

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
Unit 3: A Disciple Embraces Christian Community  
LESSON 27: DISCIPLES "DO LIFE" TOGETHER

**What we want students to learn:** That embracing Christian community means a willingness to embrace a life lived in close connection with other Christ-followers.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To apply what they have learned about living in Christian community to how they interact with one another, both inside and outside of church.

**Scripture Focus:** Ephesians 4:25-32

**Supporting Scripture:** Acts 2:44; Hebrews 10:24-25

**Overview:** You started this unit by looking at a description of Christian community in Acts 2. You're going to continue to build on this picture by going back and pulling out specific aspects of this description. In this lesson, you're going to dig a little deeper into what it means to live life together. In Acts 2:44, Luke says that the Jerusalem Christians were "together" and had all things in common. In other words, their lives were intertwined. Paul gives us a great picture of this in Ephesians 4. Your students will use Paul's words here as an example of how to live in community with one another.

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## 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 27 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 27, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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## 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:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians. Of course we know Paul as the one-time chief

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enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.

- **Time frame:** Ephesians was probably written by Paul from prison in the latter years of his life, sometime around 60 or 61 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul had a very close relationship with the church in Ephesus. It seems as if the motivation for the letter was simply that the church would know how he was faring in his imprisonment. But, true to form, Paul couldn't help but teach. The letter covers general teaching on the work of Christ to redeem believers, unity among believers, and how believers are supposed to conduct themselves.

## THE SETTING

Paul wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus during his imprisonment in Rome. He begins the letter by explaining the Gospel, detailing all that Christ has done to accomplish salvation on our behalf. He reminds the Christians who they are in Christ. Paul then told them how these truths should be lived out in the church, the home, and the community. Leading up to our focus passage, Christ-followers are reminded that they can no longer walk around living like unbelievers because they have been given a new self through the Spirit. The new life in Christ is then described in contrast with the old way of living.

## THE MAIN POINT

A disciple of Jesus will live among others in a way that reflects Christ. Our love for Christ and His Spirit within us should be evident in the way we interact with others, particularly our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Through the Gospel, Jesus united radically different groups of people into one body to work together. As members of that body of Christ, we are to live lives in close connection with other Christ-followers. We cannot live the Christian life the way God has called us to if we are not doing life together with other believers.

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## 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**.

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## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** Get students thinking about the importance of community.
- **Set-Up:** You will need a blindfold and objects to make a small obstacle course (this could be the chairs in the room that students typically sit on).

FIRST, get one student to volunteer to walk through an obstacle course blindfolded. Have that student briefly leave the room while you set up a small obstacle course. As you set up the small obstacle course, explain to the remaining students that they cannot say or do anything to help the blindfolded volunteer complete the obstacle course.

THEN, blindfold the volunteer and bring him or her into the classroom. Explain that he or she must get from point A to point B blindfolded, without bumping into any obstacles. Allow the student to attempt this.

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NEXT, get another student to volunteer to walk through the obstacle course blindfolded (or use the same volunteer). Have the volunteer leave the room while you give instructions to the remaining students. Explain to the remaining students that this time they can help the blindfolded person in any way, whether that be telling him where to go or physically taking him by the arm and guiding him to the endpoint.

THEN, bring the blindfolded volunteer into the room and explain that he or she must get from point A to point B without bumping into any obstacles. The remaining students should help the blindfolded volunteer, working together to get from point A to point B. After the student successfully gets from point A to point B with the help of others, ask something like the following questions:

- **Which trip through the obstacle course was easier, the first or second?**
  - Answer: The second.
- **What difference did it make when everyone was able to work together?**
  - Answer: Having help made it possible to navigate the obstacle course.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **The game we just played can actually teach us a lot about life. It is difficult to do things on your own. When there is no one to help you out, to encourage you or walk with you, you can hit a lot of obstacles. It's difficult to get where you are supposed to go. God created us to work together and do life in community with others. In our lesson today, we are going to look at what it means to live a life in close connection with other Christ-followers.**

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

## THE MAIN EVENT

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- **Goal:** Help students understand that embracing Christian community means a willingness to embrace a life lived in close connection with other Christ-followers.
- **Set Up:** You may benefit from a dry-erase board, but it's not critical. Make sure students have a Bible or that they are able to look along with a friend.

FIRST, remind students that you have been studying Christian community the last couple of weeks. Draw their attention to Acts 2:44, which they studied in Lesson 25. Read or have a student read Acts 2:44. Say something like:

- **In our lesson today we are going to build on this idea of Christian community. We will examine what doing life together with other Christ-followers looks like.**

THEN, ask students to turn to Ephesians 4. As they are turning to Ephesians 4, take a moment to provide context for this passage using information from the Bible Background. Then read or have a student read Ephesians 4:25-32.

NEXT, explain that there are several contrasts in this passage. As you look at this passage more in depth, make mental notes (or jot them dot on a dry-erase board) of the contrasts to get a better understanding of what Christian community looks like, and how it might differ from the world. These contrasts show what members of Christian community do and do not do as a result of the Gospel changing their lives. Ask something like:

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- **What is the first contrast you see in this passage?**
  - Answer: Put away falsehood, speak truthfully.
- **Usually when something comes first in a list, it means that it is of great importance. Why do you think speaking truthfully is listed first in this passage about how we are to interact with others?**
  - Answer: Jesus said that He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). If disciples are to look like Christ, we must also express truth. Our words should always point to truth because the truth is in Jesus (Ephesians 4:21). If people know that they can trust us to tell the truth in every day life, they are more likely to trust the Gospel when we share it with them.

THEN, say something like:

- **According to this Scripture, one reason we should speak the truth with one another is because we are members of one another. This might sound like a really weird concept, but we have to think of Christians like a human body. Each Christian is a member of the body of Christ. Just as you have different members of your body (your arms, your legs, your eyes, etc., each with its own special function), Christ-followers all have different roles and functions that help the church work together to accomplish a goal. We are members of one another, the same body of Christ, and we need one another. We need to work together in order for God to be glorified and His Kingdom built up.**

Ask something like:

- **How does knowing that Christians are members of one another change how you see other Christ-followers?**
  - Answers will vary. It should cause us to value and honor other believers, and to know that they've been put in our lives for our good.

NEXT, explain that as members of one another, it means that we must "do life" with other believers. As we continue to study this passage, we will unpack what that means. Ask something like:

- **This passage says that we are to be angry and not sin. How is it possible to be angry and not sin? What does this look like?**

◦ Answer: We can be angry without sin when we are angry over the things we know God hates.

There are injustices in the world that rob God of glory and go against His commands. However, we must be very careful because too often our own prejudices and perspectives cloud our judgment.

- **What does the Scripture mean by "do not let the sun go down on your anger?" What does that have to do with giving the devil an opportunity?**

◦ Answer: When we are angry with others, it is important that we deal with the issue and seek to resolve it quickly. We should also confess our sin of anger to God and not allow anger to continue sitting in our heart. When we hold on to anger, it quickly leads to other sins that allow Satan to have a foothold in our hearts.

- **How can unresolved anger hurt a community of believers? The church?**

◦ Answer: If we are distracted by being angry with one another, we will not be able to work together for the Kingdom of God. We will be more focused on our problems than on working together to reach a lost and dying world for Christ. Our witness to the outside world will suffer.

- **What is the big contrast in verse 28?**

◦ Answer: Do not steal, do honest work. This again goes back to verse 25. Part of putting away falsehood is by doing honest work.

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- According to the text, Christ-followers should do honest work so that they can have something to share with others are in need. How does sharing with others show true Christian community? How does this reinforce the idea that we are members of one another?

- Answer: When we share with other believers, we acknowledge that we are one body of Christ. We see fellow Christ-followers as family and we do not want to see a part of our family suffering.

THEN, explain that the words we say to others have huge impact. Our speech should be a reflection of a heart that is captivated by Jesus. If He has changed our hearts, our speech should be changed as well. As we do life with other believers, we must understand that our words matter. Ask something like:

- **Looking at verse 29, what should our speech be like?**
  - Answer: Not corrupting. Our speech should build others up, fit the occasion and give grace to those who hear.
- **What type of damage can corrupting talk do to a community of Christ-followers?**
  - Answers will vary. It can cause division within the body of believers, which is contrary to what God has called His church to be.
- **How can we build others up with our speech? Give some examples.**
  - Answer: Words that builds up others bring truth and love; they are words of encouragement, affirmation, and kindness.

NEXT, explain that the way we treat others can actually grieve the Holy Spirit. Say something like:

- **As members of one another, the way Christians treat each other is really important. We are to live lives in close connection, working together to build up the Kingdom of God. When we do not live as God has called us to live, we can actually grieve the Holy Spirit. Think about how upset you would be if your two best friends were always fighting each other or just downright hated one another. This is sort of how God feels, except its much bigger. When two of His children are fighting or not showing grace to one another, it grieves His heart. The encouragement we get from this passage of Scripture is to live in close connection with other believers in such a way that we show Christ to one another, rather than breaking God's heart by treating one another badly.**

THEN, ask something like:

- **We see a huge contrast of heart attitudes in verses 31 and 32. What are we to put away, and how are we to act instead?**
  - Answer: Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice are to be put away. We are to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving.

FINALLY, explain that when we do life with others, the characteristics mentioned in verse 31 should not be true of our relationships. We should not be getting together with other believers to speak bitterly against another. We should not spend time with our friends slandering others. We should not be plotting how to exact revenge on someone who has hurt us. Say something like:

- **Rather than the characteristics mentioned in verse 31, the attitude of Jesus should also mark the attitudes of His followers; these are the characteristics we see in verse 32. If there is anyone who should**

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show kindness and a tender heart to others, it is the one who has experienced the love and grace of Christ. When you understand the ugliness of your sin and the cost Jesus paid to make you right with God, it is hard to be unwilling to forgive and hold any bitterness in your heart toward one another. When you understand that it is God's kindness toward you that has led to your repentance (Romans 2:4), it is harder for us to be unkind to another person that Christ has died for. We are fellow sinners, bought with the same blood of Christ. His kindness, grace, love and forgiveness should freely flow from one to another. These are to be the marks of Christian community. The world should look at us and see that there is a distinct difference in the way we treat others, especially in how we treat fellow Christ-followers. When we treat one another poorly, we hurt our witness and the members of our own body.

Ask students if there are any questions about the Scriptures that have been studied. Then move to *The Last Word*.

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To have students apply what they have learned about living in Christian community to how they interact with one another, both inside and outside of church.
- **Set-Up:** None.

FIRST, have the students think back through some of the contrasts that you discussed during the lesson. Ask something like:

- **When you think about how you regularly treat other believers, do you do some of the things that Paul encouraged us not to do? Or do you treat others the way Paul says we should in this passage? Which areas do you struggle with the most? Which ones come easier to you?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **Based on what we looked at today, how are you doing with living in close connection with other Christ-followers? Are you doing life with others the way God's Word says you should? If not, what needs to change?**
  - Answers will vary.

THEN, have the students spend some time reflecting on their answers to the previous question. Ask something like:

- **If we're truly going to "do life" together and live the way the Lord is calling us to live in this passage, what are some good first steps we can take? If it's not something we're regularly doing, how do we get started?**
  - Answers will vary.

NEXT, read or have a student read Hebrews 10:24-25. Ask something like:

- **This is an incredibly practical passage. Do you think this is a good starting point? Explain.**
  - Answers will vary.
- **Why is regularly meeting together important for Christian community?**
  - Answer: How are we going to live in Christian community if we aren't around each other? Sure, we hang out with our brothers and sisters in Christ outside of church, but having a regular time to get

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together and learn and worship together is key for us growing closer to Christ together.

- **What difference would it make in our lives if we were really committed to spurring each other to good works and encouraging one another? Do you think it would make a difference in our speech, anger, truthfulness, etc.? How so? Explain.**
  - Answers will vary. We all love being encouraged. We all like positive reinforcement in our lives. If we truly committed to spend time encouraging one another and lifting each other up, Christian community would come much more naturally to us.
- **What are some practical things you can do from this point forward to encourage the growth of community within our youth group and church?**
  - Answers will vary. Being committed to regularly meeting together is a good place to start. Being intentional about encouraging people around you, not just your close friends. Taking the lead on prompting others toward love and good works and setting a good example of both are important.

FINALLY, remind students that embracing Christian community means a willingness to embrace a life lived in close connection with other Christ-followers. The Gospel affects how we relate to others, especially other believers. Life is no longer about self, but dying to self for the sake of the body of Christ because we are members of one another.

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](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).