crude jokes, make fun of other people.
- **What are some ways that we can make our conversations with friends an influence opportunity?**
 - Answers will vary. Some possible answers include defending others who are being attacked, finding jokes that don't involve inappropriate content or cursing, choosing to no be funny at the expense of anyone else.

The final area that you can discuss is through respect of adults. Ask the students:

- **What are some ways that we hide our light under a bushel when it comes to dealing with adults?**
 - Answers will vary. Some possible answers include making fun of adults or talking poorly about them behind their back.
- **What are some ways that we can use opportunities to deal with adults as an influence point?**
 - Answers will vary. Some possible answers include showing respect to adults even when we don't agree, defending adults when our friends try to disrespect or gossip about them, offering kind words to adults and elders when we talk to them.

THEN, explain to students that being an influence for Christ does not necessarily involve wearing Christian t-shirts every day or even talking only about Jesus in every conversation. Tell students that even Christians can enjoy sports and humor and art and music, but the call of Scripture is to live differently so that we may be an influence for Christ. Tell students that Christ has given them opportunities in their lives every day to be an influence for Him. We must use these opportunities so that we remain the "salt and light" for the kingdom of God.

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

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 10: THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP,
PART 1: DISCIPLES INFLUENCE CULTURE

- 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.