

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 6: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND DISCIPLESHIP

What we want students to learn: That the Holy Spirit both empowers and enables our discipleship.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To begin to lean on the Holy Spirit more for guidance as they follow Jesus.

Scripture Focus: Romans 8:5-11

Supporting Scripture: John 14:15-17

Overview: The purpose of this lesson is to help students see that, if they have entered into a saving relationship with God, the Holy Spirit not only dwells within them, but also that He empowers them to follow after God. Students will understand that as followers of Jesus, they are no longer slaves to sinful flesh. Instead, they have total access to the Holy Spirit who is able to bring life, growth, and transformation. By depending on the Holy Spirit we grow as disciples.

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 6 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 6, 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:** Paul is the author of Romans.
- **Time frame:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.
- **Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 6: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND DISCIPLESHIP

other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a level playing field be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.

THE SETTING

Rome was the center of government, life, and culture at the time Paul wrote this letter to the Romans. Though he had never been to the church in Rome before, he felt compelled to write them as he hoped to visit them in the future.¹ Paul wanted the Romans to clearly understand the Gospel message and how it could change a person's life. In Romans 8, Paul is talking about how Christians can be assured that once Jesus has saved them there is no more fear of condemnation. God is at work in the life of everyone who has received Him as Lord and Savior through the power of the Holy Spirit.

THE MAIN POINT

Becoming a passionate disciple of Jesus Christ is not based on your willpower. It comes from the power of God within you, the Holy Spirit. Through studying Romans 8:5-11, we will see how the Holy Spirit works in our lives to transform us into continuously growing disciples. First, we will examine our everyday choice to follow our flesh or follow the Spirit. Then, we will take some time to better understand who the Holy Spirit is and how He works. We will look at Jesus' teaching about the Holy Spirit in John 14:15-17. Finally, we will see how the same Spirit that helped Jesus conquer the grave can give us power to live as devoted followers of Jesus every day. Every day, the Holy Spirit desires to help us practically grow as disciples.

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 thinking about the power of the Holy Spirit in their journey as a disciple.
- **Set-Up:** Two or more flashlights, batteries, and the seven verses of Romans 8:5-11 printed on separate strips of paper, tape.

FIRST, before students enter the room, discreetly tape the seven verses from Romans 8:5-11 around the room. These verses should be placed in areas where they are not immediately noticeable when students enter. Once students have entered, explain to them that in order to know what passage of Scripture you are going to study this morning they have to find it around the room. There is just one catch: The lights are about to be clicked off. However, they will have access to at least two flashlights to find the each verse from the passage of Scripture.

NEXT, click off the lights in the room and pass out the flashlights. Depending on the number of flashlights you have, you can divide up your group to search. **At least one flashlight should not have batteries in it.** Have your students search the room until they find all the verses and can tell you the complete passage of Scripture that they will study.

¹ NIV Life Application Bible, p.1879.

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 6: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND DISCIPLESHIP

THEN, ask this question:

- Was it difficult for the person/team whose flashlight didn't work? Why? What did your flashlight need?

FINALLY, explain to your students that today you are talking about the power to live the Christian life as a disciple. Without this power source, trying to live as a Christian is frustrating and ultimately impossible. Use the batteries as a visual as you make your illustration. Say something like this:

- When we think about being a disciple of Jesus, often we only think about our efforts. We think about giving our best effort not to sin, to pursue God, and to do good deeds. However, God never intended for our journey as a disciple to just be about our best efforts alone. He has given us an incredible gift that empowers us to live as a disciple: the Holy Spirit.

Think about it like this. Just as batteries give power to a flashlight to function as intended, the Holy Spirit gives power to us to function as a disciple. If we are not seeking the power of the Holy Spirit, it is no wonder that we struggle to be a growing follower of Jesus. We need power beyond our efforts to grow to our God given potential. God has freely given that power in our lives through the Holy Spirit. Today we will look at how the Holy Spirit makes all the difference in our discipleship journey.

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

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help students understand who the Holy Spirit is and how He works grow them into a mature disciple.
- **Set Up:** Pictures of popular items to demonstrate choices (such as Coke vs. Pepsi, Chick-fil-A vs. McDonald's, etc.) At least one or two of these pairs need to be ones with obvious "better" choices (i.e., a new smart phone or an old shoe). Make sure each student will have access to a copy of the Bible.

FIRST, explain that in order to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives we have to talk about choices. Begin showing pictures and asking the class to choose which one they would prefer. For example, you could show a picture of a Coke and a Pepsi, and then ask, "**Which do you prefer?**" As you continue to show pictures, make sure that it becomes gradually more and more obvious what the better choice is. For example, you could show a picture of Disney and a Prison making the choice obvious.

NEXT, read or have a student read Romans 8:5-6. Explain that Paul gives us a clear choice in these verses: the flesh or the Spirit. In this passage, "to live according to the flesh is to live and act sinfully."² The ESV Study Bible puts it this way, "to think just the way the unbelieving world thinks."³ By contrast, the Spirit means Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. If we know Jesus as Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit dwells within us. Say something like:

- **Each day you have a choice. Option 1, you can set your mind and focus upon the flesh. This means thinking and living like God is not really there. It means disobeying God and allowing the world to tell you how to satisfy your desires. There is just one problem. Nothing about the flesh is ultimately satisfying. You can live for the flesh, but it will let you down and disappoint you every time. As verse 6 puts it, "to set the mind on the flesh is death."**

Option 2, you can set your mind and focus upon the Spirit. This means pursuing God and allowing Him

² Easton's Bible Dictionary, accessed via blueletterbible.org.

³ ESV Study Bible, p.2170

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 6: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND DISCIPLESHIP

to work in and through your life. It means yielding control of your life to God and following the Holy Spirit's lead. Verse 6 makes a promise that when we do this we will find "life and peace." This is where God moves in a powerful way to bring meaning and purpose to our lives as disciples. We'll talk more about how to follow the Holy Spirit as we continue to look at this passage.

THEN, read or have a student read Romans 8:7-10. Explain that this passage is talking about two different kinds of people: "those who are dominated by their sinful nature, and those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit. All of us would be in the first category if Jesus hadn't offered us a way out."⁴ Explain that before meeting Jesus, people may try to live up to God's standard, but this is impossible to do in our own strength. Say something like:

- **We are all tragically chained to "the flesh" until we are set free by accepting Jesus, which allows us to follow "the Spirit." Let's take a closer look at who the Spirit is and what role He plays.**

NEXT, read or have a student read John 14:15-17. Explain that we are enabled to keep the commandments of God because of the power of the Holy Spirit within us. While the world does not have access to the Holy Spirit, every Christian has full access. Remind students that the Holy Spirit actually lives within any of them who have come to saving faith in Jesus. One commentator put it this way: "Paul places all believers into the category of those who are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, since every believer is indwelt by the Spirit (Romans 8:9). The believer is freed from the absolute power and penalty of sin."⁵ Say something like:

- **Jesus makes a tough statement in verse 15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." We all know that keeping the commandments of God is extremely difficult no matter how committed we are to God. We cannot do it in our own strength! Jesus knew this as well, which is why He promised to send us help on our journey to be a disciple. Jesus says in verse 16, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper." This word for Helper means advocate or counselor.⁶ If you are a believer, this means that the very presence of God is within you to support you with power and guide you toward God's best in your life. With prayer and seeking God through His Word, the Spirit works to grow you into a mature disciple of Jesus.**

Explain that earlier in the lesson you talked about choices. You came to understand that following the flesh or the Spirit was a choice. Explain that you want students to look back over their walk with God to see how the Spirit has worked to help them make choices that lead them to grow as a disciple. Ask your students:

- **What is something that you used to struggle with before knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior?**
 - o Answers may vary. The point is to get students thinking back to a time that they struggled with sin, but did not have the power to overcome it through the Holy Spirit.
- **After you met Jesus as Lord and Savior, how did God work in your life to help you in that struggle?**
 - o Again, answers may vary. Explain to students that God moves in their lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. Only through the strength and power of the Spirit can God give us victory over struggles and sins.

⁴ NIV Life Application Bible, p.1894

⁵ Moody Bible Commentary, p.1756.

⁶ ESV Study Bible, p. 2053.

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 6: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND DISCIPLESHIP

THEN, explain that trying to live the Christian life without the Spirit of God is ultimately frustrating. This is why people who don't know Jesus and don't have the Holy Spirit's power in their life find that trying to live up to God's standard is an impossible burden. Say something like:

- **This is the essence of religion: trying to live up to an impossible standard in order to be acceptable to God by our efforts. God did not call us to a religion. He called us to a relationship with Him that is empowered by the Holy Spirit's work within us. Henry and Richard Blackaby put it this way, "Jesus said that it is not our activity that produces fruit, it is our relationship with Him."⁷ Sometimes we forget that it is not so much about trying harder as it is about leaning into our relationship with God and yielding to the Spirit's work in our lives.**

NEXT, read or have a student read Romans 8:11. This is one of the most crucial verses in this passage of Scripture to understand the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Ask your students:

- **What has the Spirit done in the past that proves His power?**
 - Answer: Raised Jesus from the dead.
- **What does this verse promise that the Holy Spirit can do in our lives?**
 - Answer: The Spirit will dwell in you, give life to your mortal bodies.

FINALLY, say something like this:

- **The same power that raised Jesus from the grave is completely accessible to you. If you know Jesus as Lord and Savior, that power is already within you, working and moving you toward the disciple that God wants you to be. You have every bit of power you need to be a remarkable disciple of Jesus in the Holy Spirit. Like we talked about earlier in this lesson, the choice is yours. Will you choose the flesh that has no power over you and walk down a pathway that is hostile to God? Or will you choose to yield to the working of the Holy Spirit as He moves within you and teaches you from God's Word? The promise of the Holy Spirit is LIFE. Choose to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit and watch as He grows you into a strong disciple.**

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

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students see how the Holy Spirit works practically to help them grow as a disciple and commit to following the Holy Spirit's leadership.
- **Set-Up:** A Bible and a flashlight.

FIRST, have a student volunteer to come to the front of the room and re-read Romans 8:11. Once they reach the front of the room, turn out the lights in the room and ask them to read the passage. It may be difficult if not impossible to do. Just like "Lead In" at the beginning of the lesson, it can be very difficult to see the Scripture without light. Then offer them the flashlight to read the Scripture again using the flashlight. Ask them which way was easier. Explain that one of the things the Holy Spirit does is "illuminate" the Bible for us to understand it. This just means that Holy Spirit gives us understanding as we read, study, and apply God's Word to our lives. Ask your students:

- **Have you ever read the Bible and had a particular verse really stick out to you? Have you ever**

⁷ Experiencing God Day By Day, p.116.

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 6: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND DISCIPLESHIP

read a verse of Scripture that really impacted your life? What was the verse and why did it mean something to you?

- o Explain that the reason that the verse made an impact in their life is because the Holy Spirit illuminated that verse in the hearts and minds, helping them apply it to their lives.

THEN, take the flashlight from the student and shine it on yourself. Explain the Holy Spirit not only illuminates God's Word, but it also shines light on our own hearts. One of the functions of the Holy Spirit is "conviction." This is the reason why when Christians sin, they feel a sense of intense discomfort and an urgency to change. Remind students that this is different than feeling guilty that they were caught doing something wrong. It is different that having a conscious. Explain that this is God moving within them prompting them to understand that He didn't design them for sin; they were made for so much more. Ask your students:

- **Have you ever experienced that feeling of conviction? How did it feel? Did it make you want to change?**
 - o Answers may vary. The point is not to get students confessing sin, but to talk about how the Holy Spirit has convicted them and will continue to do so in the future.

NEXT, shine the flashlight onto another adult or student in the room. Explain that the Holy Spirit also prompts us to minister to the lives of others. One example of this is when Paul said that he was constrained by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem (Acts 20:22). For disciples, the Holy Spirit will often prompt us to reach out to another person or to follow a call to live on mission to a group of people. Ask your students:

- **Have you ever felt the Holy Spirit leading you to do something or minister to someone? What was that like? What did you do?**
 - o Answers may vary. Help students understand that they do not need to feel a special feeling in order to obey what God clearly defines in Scripture, like honoring their parents or sharing their faith. However, there are unique times when the Holy Spirit will move us to some specific action that God desires for us to do, like ministering to a particular group of people on your school campus.

FINALLY, turn the lights back on. Explain that the Holy Spirit is like a light in our life showing us things as they really are and guiding our path. Not only that, but the Holy Spirit empowers us to be able to carry out the things that He shows us. These are just three ways the Holy Spirit works in our lives: helping us understand God's Word, convicting us of changes we need to make, and prompting us to minister to others. There are many more ways, but practically these are three ways you can begin looking for the Holy Spirit to move in your life this week!

FINALLY, 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.

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.

WEEK 6: LESSON PLAN
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