

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE
UNIT 4: A DISCIPLE ENGAGES WITH
HIS OR HER SURROUNDINGS

LESSON 32: THE MOTIVATION FOR ENGAGING
WITH OUR SURROUNDINGS

What we want students to learn: That through engaging with their surroundings, they would ultimately lead people to Christ.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To envision specific people in their lives who don't have a saving relationship with Jesus, and to practically consider how they might engage with these people in order to draw them closer to Christ.

Scripture Focus: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Overview: Paul understood a truth that should motivate us as Christ-followers: we should view all our interactions with others as potential opportunities to lead people to saving faith in Christ. It's at the heart of what it means to be a Christ-follower, and what it means to engage with the world that surrounds your students. Paul gives us a great model here as far as how we're supposed to view others. Paul isn't saying here to lose our center, or change our identities to relate to others. He's suggesting an "eyes wide open" approach that sees others for who they are, empathizes with them, and seeks to lead them closer to Christ as a result. It's a powerful teaching for students as they seek to follow Jesus in a discipleship relationship.

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 32 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 32, 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:** The Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to the Church in Corinth.
- **Time frame:** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus in the spring shortly before Pentecost. We are unsure of what year, but it was likely between 53 AD and 55 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written to a divided church to call them to become united for the sake of the Gospel. He was calling the church to lay down the things that divided them in order to fully embrace the one thing that is strong enough to unite them: Christ crucified!

WEEK 32: LESSON PLAN
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THE SETTING

Corinth was a busy city that was home to people from all sorts of different backgrounds and contexts. There were also a lot of people that traveled through Corinth. So, it was a place in desperate need of the good news of the Gospel. Paul had planted a church there and now they were struggling. All sorts of cultural influences had impacted their understanding of the Gospel and there was a lot of division within the church. Paul wrote them this letter to encourage unity in Christ. In the passage we're going to look at today, he talked to them about the importance of engaging those around them for the sake of the Gospel message.

THE MAIN POINT

The Lord has put us all in different contexts and consistently gives us opportunities to engage our surroundings for the sake of the Gospel. The main point of this lesson is that when we are intentional about engaging our surroundings, we have the chance to lead people to know Christ. However, if we just put our life on autopilot and don't pay attention to what's around us, we miss out on incredible chances to impact our world for Christ and see more people enter into a saving relationship with Him.

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 see how observant students are with their surroundings.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need to identify or bring into the room objects that teenagers can describe using only two descriptions of the objects.

FIRST, explain to students that they will basically be playing a game of "I Spy."

THEN, explain the rules after splitting up students into even teams. You'll be identifying an object in the room (big or small) and then simply say something like, "It's big and yellow" or "It's medium-sized and green." Then teams will go one by one and try to guess what the object is. Each team needs to elect one spokesperson but can work as a team to come up with the answer. Choose maybe eight or ten objects to play "I Spy" with. Make sure that the last object is your Bible.

NEXT, when you've finished, say something like this:

- **The reason we played an intro game like this is very simple: I wanted to see how well you engage in the surroundings that are around you. Some of you came up with what object I was describing with ease. Others, it took some time. For a game like this, it obviously doesn't matter. But how well we notice and engage with what's going on around us out in the real world is an important part of our walk with Christ. Today, one of our main goals is to help you realize that through engaging with your surroundings, you can ultimately lead people to Christ.**

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

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THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students see that through engaging with their surroundings, they will ultimately lead people to Christ.
- **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, read or have a student read 1 Corinthians 9:19-22. Be sure to take a few moments to provide the context for the passage using the Bible Background. Lead them in a short discussion about the passage that was just read by asking something like:

- **There is a foundational principle found in verse 19. It is inescapable. It's the call to be a servant. What does it mean, "to be a servant to all?"**
 - Answer: One of the big themes in Scripture for Christians is serving others. By serving others we can tangibly show the love of Christ. Paul begins this disciple-making passage reminding the believers at Corinth that he became a servant of all in order to teach people about Christ.
- **What main focus of Paul's do we see at the end of verse 19?**
 - Answer: Paul's heart was to reach more and more people. He was free from all, meaning he was not subject to them, yet made himself a servant to all, to win them to Christ. We can learn a lot from this model.
- **Think about this, what is your motivation behind serving others? For others to see Christ in you or for them simply to see you? Why is it so important to know where your heart is on this issue?**
 - Answer: If our motivation for serving others is wrong, we aren't actually serving people. We are simply using them to get what we want. Paul's disciple-making mission was very apparent in this passage. It was this: when I serve others, I build a relationship with others around me, and then it creates the possibility for Gospel conversation. When our heart is not in the right place, it will be hard to accomplish the Great Commission.
- **What is the main theme that is clearly seen in verses 20-21?**
 - Answer: Paul was willing to find the best means possible to reach people for Christ without doing anything that would affect his walk with Jesus or testimony.

Explain the two main takeaways we see in verse 20-22a. Say something like:

- **We can gather two main takeaways from verses 20-22a. First, Paul used culture and customs as an avenue to share the Gospel. Second, Paul did not compromise his witness for the sake of those customs and cultures. Paul strongly desired for the people to know that, in Christ, there was "no distinction between Jew and Gentile" anymore.**

NEXT, ask something like:

- **How important is the Gospel of Jesus Christ to you? What are you willing to sacrifice to make Christ known?**
 - Answers will vary. It will probably be helpful here to share a time in your life in which you gave up a personal preference in order to share Jesus with someone or minister to someone.
- **What do you think Paul means by, "I have become all things to all people"?**
 - Answer: It is important to note what Paul is not saying when he says, "I have become all things to all people." He is not saying: "act however the world acts in order to reach the world." What Paul is saying is that he sets his preferences aside for the sake of the Gospel. He sympathizes with the weak. He, a Jew, knew Jewish law and customs. Paul knew the law could not and did not save him but he also knew that was what was taught and thought in the Jewish culture.

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- **Let's talk about the phrase, "that I might save some." Do you think Paul thought he himself could save people? Explain. What did he mean?**
 - Answer: Paul knew that he couldn't save anyone. Only Jesus can save. What Paul did know was he was a vessel that God was using for His glory. We can speak life into people by speaking the word of God to people. As disciples of Jesus, we must know that only God save but it is our job to point people to Jesus, who can save.
- **Why do you think he uses the word "some"?**
 - Answer: If you have been a Christ-follower for any length of time, you know that not everyone is receptive to what you have to say as a Christ-follower. However, this is not an excuse to stop living for Jesus, to stop sharing your faith, or to stop engaging your surroundings.
- **Why do you believe some people hear the Gospel message, and ultimately decide to reject it?**
 - Answers will vary. Ultimately, people reject the Gospel message of Jesus Christ because of an unrepentant heart. Remind students of Paul's conversion experience and the fact that God can change any heart.

THEN, read or have a student read 1 Corinthians 9:23. Say/ask something like:

- **Paul makes an incredible ending statement in verse 23. He says, "I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings." What do you believe this verse communicates about Paul's life as a disciple of Christ? How should we respond to such a verse? What habits and practices should be in our lives that communicate to a lost a dying world, "I'm all in for Christ!"**
 - Answer: Answers will vary. However, at the heart of this question is the fact that our lives should represent what we believe. Our actions must back up our faith statements. While daily time spent in the Word, prayer, fellowship with believers are all great habits, what some students often miss is that when we are all in for Christ and His mission it will change the way we process decisions, who we hang out with, who we allow to influence us as well. It is more than a checklist; it is an entire lifestyle.

FINALLY, wrap up this portion of the lesson by explaining to students that all Christ-followers are on a journey to love and pursue Jesus more than anything else. We have days where our faith is strong and days in which we struggle, days in which Gospel conversations go well and others that we might think we have left people more confused than before we started. The key is to keep going, and to keep engaging the people that are around us with the life changing Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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 places they go and the people they are around.
- **Set-Up:** You'll want to use a dry-erase board, or some other means to help students visualize this activity. Students will also need a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.

FIRST, explain to students that as you begin to wrap up your lesson, you want to give them an opportunity to evaluate the places in which we most often are, and the people with whom we are with most often.

NEXT, write the word "Places" on the left side of the board and the word "People" on the right side. Then have students do the same on their paper. This is an individual activity and not a group activity.

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THEN, have students write down under "Places" the top five places they spend the most time. Common answers will be home, school, work, church, ball field, band, etc.

NEXT, have students write down under "People" the people they interact with at those places. Common answers will be name of friends, family members, teammates, etc.

THEN, say something like:

- **Finally, we want you to realize that the places you are at and the people you interact with are not on accident. God knew before the foundation of the world you would be interacting with these people in these environments. More than anything, we want you to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Next, we want you to realize the impact you can personally have with your family and friends for the Kingdom of Heaven. The places you are at and the people you are around matter.**

FINALLY, encourage your students to keep their piece of paper throughout the week and think about ways they can engage their surroundings for the sake of the Gospel. Encourage them to spend time praying over these people and places. Pray for the Lord to open doors and opportunities for them to talk more about Him and what He has done in their lives.

Make sure there are no closing thoughts and 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.