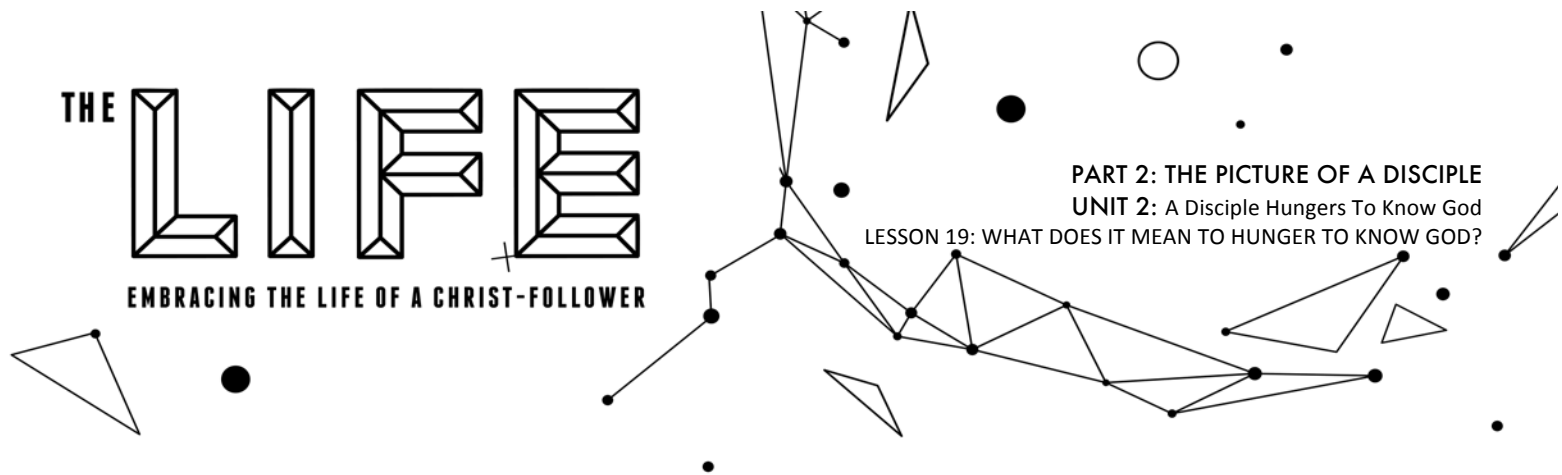




What we want students to learn: That as Christ-followers, we should have a strong desire, deep within us, to know more and more of God.

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.

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 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.

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.

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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?

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

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- **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:

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- 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.

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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

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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.

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- 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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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.