

# THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP  
LESSON 4: DISCIPLESHIP ISN'T AN OPTION

**What we want students to learn:** That the Gospel, the “good news” of God’s rescue plan through Jesus Christ, is not basic or elementary; it’s the power that fuels the everyday life of a Christian.

**What we want students to do with what they’ve learned:** To prepare themselves to encounter the Gospel and its impact on their lives in a way that they might never have before.

**Scripture Focus:** Luke 9:23-25

**Supporting Scripture:** Matthew 10:38-39

**Overview:** Many students, and many Christians in general, mistakenly think that discipleship is for the “super Christians.” Discipleship is often seen as “next level” religion for the ultra mature or devout. Discipleship is seen as something we arrive at when we know enough or are good enough at being Christians to get serious about it. This lesson will challenge students to see that nothing could be further from the truth. Discipleship is the expected standard for all believers. It’s not an option. It’s commanded.

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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 4 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 4, 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:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian, and a companion of Paul.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of Luke was written around A.D. 60.

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- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

## THE SETTING

In Luke's Gospel, this passage directly follows Jesus foretelling His death. Jesus' command in Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me," holds even greater significance for those of us on this side of the cross. "Follow me" is a common command repeated throughout the Gospels. It was the invitation Jesus extended to His earliest disciples and the invitation He continues to extend.

## THE MAIN POINT

The main point that we want to make is that in Luke 9:23-25, Jesus calls all of His followers to make sacrifices and surrender to God's will in their lives. There should not be a distinction between a Christian and a disciple. This lesson will help students see that all believers should strive to follow Jesus. In a world that screams for people to do what makes them happy, Jesus asks His followers to surrender their wants and trust His plan for their lives. This lesson presents a hard challenge, but we know that Jesus is worthy.

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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 discuss the trade-offs of putting in the bare minimum or giving your all to something.
- **Set-Up:** Print a copy of the two situations for each group or display the information for all to see.

FIRST, introduce the concept of discipline. Ask something like:

- **What comes to your mind when you hear the word "discipline"? What does that word mean?**
  - Answers will vary. One definition that Merriam Webster offers is "orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior." Another is "a rule or system of rules governing conduct or activity."
- **What is the typical result of being disciplined in a certain event or circumstance?**
  - Answers will vary. Typically, we see better results and outcomes in the areas of life where we exercise a certain level of discipline.

NEXT, divide students into groups of three or four. Explain that each group is going to read through a list of requirements necessary to achieve specific results for a given scenario: one is a chemistry test and the other is a job. Instruct the groups to discuss the trade-offs and gains for each option. Then, ask each group to choose the one option that they feel offers the best result for the required action.

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## Chemistry Test

	Requirement	Result
Option 1	Do not go to class and do not study	Fail
Option 2	Go to class and study 1 hour	Make a D
Option 3	Go to class, pay attention, and study for 1 hour	Make a C
Option 4	Go to class, pay attention, take notes, and study for 2 hours	Make a B
Option 5	Go to class, pay attention, take notes, study 4 hours	Make an A
Option 6	Go to class, pay attention, take notes, ask questions in class, study 4+ hours individually, and meet with group to study	Make a Perfect Score

## Part Time Job

(Federal minimum wage \$7.25)

Option 1	Work 0 hour	\$0
Option 2	Work 5 hours	\$36.25
Option 3	Work 10 hours	\$72.50
Option 4	Work 15 hours	\$108.75
Option 5	Work 20 hours	\$145
Option 6	Work 20+ hours	\$145+

THEN, when the groups are done with their discussions, bring all students back together and briefly discuss. Ask something like:

- **How disciplined did your group decide to be with the upcoming chemistry test? Why did you pick that option? What trade-offs did you consider?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **What about the second option with the part-time job? How disciplined did you decide to be? Why did you pick that option? What trade-offs did you consider?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **When you think back to the definitions we discussed of the word "discipline," what connection do you think it has to the word disciple? In what way do you think that a disciple is disciplined in his or her walk with Christ?**
  - Answers will vary. There is definitely a "prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior" for disciples.

FINALLY, explain that sometimes we can approach our Christian walk in a similar way. If we are only concerned with "getting by" or what we deem as "good enough," we may choose not to put in much time or effort into our relationship with God. Ask something like:

- **Do you think you ever approach your relationship with the Lord like this? Do you think about certain**

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trade-offs when it comes to how devoted you are to following Jesus? What are the trade-offs you think about? Is this the mindset of a disciple of Jesus?

o Answers will vary. Leave these questions hanging out there as you transition into *The Main Event*.

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

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** For students to learn that discipleship isn't just an option for the "super religious." It is God's expectation of every believer.
- **Set-Up:** Make sure each student has access to a copy of the Bible or can look along with a friend.

FIRST, begin this part of the lesson by asking something like:

- **Do you think that you have intentionally or unintentionally done the minimum to get to heaven while missing out on a deep connection with God?**
  - o Answers will vary. You may choose for this question to be rhetorical or ask students to honestly answer.

THEN, ask students to turn to Luke 9:23-25. While they are turning, take a moment to provide the context for this passage using information from the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read the passage. Ask something like:

- **What does it take to be a Christian?**
  - o Answers could vary. Students will hopefully respond with an explanation of the Gospel. Confession of sin and proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation are necessary. Be sure to fill in any gaps that students leave out.
- **What does it take to be a disciple?**
  - o Answers will vary. Students may likely respond indicating that a disciple somehow or in some way goes "beyond" what a Christian does.
- **So let's make sure we're clear. Do you think there's a difference between being a Christian and being a disciple? Explain.**
  - o Answers will vary. Discuss with students that a disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ. A Christian is also a follower of Jesus Christ. The beliefs and actions of both should be the same. Being a disciple does not make one a "super Christian." Likewise, God expects the same from all believers. Explain that Jesus always referred to those that followed Him as disciples. Believers were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26). This was after Christ had risen from the dead and ascended back to Heaven, so Jesus never made any distinction between the two. The Romans started calling believers Christians to mock them as being "little Christs." So we can see in this passage that "anyone" listed in Luke 9:23 refers to any believer. Discipleship is something God expects from each of us.
- **What do you think it means to "deny yourself"? Why does Christ call us to do it?**
  - o Answers will vary. It means that we are not in control of our lives. When we declare Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we submit our life to Him. We must practice denying ourselves whenever our desires go against the will of God.
- **What are some examples of ways we have to deny ourselves on a consistent basis?**
  - o Answers will vary. Some examples include: obedience to parents even when we disagree, remaining pure in relationships even when feelings and hormones get stirred, responding with forgiveness and

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kindness even when we have been mistreated, etc.

- **How do you “take up your cross”? What does that mean?**
  - Answers will vary. Discuss with students that denying ourselves is often about giving something up, while taking up our cross is usually about doing something in obedience to God, even when it leads to rejection. Once again, this has to start with the mindset that we are not in charge. God knows best. We must submit daily to the things God calls us to do and say.

THEN, point out that Jesus paid the penalty for our sin when He died on a cross, but the Bible also has a lot to say about believers and their own crosses. Read or have students read the following verses: Matthew 10:38-39, Galatians 2:20, and Galatians 5:24. Ask something like:

- **What do these passages all have in common with each other and the ones we’ve already looked at today?**
  - Answers will vary. They all discuss that those who follow Jesus are to give up their rights to their own life and submit to what God had called them to.
- **Let’s circle back to a question we’ve already discussed. Do you think being a disciple, denying yourself and taking up your cross, is something just for a certain committed group of Christians or is it for everyone who says they are a Christian? Explain.**
  - Answers will vary. Hopefully students have seen that this is a consistent theme throughout Scripture and realize that being a committed disciple of Jesus is expected of all Christians. It’s not optional.

FINALLY, ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition to *The Last Word* portion of the lesson.

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** For students to examine their personal walk with God.
- **Set-Up:** You’ll need to print a copy of the “Spiritual Disciplines Evaluation” handout for each student and provide something for them to write with.

FIRST, remind students that Luke 9:23 talks about taking up your cross “daily.” We do not become like Christ overnight; rather, it is a lifelong process known as sanctification. Explain that each day we are to strive to be more like Christ than we were the day before. And the cool thing is that the Holy Spirit works to help us accomplish the same thing.

NEXT, explain that spiritual disciplines are behaviors and practices that can assist us in our sanctification process. As we strive to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus, it may be helpful to evaluate which disciplines we currently do well and those that we may greatly benefit from improving.

THEN, pass out the Spiritual Disciplines Evaluation handout. Give students time to complete the evaluation. Then, have a brief discussion with students about their responses. Ask something like:

- **In which area or areas do you feel like you do the best?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **With which area or areas do you struggle?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **If you could improve in the area or areas you struggle, how do you think it would help you in your**

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**walk with Christ? How would it help you become a more committed disciple?**

o Answers will vary.

FINALLY, challenge students to pick one discipline they are currently not practicing to implement this coming week. Then, ask if there are any questions and close in prayer thanking God for being worthy of our lives' allegiance.

- 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).