

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE  
UNIT 5: A DISCIPLE HAS A DESIRE TO  
WORSHIP GOD

LESSON 37: WORSHIP IS A RESPONSE  
TO WHO GOD IS

**What we want students to learn:** That worship is defined as a right response to an encounter with God.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To think about how they encounter God and how they respond to Him when they do.

**Scripture Focus:** Psalms 136:1-9

**Supporting Scripture:** Luke 7:11-17

**Overview:** For the Christ-follower, a desire to worship God goes way beyond what teenagers do in “big church” on Sunday mornings. For your students, worship should be understood as simply this: a right response to who God is. Your students’ lives intersect with God in many different ways. They encounter Him in His Word. They can think about Him on their way to school. They experience or are aware of blessings from God as they interact with friends and family. They see God in His creation, and so on. When they encounter God in these ways, when they behold Him, so to speak, worship is their response. This lesson will help introduce a 6-week unit on the truth that disciples long to worship the Lord.

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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 37 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 37, 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:** 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

**WEEK 37: LESSON PLAN**  
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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

It can be helpful to point out to your students that the Book of Psalms is really just a collection of people's thoughts about God. Sometimes they are praising God, sometimes they are confused, and sometimes they are angry. There are psalms about how God has helped people, how people have seen God work, and how people have chosen to follow Him. There are really honest psalms that are written by people who are struggling. Some of them were written by kings, others by worship leaders, and we don't know who wrote some of the others! The psalm we are examining in this lesson was most likely a congregational experience. It calls for a group of people to remember how God has loved and provided for them throughout the past.

## THE MAIN POINT

Psalm 136 begins with the words, "Give thanks to the Lord." This really can sum up the entire message of the psalm: we should be thankful for how God has provided in the past. The psalm points out God's provision in creation, Israel's salvation from Egypt, and the victories of God's people in Canaan (in this lesson, we will look at mostly the section about God's power in creating the world). This psalm was intended to encourage the people of God about the future, and it can do the same thing for us. If we know that God provided and cared for His people then, surely He will do so now. Most importantly for this lesson, this psalm is a response. God has moved in the past and the writer of this psalm is acknowledging that and worshipping God because of what has happened.

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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**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

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## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To introduce your students to a good, working definition of "worship."
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a whiteboard, as well as a sheet of paper and writing utensil for each student.

FIRST, give each student a sheet of paper and a pen.

THEN, explain that you're going to play a quick few rounds of "Word Association." You'll write a word on the board and they have five seconds to write the first word that comes to their mind.

You can use this game to talk quickly about what worship means to your students, but it may be fun to do a few silly rounds first. Some good clues for Word Association could be:

- **President, salad, dodgeball, (the name of another adult volunteer or a teacher), school.**

After you give the five seconds for students to write down their thoughts, have a few of them share; laugh along with their weird choices.

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NEXT, write the word "WORSHIP" on the board, and ask the students to write down what comes to their mind. After they've had time to think, take some time to walk through their responses. Write them on the board around the word worship. They may use words like singing, song, guitar, and maybe will even name your church's worship pastor. There will probably be a lot of talk about singing. There may be some who talk about prayer or Bible teaching as being a part of worship too – that should be encouraged! You might want to write "nap" on the board if you've ever caught any of your students sleeping in church!

THEN, once you've got a pretty good thought-cloud around the word "worship," ask them if they think there's anything missing from the board. Tell your students that you're going to help them with an easy definition of worship that they can remember and apply to their lives. Write this on the board under the thought-cloud:

- **Worship is a right response to an encounter with God.**

FINALLY, transition to "The Main Event" by pointing out that this is the definition of what we're going to be discussing today in our lesson. Keep the definition on the board.

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

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students see that worship is defined as a right response to an encounter with God.
- **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, begin by asking your students to open up their Bibles to Psalms 136 and give them a little context on the Book of Psalms. Say:

- **The Book of Psalms is full of people's thoughts about God. There are poems, songs, arguments with God, prayers, and much more. Today we're going to look at a psalm that was written so that people would engage God in worship.**

NEXT, read or have a student read Psalm 136:1-9. Lead in this discussion around these verses and your definition of worship as "a right response to an encounter with God." Ask:

- **Do you think that the person who wrote this psalm had an encounter with God? Why?**
  - o Answers will vary. Help your students see that the writer of this psalm had obviously encountered God and His power. They had to have some personal encounter with God's steadfast love. They had seen that God was not going to abandon His people.
- **What are some of the things the writer of this psalm points out that God has done?**
  - o Answer: Vs. 1-9: His love endures forever; vs. 4: He does great wonders; vs. 5: He created the heavens (sky, atmosphere, space); vs. 6: He created the earth; vs. 7-9: He made the "great lights" (sun, moon, stars).
- **What does this writer call us to do because of the great things that God has done?**
  - o Answer: In verses 1-3, he calls us to repeatedly "give thanks."

NEXT, drive home this point by drawing a diagram on the board with three columns: "What, To Whom," and "Why." Then, ask your

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students to help you fill it out with the first three verses.

- **In verse 1, what does it say we should do?**
  - Answer: Give Thanks
- **To whom?**
  - Answer: God
- **Why?**
  - Answer: Because His steadfast love endures forever.
- **Repeat this with verses 2 and 3. Really, you should end up with the exact same answers for all verses.**

THEN, point students to your definition of worship and lead in this discussion. Ask:

- **Someone tell me what our definition of worship is.**
  - Answer: A right response to an encounter with God.
- **What does it mean to have an encounter with God?**
  - Your students' answers to this question can tell a lot about how they are interacting with God. If they only interact with God and His Word at church, their answers will center on that. Use this question as an opportunity to help them see that we can encounter God in many different places and ways.
- **What kind of encounter with God do you think the author of this passage had?**
  - Answers will vary. Let your students explore this idea, but the truth is that we don't really know. The author could have been outside, looking up and been overwhelmed with God's creation. He goes on to talk about Israel's history, so he may have been thinking about what God had done for his ancestors. Maybe he was facing a challenge, and it was comforting to him to think about the ways that God had provided in the past.
- **What does it mean to have a "right response" to an encounter with God?**
  - Answer: We're talking about correctly responding to what God has done in your life. Are you going to follow Him? Are you thankful? Are there things in your life that you do differently because of Jesus? That is worship.

It can be difficult for students to understand worship in any context other than a large-group service at church, but it is so important for them to understand the reality of worshipping God in any context. Explain that no matter where we are, our right response to what God has done in our lives is an act of worship: we are declaring who God is and praising Him for that through our actions.

FINALLY, transition to *The Last Word* by explaining to your students that you're going to close the lesson by looking at a moment in the New Testament where a group of people lived out this definition of worship for us. Say:

- **We're going to look at a passage in Luke where Jesus heals someone. He actually raises someone from the dead! And we're going to look at how the group that witnessed it responded to that crazy awesome encounter with God.**

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

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help your students think about how they encounter God and how they respond to Him when they do.
- **Set-Up:** Make sure students have a Bible or that they are able to look along with a friend. Also make sure that you've still got the worship definition on the board.

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FIRST, review the definition of worship one last time to once and for all drive the point home. Say:

- **Worship is a right response to an encounter with God.**

THEN, read Luke 7:11-17 and lead in this discussion. Ask:

- **What encounter with God did these people have?**
  - Answer: They witnessed Jesus raising someone back to life!
- **What was their response?**
  - Answer: They were totally freaked out and glorified God because of what they saw!
- **Do you feel like that was a “right” response?**
  - Answer: It’s probably much like what we would do! Imagine how scary it would be to see someone come back to life. These people were totally freaked out, but they realized that Jesus had great power from God. They saw the things He did and worshipped God because of it.
- **Did anyone sing any songs in this passage? Then where is the worship?**
  - This may seem like an elementary question, but this really is the crux of what you’re trying to teach with this lesson. Though there is no order of worship, pews or songs in this passage, the people who see Jesus for who He is and glorify God are worshipping. Make sure that your students understand how our working definition of worship connects to this passage.

NEXT, help your students connect this deeper understanding of what worship really is to their own lives. Point back to the “thought-cloud” that you created on the board at the beginning of the lesson (when you played “word association” with the word “worship.”) Then, ask:

- **Let’s look back at what we talked about worship being like at the beginning of the lesson.**
  - Your students probably talked a lot about church and singing. Now is the time to broaden that understanding.
- **If worship is simply having a right response to an encounter with God, what are some things that we can add to this list? What are other ways we can worship?**
  - Answers will vary. Help your students flesh out the list a bit more.
- **Where are some unusual places you can worship? What are some ways other than singing that we worship God?**
  - Guide them toward some of these applications of your definition of worship:
  - We can worship God by praying at the beginning of our day. We’re responding to Him giving us another day to live by living it for Him.
  - We can worship God through making wise choices. As we choose the right things, we’re responding to the presence of His Spirit in our lives.
  - We can worship God through listening to music that turns our thoughts to God while we drive in the car.
  - We can worship God through reading our Bible in down time at school.
  - We can worship God through reaching out to a friend we know needs help. In this, we are responding to the ways that God has helped us by helping others.
  - We can worship God by respecting our parents. We are responding to God’s authority in our lives through the people he has put in charge.

THEN, help your students see a fuller picture of worship. Say:

- **One of the ways that we respond most often to what God has done is singing songs that honor Him, but**

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that's not the only way we worship. We are worshipping God every time that we act differently because of what He has done for us. Look at the board now. Look how many different ways we can respond to what God has done in our lives. Look at the different places we can worship! We can worship with friends, parents, our church family, and others.

FINALLY, read the first three verses of Psalm 136 again to your students. Then, say:

- We give thanks to God through prayer, singing, and a life lived for Him because we know that His love endures forever.

CLOSE in prayer, asking God to help all of you worship in every area of your lives. Pray something like this:

- Father God, thank you for all that you have done in our lives. Even though you are so big that you created everything, you care about all the little things that go on in our lives. Give us the courage to respond to the way that you love us. Don't let us limit that to what happens in a church service on Sundays or Wednesdays, but help us to live a LIFE of WORSHIP to you. We love you. Amen.
- 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](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).