

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE
UNIT 2: A DISCIPLE HUNGERS TO KNOW GOD
LESSON 21: KNOWING GOD
THROUGH THE BIBLE, PART 1

What we want students to learn: That the primary way God has chosen to make Himself known to us is through His Word.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To evaluate their practices as it pertains to regularly meeting God in the Bible.

Scripture Focus: Psalm 119:1-10

Supporting Scripture: Jeremiah 29:13

Overview: Having a hunger to know God is a mark of a disciple. And this hunger is most fully satisfied when we meet God in the pages of His Word. Seeking to know God more through studying Scripture is a primary way in which we draw closer to Him. This lesson is the first of two where you will challenge students to consider their behaviors and attitudes toward spending meaningful time with God in His Word.

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 21 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 21, 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:** God inspired various authors to write a majority of the Psalms in their 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 remain 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).

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- **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 book of Psalms is sometimes known as the "songbook" of the Bible. While we don't know the author of all the psalms, we believe that David wrote more of them than anyone else. We can imagine David sitting by a tree, singing the words we are reading. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the entire Bible. And, it's all about the Bible. This is not unintentional. God's Word is absolutely crucial to our lives as believers.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point of this lesson is that having a hunger to know God is a mark of a disciple. And this hunger is most fully satisfied when we meet God in the pages of His Word, because it is one of the primary ways God has chosen to reveal Himself to us. In this psalm, David celebrates the richness and value of God's Word in the life of those that trust and follow the Lord.

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

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about how they respond to certain subjects, and how much they know about subjects and various categories.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need the list of various subjects and categories below.

FIRST, explain to students they will be playing a game called "Name It." Then explain these game rules. Have 4-5 students come up in front of the large group. (In a small group setting, simply go around the circle.) Begin by naming a category out loud. Then go to each participating student and give him or her a brief moment to name someone or something that is related to that particular category. Students cannot repeat what someone else has said. They cannot say "Um, uh, etc.," or pause for longer than five seconds without responding. If they do any of these, they are out. This is an elimination game.

Here are some categories that can be used. You could also place the categories in a hat or bucket so you don't even know which one is being used until you draw it out of the hat or bucket.

1. Disney Princesses
2. NFL teams
3. Different types of soda
4. TV shows
5. Musical instruments
6. Boy names that start with M
7. Girl names that start with L

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8. Dog breeds
9. Ice cream toppings
10. Colors
11. Chip flavors
12. Fast food restaurants
13. One Direction (or another bands) songs

*Whether you use all of these or not, be sure and end with this category: Books of the Bible.

THEN, say something like this:

- **A game like this is usually exciting for some and can be frustrating for others. Your experience with the different categories will dictate how well you responded, and if you were interested in certain categories more than others. Disney princesses are exciting for some and irrelevant for others. Some of the categories you knew well. With others, after a turn or two, you may have struggled to say another answer. Today one of our main goals to consider our behaviors and attitudes toward spending meaningful time with God in His Word. Typically, saying "Turn your Bibles to . . ." doesn't get the same excitement as asking "How about those (fill in with a sports team)!" You might be able to tell me every single NFL team and their starting quarterback, but might not know much about books of the Bible.**

FINALLY, explain to students that one of the primary ways God has chosen to make Himself known to us is through His Word. Explain that as those who are seeking to live as disciples of Jesus, we must consistently evaluate our practices as it pertains to regularly meeting God in the Bible.

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

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students see that seeking to know God more through studying Scripture is a primary way in which we draw closer to Him.
- **Set Up:** Make sure students have a Bible or a Bible app that they are able to look along with a friend. They will also benefit from having something to write with and on.

FIRST, lead students to read Psalm 119:1-10 quietly to themselves. To get students really diving into the passage have them highlight or underline any phrases that stand out to them. Right before students begin reading, make sure you take a few moments to provide the context for the passage using the Bible Background.

THEN, explain and reiterate one of the main goals of this session. Say something like:

- **Having a hunger to know God is a mark of a disciple. And this hunger is most fully satisfied when we meet God in the pages of His Word.**

NEXT, read or have a student read Psalm 119:1-3 aloud. Then, lead them in a short discussion. Ask something like:

- **What do you think it means when someone is "blameless"?**

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o Answer: According to the dictionary, the word blame means “innocent of wrongdoing.” Does this mean we are perfect or more spiritual than others? Absolutely not! In this context, walking blamelessly is a matter of character and of the heart.

- **What are some ways we can pursue walking blamelessly in our everyday lives?**

o Answers will vary. Notice the end of verses 2 and 3. Verse 2 ends with “seek Him with their whole heart.” Verse 3 ends with “walk in His ways.” While the practical ways of walking blameless might be shown in various ways, we know this for sure: it is impossible to walk blameless if we are not seeking God in His Word.

THEN, read or have a student read Psalm 119:4. When students have finished, lead them in a short discussion. Ask something like:

- **Think about the idea of God’s Word being “fully obeyed.” If we want to “fully obey” His Word, how should we approach spending time in Scripture?**

o Answers will vary. Some potential answers could be: consistently, actively, intently, persistently, or with determination.

- **Why is it so important for Christ-followers to seek to fully obey God’s Word? What does it communicate to a lost a dying world when we’re inconsistent in this?**

o Answer: Christ-followers should seek to consistently and confidently keep the commandments of Christ. Simply, we must do what He says. In order for us to do what He says, we must know and care about what He says. When we’re inconsistent in this, we confuse an already confused world. Remember, a primary way God has chosen to make Himself known to us is through His Word.

NEXT, read or have a student read Psalm 119:5-8. Lead them in a short discussion by asking something like:

- **Why do you think David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, put an emphasis on praising with “an upright heart?”**

o Answer: The heart is the heart of the matter. Remind students that having a hunger to know God is a mark of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. And this hunger is most fully satisfied when we meet God in the pages of His Word. Reading God’s Word should be done out of passion not duty and obligation.

- **Why can it be so easy to slip into lazy or apathetic attitudes toward engaging with the Bible?**

o Answer: God desires for us to live lives of passion for Him. When we start to treat spiritual disciplines such as reading our Bible as a “checklist” then it is easy to slip into a lazy, apathetic mode. To fight this temptation we must constantly crave the things of Christ, and praise Him for what He has done and continues to do in our lives.

THEN, read or have a student read Psalm 119:9-10. This is the heart of this passage. Have students underline verses 9 and 10 in their Bibles or highlight it on their phones. Say something like:

- **Most Christ-followers would probably tell you with their mouth that they desire to live pure lives and want to fully seek after the things of Christ. However, when you follow that up by asking them how much time they spend in God’s Word in order to make this a reality, you might get a blank look. We can’t really try to live pure, holy lives outside of God’s Word. We can’t say we desire to know God, but not engage with Him in His Word. It doesn’t make sense.**

FINALLY, explain to students that living pure lives is a difficult task in our culture today, no doubt. It is difficult but it is not impossible. Help them again see the connection between living pure lives and time spent in God’s Word. Then ask something like:

- **What is danger in living “half-hearted Christianity?”**

o Answer: It is not biblical Christianity. In the New Testament, Jesus has strong words about lukewarm Christianity. We must seek God with all of our heart.

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- **Why can it be easy to “stray” as verse 10 speaks to?**

- Answer: It is easy to wander because we are fallen human beings that are susceptible to all of the distractions that come our way. However, this cannot be and should not be an excuse.

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *The Last Word*.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students step back and evaluate the actual time they spend in God’s Word.
- **Set-Up:** You’ll want to use a dry-erase board, or some other means to help students visualize this activity.

FIRST, explain to students that as you begin to wrap up your lesson, you want to give them an opportunity to evaluate the time they spend in God’s Word.

NEXT, read or have a student read Jeremiah 29:13 out loud. While it’s being read, write the verse on a dry-erase board for them. Then, say something like this:

- **Notice the phrase “with all your heart.” Having a hunger to know God is a major part of what it means to follow Jesus. The main way we grow and cultivate this hunger is by meeting God in the Bible.**

THEN, have students write down on a sheet of paper (or have it typed out on a sheet of paper for them), “In the past 7 days, I have read God’s Word _____ times. In this time frame I read approximately _____ verses/passages. One of the main things, a takeaway or two, I learned while reading God’s Word was _____. As a result of reading God’s Word I had a heart of _____.”

Encourage the students to be honest in their evaluation. This isn’t intended to shame them if they haven’t been spending time in Scripture. They don’t have to show or talk about their answers to anyone if they don’t want to.

THEN, ask something like:

- **What was revealing about this exercise? What was hard about it? What, if anything, came naturally to you?**
 - Answers will vary. Spend some time walking through their answers and considering practical steps to get them more on track with spending time reading God’s Word.

FINALLY, remind students that it is crucial to evaluate their practices as it pertains to regularly meeting God in the Bible. Say something like:

- **Jesus desires for you to know Him on an intimate, personal level. It is impossible to know God apart from His Word. It is that simple, yet hard to pursue consistently.**

Encourage students that all believers, at times, struggle with having consistent, meaningful time in God’s Word. Life happens and we all get busy. Satan would love for us to be so busy that we forget often to engage God in His Word. Spend some time this week making a great effort for this to not be the case.

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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.