

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 3: DISCIPLESHIP WAS ALWAYS GOD'S PLAN

What we want students to learn: That even in the Old Testament we see God calling people to be in a relationship with Him.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To begin to view other Christ-followers with a sense of unity, no matter the differences that may exist between them.

Scripture Focus: Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 7:6-8; Ephesians 2:13-16

Supporting Scripture: Colossians 3:11

Overview: The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand that discipleship isn't just a New Testament concept. It's easy to think about discipleship and only think about Jesus calling followers to Himself. And while, from a theological perspective, Jesus did enable more direct access to the Father, God has always been in the business of calling people to Himself to follow after His ways. This lesson will make this point for students.

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 3 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 3, 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:** While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Deuteronomy, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).

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- **Time frame:** The dating of Deuteronomy is a point of debate. The issue is that no one knows for sure when the exodus occurred, whether it was in the mid-1400s B.C. or a later date around the mid-1200s B.C. The writing would have occurred around those general dates.
- **Purpose:** *Deuteronomy* means "second law." It was a reminder of the law of God for the second generation of Israelites in the desert before they entered the promised land. It reminded the people that the Lord is God. He is faithful to keep His promises to His people.

THE SETTING

The main passage for this lesson is Deuteronomy 7:6-8. Moses is speaking to God's people about the covenant (special relationship) they will have with God. As Moses goes through the terms of this relationship, he tells the people why God has chosen them. As God calls His people into a special relationship based on love, we can begin to see how God will eventually call all people to Himself through Jesus.

THE MAIN POINT

In these verses, God is speaking to His people through Moses about their value. In verse 6, God calls the people of Israel "holy." It's important to realize that God is not calling them righteous, but He is setting them apart (the literal definition of "holy" is set apart). In fact, he even goes as far as to say that they have not been chosen to be God's people because they were necessarily anything special (v. 7), but because "the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers." God is calling the people of Israel into a special relationship with Him because He loves them. He does the same for us.

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 help students begin to realize that God did not stumble into the plan of discipleship through Jesus, but "called His shot" long before.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need the ability to show this YouTube clip to students at the beginning of this lesson: [youtube.com/embed/HkEX0eb2eBo?start=0&end=177](https://www.youtube.com/embed/HkEX0eb2eBo?start=0&end=177).

FIRST, set up the video by giving a little baseball history lesson. Say something like:

- **One of the craziest moments in baseball history was when Babe Ruth famously "called his shot." It was the Yankees vs. the Cubs in the 1932 World Series. According to legend, Babe stepped up to the plate, pointed toward the flagpole in the outfield, and proceeded to hit a home run.**

NEXT, show the clip from this YouTube video:

- <https://www.youtube.com/embed/HkEX0eb2eBo?start=0&end=177>

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- Make sure to cut off the video before the 2:55 mark.

THEN, talk with students about the controversy of Babe Ruth's called home run. Ask something like:

- **Do you think he really called the home run? Or was he just motioning to the bench?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Why do you think it is so controversial?**
 - Answers will vary.

FINALLY, transition into *The Main Event* by saying something like:

- **The called home run is so controversial because it's so unbelievable. No one really knows they're going to hit a homer before they swing. The idea that Babe would be able to call his shot and follow through on the prediction is crazy! It's crazy to think about someone calling their shot like Babe Ruth. It's hard to believe. As outlandish as that moment seems, it happens all throughout Scripture with God. God calls His shots left and right. The Bible is full of prophecies that come true. Scripture talks about Jesus long before He showed up in the flesh. Today we're going to talk about a shot that God called with you.**

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

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help students see that God has always been calling people into a special relationship with Him, and they are no different. God wants them to follow Him in a personal way.
- **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.

BEGIN by reminding students that they're going to see how God has "called His shot" throughout Scripture. Prepare them to be ready to look up several passages with you. Say something like:

- **We're going to start by looking at a passage that comes early in Scripture. Let's look at what God is doing in Genesis 12:1-3.**

NEXT, read or have a student read Genesis 12:1-3. When students have finished, lead them in a short discussion. Ask:

- **Who is God speaking to in this passage?**
 - Answer: God is talking to Abram (who later goes by Abraham). God is calling Abraham to follow Him in a special way.
- **Let's look for the called shot. What is God going to do through Abraham?**
 - Answer: Help students if they need it by looking back at the end of verse 2 and verse 3. God says that He is going to bless the world through Abraham. He is calling Abraham into a special relationship!
- **Is there anything that Abraham is supposed to do?**
 - Answer: Help students if they need it by looking back at verse 1. Basically, Abraham is supposed to follow God. God is asking Abraham to follow Him. Sound familiar?

NEXT, have students turn to Deuteronomy 7:6-8. As they are locating this Scripture, talk to them about the time that has

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passed in between these passages. You can say something like:

- **Abraham did follow God, and over time his family did grow – just like God said! They grew into a big nation of people, but they were enslaved by Egypt. God brought them out of slavery and gave them a land of their own. But God repeated to this big nation of people the same calling that He gave to Abraham.**

NEXT, read or have a student read Deuteronomy 7:6-8. Talk through this passage with students. Ask something like:

- **What do you think it means to be “holy” (v. 6)?**
 - Answers will vary. Students will probably say something about being right, making right choices, or being righteous. Redefine this word for them and help them see that holy also means being “different” or “set apart.” The reason we say God is holy is because He is completely different than us. He is perfect! Help students see that what God is really saying here is that the Israelites will be set apart. They will have a special relationship with God.
- **Why did God set Israel apart to have a special relationship with Him?**
 - Answer: Look at verse 7 and the beginning of verse 8. Israel had done nothing to earn God’s love or catch His eye. The only reason God called them to be set apart with Him was because of His great love for them. This is the most important point in the lesson. Let students answer and talk through their ideas, but make sure they understand that God called them out because He loved them.
- **God was also keeping His promise to Israel. Where did we first learn about this promise?**
 - Answer: Abraham! God called Abraham in Genesis 12 and told him that he would become a great people – now it has happened.

THEN, help students connect the Deuteronomy passage with the Genesis passage. Ask something like:

- **In this passage, God is talking to a large group of people, right? Who were they? Where did they come from?**
 - Answer: They were Abraham’s family! His children had more children, and they grew into the nation of Israel.
- **Do you remember what God said was going to happen through this family?**
 - Answer: In the Genesis passage, we read about how God was going to bless the world through this family. God is calling His people into a special relationship so He can bless the world through them.
- **Do you think there was anything the Israelites needed to do in this special relationship?**
 - Answers will vary. Let students talk through their answers, but help them see that Israel was supposed to show the world what it looked like to follow God. They were going to show the world what it was like to have a relationship with God. It was never just about Israel – it was always about God’s love for the whole world!

NEXT, transition to the cross by asking something like:

- **What was the blessing that the whole world would experience because of God’s people (Abraham’s family)?**
 - Answer: Salvation through Jesus. Jesus was born as an Israelite, too – He was part of this family! Through Abraham’s descendants, all the way to Jesus, God would make a way for everyone to have their sins forgiven!

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NEXT, drive home the point by saying something like:

- **God called His shot! When Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world, God was not surprised. We shouldn't have been either. Jesus was always God's plan for blessing the world through Abraham's descendants.**

THEN, explain that all throughout history there have been two groups of people in the world: God's people (the Israelites) and everyone else (the Gentiles). Say something like:

- **God's people were always special. God was sticking to His promise of leading them in a special relationship. But it wasn't just about them. Listen to what God says in Ephesians 2.**

NEXT, read or have a student read Ephesian 2:13-16. Ask something like:

- **What does this passage say happened to those two groups of people?**
 - o Answer: Through the sacrifice of Jesus, God brings them together. This is the incredible part: we are called into a special relationship with God, too! It's not just for people who were related to Abraham, but anyone who believes in Jesus!
- **God brings these two groups of people together in Himself. How did He do this?**
 - o Answer: Through the cross. Everyone – whether you are an Israelite or a Gentile – is reconciled to God through the cross. We have sin (disobeying God) in common. God meets all of our needs through Jesus, bringing us to Himself!

THEN, explain to students that this isn't just a sentiment expressed by Jesus. Peter backs up this concept as well, writing something like 20 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. Read or have a student read 1 Peter 2:12. Explain that Peter is echoing the words of Jesus, further affirming that this is a real part of our identities as Christ-followers. Remind students that when Peter used the word "Gentiles" he is simply talking about those who do not believe in Christ. Read Matthew 5:16, then ask something like:

- **How is what Peter says here similar to what Jesus says in Matthew 5:16?**
 - o Answer: Both of them see the way we live our lives as having potential to draw people to a relationship with God.
- **In both Jesus' and Peter's statements, what is the ultimate goal in people acknowledging the source behind our remarkable lives?**
 - o Answer: Help students see that the goal is for people to come to a saving relationship with Jesus. The idea is a powerful one: our lives can be one of the ways Jesus calls people to Himself to experience His salvation. Help students see what an amazing truth this is.

FINALLY, transition to *The Last Word* by explaining to students that just like Abraham was called to live differently and the Israelites were supposed to show the world how to have a relationship with God, God is calling us to live for Him as well! Say something like:

- **Just like God called Abraham to have a special relationship with Him, God called the entire people of Israel to follow Him. Abraham followed God wherever He led him. Israel followed God in order to show the world what it was like to have a relationship with Him. God has called us to follow Him in a special relationship because of Jesus. Let's take a look at what He's asking us to do.**

Ask if there are any questions, then transition into *The Last Word*.

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THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students see what God is calling us to do as a part of our relationship with Him.
- **Set-Up:** You'll want to use a dry erase board or some other means to help students visualize the three Scripture passages you read together.

FIRST, write these three headings on the board: ABRAHAM, ISRAEL, US.

NEXT, ask students to help you write under each heading what God was/is calling those people to do as a part of the relationship He called them to. Ask something like:

- **God called Abraham into a special relationship with Him. What was Abraham supposed to do?**
 - Answer: Follow God wherever He called him. (Be sure to write that on the board.)
- **God reminded Israel of the relationship He had with them because of Abraham. What was Israel supposed to do?**
 - Answer: Help the world see how to have a relationship with God. (Be sure to write that on the board.)

THEN, read or have a student read Colossians 3:11 to help you fill in the calling for us. Ask something like:

- **What is this passage saying?**
 - Answer: God is no longer singling out one people group to have a special relationship with Him. Because of Jesus, anyone who believes in Christ is called to follow God. We're all following God together. This means that God is even calling people who are different than you to follow Him. Even though we may be very different from some other believers, we are all part of the Body of Christ!
- **What is God calling us to do?**
 - Answer: Follow God together in unity. (Write this on the board.)

NEXT, help students see that God is calling us to fulfill His calling to Abraham and the Israelites. Point to the board as you say something like:

- **Just like Abraham, God is calling us to follow Him wherever He calls us to go. Just like Israel, God is calling us to help the world see how to have a relationship with Him. But He is calling us to do it together.**

Encourage them to see the full picture of what God has done for them because He loves them. It started with one family, but through that family, God blessed the world. Now He is doing the same thing through us!

FINALLY, allow time for any closing thoughts or questions from 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.