

# ETERNITY

## SESSION 1: THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

### Quick Start



#### Read

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.



#### Print

Before your time with the students, make enough copies of this session's handout for your entire group. (The handouts came with your download.)



#### Watch

Preview this session before watching it with your students. Make sure that everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

***Note: For more detailed information, please see the How to Use The Leader's Guide document.***

## • OPEN

**Leader:** *Before the lesson, hang a large sheet of butcher paper on the wall of your meeting room. Write “Stuff I’m Leaving in My Room” in the center of the paper, and draw a circle around those words. Put a bunch of markers on the floor underneath the paper.*

Imagine this: It’s 3:00 am. You’ve just woken up to your dad banging on your bedroom window. Then, he breaks the window. Your room is filled with smoke. Your entire family, your pets are all outside your house. They’re safe and they’re screaming at you to get out of your room before it’s engulfed in flames. But, you’ve got a lot of stuff in your room, and it’s all stuff you love. Take a moment and think about the stuff you *wouldn’t* grab before you jump out the window to safety, and write those things on the paper up front.

**Leader:** *Give students a few minutes to write the things that they wouldn’t take with them. When everyone is done, invite kids into a conversation about those things by asking the following questions:*

**Why did you choose to leave those things behind?**

**How long would it take you to choose what to leave behind before jumping out the window?**

It’s weird to think about grabbing stuff out of our burning house, isn’t it? Somehow the idea of a fire levels the playing field. We’re forced to think about the things that are the most important to us, and consider the things that we care the least about.

What about your life right now? There’s no fire, so you can take a minute to think about these questions.

**What in your life right now do you think you need to give up so that you can live more fully for God?**

**Which of your possessions or habits get in the way of you knowing God or your friends better?**

Today we’re going to talk about the stuff that really matters in life, and we’re going to chat about the reality that how we view our life determines nearly everything we think and do.

## • VIEW

**Watch Session 1: *The Right Perspective*** (18 minutes)

## • REVIEW

In the video, Francis asked us to think about the things that are the most important in our lives. He encouraged us to really focus on Christ so that we fully know God.

One of the things that keeps us from knowing Jesus is that we lose our focus. We're distracted by something and we end up jumping off track. Who remembers what Hunter struggled with? He said,

*I had this football scholarship. I was making money. I had a brand-new truck. The popularity—I was the captain of the football team. It felt great for a while and I thought that I was on top of the world.*

**Why do you think he felt on top of the world?**

**Do you agree with the way Hunter put his life together? Do you think it was wise?**

Hunter assembled a life made up of all the things many of us feel are most important. But did you notice what eventually happened? Who remembers the result of all that effort that Hunter put out there? He said,

*And one day I just hit rock bottom.*

**Let's talk about that. Why do you think Hunter hit "rock bottom"?**

Hunter really became two different people. The first person was the guy he presented to others—the person others saw. The second person was the secret guy, the one no one saw. Hunter said,

*I would lead my team in prayer before a game and right after I would go and cuss out the other team and just run my mouth. So I just lived this double life. You know, putting on a front on Facebook and living another life behind the scenes.*

**It's hard to try and live two different lives, a public life and a secret life. Have any of you struggled with that? What do you think led you down that path? What prompted you to change?**

Francis' rope illustration points to a good remedy to that two-person struggle. Through that illustration, Francis is "throwing us a rope," helping us see a way out of the trap that Hunter described.

**Who remembers the rope illustration? Someone describe it to us.**



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Francis' illustration helps us see that there's more going on than the moment we are living in. He said,

*Think beyond the here and now and recognize there's a lot more going on.*

Francis encouraged us to take the long view of life, not to react only to the circumstances or emotions that we're feeling right now, but to react based on eternity.

**Is it easy to live like that? Why or why not?**

**What do we struggle with when we try and take the long view of life?**

**In the second story we heard from Ashleigh. What impacted you the most from hearing about her friendship with Madison?**

Did you notice what made the difference for Ashleigh? It was when Madeline wrote, "Jesus loves you" on her folder. It made Ashleigh mad at first, but that was the thing that made a difference some time later.

**Have you ever done something like this? What happened?**

Ashleigh said,

*This world is temporary and living my life to the fullest back then looked like doing drugs and partying, and living my life to the fullest now looks like spreading the gospel and telling people that they are forgiven and that they're loved.*

**How does that relate to what Francis was saying earlier about living in light of eternity?**

It can be very difficult to take a long view of life. It can be difficult to make every decision in light of how that will affect the rest of our life, and our eternity. But, if we can get to that place where we're seeing everything we do in light of our eternal life, we will be able to turn away from living a double life like the one Hunter got trapped in. It's all about keeping the right perspective.

## • BIBLE JOURNEY

In just a moment we're going to dig into Matthew 25:14–30, Jesus' parable of the talents. Before we take a look at this passage, we need to understand a little bit more about the context in which Jesus is telling this story. At the beginning of Matthew 24, the disciples ask Jesus how they are supposed to know when He will return. All of chapter 24, and Jesus' parable in Mathew 25:1–13 can be summarized like this—Jesus is returning, and no one except God the Father knows when. “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour” (Matthew 25:13).

Would someone read Matthew 25:14–18?

**What, in your own words, is happening so far in the parable?**

In the parable a “talent” represents a very large unit of money. Some Bible scholars say it's worth as much as 20 years worth of wages for a laborer. Whatever the exact value of a talent, it is a huge amount of money—even for the servant who was given only one.

**How does knowing the value of a “talent” change how you view the story?**

Each of the servants was given a very big responsibility. In each case, the master was entrusting them with something valuable, something they could not have produced on their own.

**Why do you think the third servant buried the talent he was given?** (Answers from students may vary, but the real reason will be revealed later in verse 26.)

Someone continue reading the story, Matthew 25:19–28.

**Why does the master reply “Well done good and faithful servant” to the first two servants?**

**How does what the third servant says to his master differ from how the first two servants approached the master?** (The servant who was given one talent approaches his master with an excuse. The first two simply presented the fruit of their hard work.)

**When do you typically try to give an excuse for something?**

We've all heard the old excuse, “my dog ate my homework”—your teacher definitely has. Or maybe when your mom asks why you didn't clean your room, you come up with some excuse about not being able to find the vacuum...While

sometimes our excuses are valid, we are typically just trying to cover up our own failure to do something.

**Why does the master reply, “You wicked, lazy servant!” to the third servant? Do you think this was fair?**

**Why?** (In verse 25, the servant said he hid the talent because he was afraid, but the master doesn’t believe this...he saw through the servant’s excuse.)

**What do you think the point of this parable is? What is Jesus communicating to His disciples?**

Like we talked about earlier, the parable of the talents follows Jesus speaking to His disciples about His return. The parable of talents reminds us that although we have a Master in Jesus, who has gone away, He’s returning. And Jesus hasn’t left us with nothing to do.

Read Matthew 25:29–30.

God has given us unique abilities, gifts and passions. He’s made an investment in us so that we can serve Him and invest in His kingdom. The fact is, many of us are like the third servant—we bury the things the Lord has given us in the ground. We hide them from others. And when we do that, we miss out on the life that God has for us. Our goal should be to live like wise servants—taking what God has invested in us and seeing it multiplied in others. That’s the way to live in light of eternity.

## • SCRIPTURE LAB

Today we’ve been talking about what it means to invest your life for the sake of God’s kingdom, using the gifts that God has given you. In just a moment we’re going to take a closer look at Abraham’s life. While he, like all of us, wasn’t perfect, his life does have the marks of someone who is living by faith, living in light of eternity.

I’d like you to break up into four equal groups.

**Leader:** *Distribute the Abraham’s Talents handout to each student (example handout on page 9). Break students into four groups. Assign each group one story from the handout. Have students work with their group to answer the questions.*

OK, I’ve just assigned each group one story to read. Each story is going to be a different snippet of Abraham’s life. Once your group has read the story, I’d like you to write the gist of that story on your handout, and answer the questions. When you’re done, I’ll call everyone back together and each group will retell their portion of Abraham’s story.

**Leader:** *Students will need 10–15 minutes to do this. As students go through the biblical narratives, be available for any questions they may have. If some groups finish early, encourage them to choose a different section on the handout and read a little of that story.*

*When groups are done, call students back together. Beginning with the first story, invite each group to stand and tell the story they read. As groups retell the story, tell the other groups to fill in the information on their sheets. Continue until all groups have shared.*

**What was the most interesting part of the story your group read?**

**How difficult do you think it was for Abraham to trust God? Why?**

In the book of Hebrews there is a passage of Scripture that sheds light on Abraham's story.

Everyone take a look at Hebrews 11:8–16 with me.

**Leader:** *Encourage students to get comfortable and take your time as you read through the passage.*

The passage from Hebrews 11 shows us that Abraham's decisions, the choices he made in his life, were marked by faith in God. While he wasn't perfect, the trajectory of his life displayed a trust in the Lord. Look again at verse 16, "They were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them."

Abraham was living in light of eternity. Even though sometimes staying true to God's promise was difficult, He had faith in the future that God had promised.

## • LAST WORD

In closing, turn to Romans 12:1–2. This small passage paints a vivid picture of what it looks like to live this life for God. Would someone read that?

Making ourselves into a "living sacrifice" is a difficult thing to understand. In light of our conversation today, a living sacrifice is someone who sees the gifts and abilities that God has given them, and then empties themselves, using those abilities to bring God's kingdom to earth. We use those abilities to grow a strong relationship with God. We use them to help others know God.

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As we do all of that, we look to Jesus, who gave Himself as a sacrifice for us. Romans 3:23–25 says,

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.*

Because Jesus was sacrificed on the cross for us, we can present our lives as living sacrifices to God. This means we don't live like the world around us. We live transformed lives, having a perspective that is shaped by what Christ has done, and by our eternity with God.

I'd like you to think about your life. Think about one area where you are not living in light of eternity. It may be how you spend your time, it may be in a relationship. Maybe it's something that you need to give up that we talked about in our activity before we watched the video. Whatever it is, take a moment and ask the Lord to give you wisdom about how you can begin to live that aspect of your life in light of eternity.

**Leader:** *Give students a moment to reflect and pray quietly. When students have finished, Invite someone to close your time in prayer.*



## ABRAHAM'S TALENTS

In the book of Genesis we read the story of Abraham. Throughout his story, God gave Abraham opportunities to live by faith in His promise, you could think of these opportunities like the “talents” from Jesus’ parable in Matthew 25. Feel free to use the back of this paper if you need more space to write

### STORY 1: Abraham’s Call

(Genesis 11:28–12:9)

1. Retell the Story—Rewrite it in your own words.
2. What opportunity did God give Abraham?
3. What are the results of Abraham’s actions?

### STORY 2: Abraham and the Promise

(Genesis 15:1–6 and 16:1–16)

1. Retell the Story - Rewrite it in your own words.
2. What did God promise Abraham?
3. What were the results of Abraham and Sarai’s impatience?

### STORY 3: Abraham’s Covenant with God

(Genesis 17:1–27)

1. Retell the Story—Rewrite it in your own words.
2. What opportunity did God give Abraham?
3. What was the promise of Abraham’s obedience?

### STORY 4: Abraham and Isaac

(Genesis 22:1–18)

1. Retell the Story - Rewrite it in your own words.
2. What did Abraham almost sacrifice?
3. What were the results of Abraham’s actions

# ETERNITY

## SESSION 2: FINAL DESTINATION

### Quick Start



#### Read

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.



#### Print

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#### Watch

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## • OPEN

*Leader: Before students arrive, place four food stations throughout the room with two or three different kinds of food choices at each station. Foods should be different. Also place a blindfold, a sheet of paper and a pencil at each station. You'll need a volunteer student or adult at each station to help with running the activity.*

Welcome to Extreme Food Tasting Competition! Today you have the simple task of choosing what food you like at each station. When you get to the station, you will be blindfolded and given two foods to taste. You must then tell the helper at each station which food you like. When you're done, hang out to see what your friends chose, or move to another station. We'll continue until each person has been to each station.

*Leader: Give students time to go to each station. When everyone is done, gather up the score sheets from each station and announce what food students liked the most.*

**How difficult was it to make the choice that you did?**

**Were any two foods so close that you could have chosen either one?**

Today we're going to talk about a choice many of us make, and our friends are making too. It's not about food, it's about who to follow in our lives. Many of us make that decision like we are blindfolded. But we don't have to. As we talk today we'll be considering the difference between heaven and hell, and we'll learn why choosing heaven is a better choice.

## • VIEW

**Watch Session 2: *Final Destination*** (18 minutes)

## • REVIEW

In our last session we talked about viewing our current life with the right perspective—living in light of eternity. Do you remember from last time the rope illustration Francis used? He used it to show us that your life on earth, right now, is just a blink compared to the totality of your life. We are all going to live forever. But we won't all necessarily spend eternity in the same place.



# ETERNITY

In the video, Justin had an interesting perspective on his life. Before he came to know Christ he viewed life in very temporary terms. He said,

*I thought that death was it. It was over, whatever it was, just like before we were born.*

**What's your response to that perspective?**

**Do you know someone who has a perspective about life like Justin's? What is it like to hang out with them?**

**How does that perspective impact the way someone lives? Do you think people who think that death is the "end" have more fun in life? Or do you think that attitude leads to despair?**

Justin's story continued. He said,

*And when I got saved it made me realize you can gather up everything here on earth. But what's it worth, if you lose your soul? That's like a speck of sand in the light of eternity.*

Justin started with an attitude that life is just temporary—we're here for a short time, then our life and existence is over. But after he was saved, his understanding changed, that this life is just the beginning to a full life here, and then a full life in heaven. At some point, we all have to make a choice between those two options. We can choose the life we were created for, or choose to believe that everything is really just temporary.

The scary thing is that those who choose to live like this current physical world is all there is have to deal with the reality of hell. Francis said this about hell,

*Jesus, who's the most loving Being that we can fathom, talks about hell more than anyone else. And He talks about it as a place of torment, a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

**When you think of hell, what do you imagine that it is like?**

**Based on what we've talked about today and what you already know about the Bible, who ends up going to hell?**



Francis cleared some of that up when he read from Romans 8:1. He said,

*Those of us who are in Christ Jesus, we face no condemnation and that there's mercy at the feet of Jesus.*

Condemnation is disapproval, but it's more than that. By condemning us, God is making a declaration that our sin is keeping us from fellowship with Him, and because of that broken relationship, hell becomes our destiny. But in that condemnation, God offers us Jesus, who died for our sin, and paid the price for our decision to live a life away from God.

Hell is a very real place. The bad news is that there are people who will reject Jesus and end up spending eternity there. The good news is that God has made a way for us to spend eternity with Him in heaven, and that way is through faith in Jesus Christ. I can't stress to you how important that decision is for each of you.

Also in the video, we saw Jaren's story. At one point he was talking about his grandma who also had cancer and he said,

*We would pray to God and ask for forgiveness and health and good news. And most of the time we looked at Scriptures about how He feels about us and how we should feel about Him.*

And later, after Jaren talked about his struggle with cancer returning,

*As I was going through the second chemotherapy, my faith wasn't broken. It kept growing. I knew I was going to heaven to see Him, even if I did die.*

**Imagine if you were told tomorrow that you had cancer. Do you think you could have a positive attitude about your life, or even your death, like Jaren?**

**Jaren didn't start out there. What led to that dramatic change in his life?**

Jaren's story reminds us of the importance of prayer and taking time to read the Bible. True hope, true purpose in life comes from God. The more you know Him—and one of the best ways to get to know God better is by reading His Word—the more hope and purpose your life will have.

## • BIBLE JOURNEY

The Bible talks about heaven and hell in several places, even in the Old Testament.

Someone read Daniel 12:1–2.

**What do these verses teach us about heaven and hell?** (Everyone will exist eternally either in heaven or hell.)

Someone read Hebrews 9:26–28.

**What do these verses teach about the importance of the decision we make during our time on earth before we die?** (We only have one life in which our choice about Jesus determines our eternal destiny.)

Someone read John 3:13 and verse 36.

**What do these verses teach us about the importance of believing in Jesus Christ?**

One passage that speaks to both heaven and hell comes directly from Jesus in Luke 16. Jesus is talking to a crowd of people, and among them are some Pharisees. In the first part of Luke 16 Jesus tells a parable to illustrate that you can't love both God and money. The Pharisees don't like what Jesus is teaching because they loved money (Luke 16:14) and they thought their wealth was proof of their righteousness. Jesus goes on to tell another parable to illustrate the problem with the way the Pharisees thought about money, but in this story we learn some amazing things about heaven and hell.

Would someone read the beginning of this parable that Jesus tells in Luke 16:19–24?

**Describe the contrast that Jesus is making between these two men.**

The contrast is striking, not because one is rich and the other poor, but because, according to the world, the man that “has it all together” (the rich man) doesn't, and the man, who according to the world doesn't have it together, really does. The Pharisees would have assumed that the rich man would have ended up in heaven and that the poor man would be in hell.

**What is significant about the fact that, in the story, the man in hell is about to call out to Lazarus?**

Although it's not specifically stated, we can assume that the rich man in this parable walked by the poor man at his gate every day, but did nothing to help the man. We can imagine the poor man calling out to the rich man for help, but the rich man rushes past, ignoring the poor man's condition and need.

Would someone read Luke 16:25–26?

**Why do you think Jesus uses Abraham in this story?** (Abraham represented the father of Israel. Bringing him into the story meant that Jews and the Pharisees would take the story seriously.)

**Why do you think Abraham makes the contrast between the actions of Lazarus and the actions of the rich man?**

In his life, the rich man thought he had it all. He had a killer wardrobe and lived a luxurious life. Lazarus was clothed in sores, and would do anything just to eat crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Their lives were completely different. But, as Abraham points out, that outward success in this life does not determine our future destiny.

**What does verse 26 teach us about heaven and hell?** (It's permanent. Once there, you can't move from one place to the other.)

Would someone read Luke 16:27–31?

**What do you think Abraham means when he says, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them”?**

Abraham is making a reference to the truth that is found in the Old Testament Scriptures. There's enough information found in the Old Testament for the rich man, or any man, to know what leads to heaven and what leads to hell. If you were a Pharisee, this would sting a bit! They prided themselves in knowing the Scriptures better than anyone else, but here Jesus is pointing out that they too should “know better” than to live the way they are living, since while they think they are the perfect example of holiness, they too will end up in the same place as the rich man in the story if they don't believe in Him.

This passage indicates that it's not an external condition or outward appearance that justifies or condemns someone, it's the internal condition of your heart—of belief or unbelief.

# ETERNITY

This story reinforces what Francis said in the video. There really are two kingdoms. And, if we stop and consider our story, we have a choice to make just like the rich man and Lazarus. But, that decision isn't something we make after we die, that's a decision that we make now.

## • SCRIPTURE LAB

When we started today's lesson, we made choices about which food we liked best. Sometimes the choices were easy, sometimes they were difficult because you were having to pick between two bad or good choices. In today's lesson we've been discussing another very important choice. This choice will determine your eternity. But you shouldn't go into this decision blindfolded! You should be well informed about this choice. We are going to look at several passages in the Bible that are listed on your handout that will give you a glimpse of eternity.

*Leader: Have students get into four groups and make sure everyone has access to a Bible. Distribute the Eternity – Heaven or Hell handout (example handout on page 18). Assign each group three verses about heaven and three verses about hell to look up. Have them write what they discovered underneath the verse reference. Students can use the back of the handout if they need more space.*

*Give groups several minutes to accomplish this. When students are done, let each group pick a few passages to describe to the group. If you have a larger group, you can divide into six groups and assign two verses from each column to each group.*

### **What new thing did you learn about eternity? How will that new knowledge shape your future choices?**

When you're in high school it's easy to think that you've got forever to live. Life just crawls along as you sit in math class looking at the clock. When we're ten, we can't wait until we're thirteen. At thirteen, we want to be sixteen. As soon as we turn sixteen we want to be eighteen. At eighteen...well, you know. We just keep waiting for life to begin. But the truth is, we've got right now. This is life. Justin and Jaren's stories illustrated for us that we aren't guaranteed tomorrow or even the next minute. The choices we make now will determine our life for eternity.

## • LAST WORD

Before you go, I want us to look at two familiar verses together. Some of you might already know these verses and can recite them without looking them up. Would someone please read Romans 3:23?



# ETERNITY

**What's the central truth of this verse? Why is that important?**

Now would someone read Romans 6:23 for us?

**Since we are all sinners, what does this verse tell us about what we deserve? What do we “earn” because of our sin?**

**What does this verse teach us about eternal life?** (That it's only found in Jesus and that it can't be earned, it's a gift for those who believe in Him.)

And so, we come down to a choice. Do we keep heading down the path marked for eternal death? Or do we accept the gift of God through Jesus and gain eternal life?

The choice is yours. Let's spend some time in silent prayer while you contemplate the choice before you.

**Leader:** *After a few minutes, close in prayer.*

## ETERNITY – HEAVEN OR HELL

There are so many thoughts and ideas about what heaven and hell are like...or even if there is a heaven and hell! It's always a good idea to find out exactly what the Bible has to say about it. Tackle the verses your leader assigns you. Write your findings under each passage and be ready to present them to the rest of the group.

## HEAVEN

1. Psalm 11:4
2. Isaiah 6:1-7
3. Isaiah 65:17-25
4. Acts 7:56
5. 1 Corinthians 2:9
6. 1 Corinthians 15:50
7. 2 Peter 3:13
8. Revelation 4:1-11
9. Revelation 21:1-7
10. Revelation 21:9-14
11. Revelation 21:22-27
12. Revelation 22:1-5

## HELL

1. Isaiah 66:24
2. Matthew 10:28
3. Matthew 25:41-46
4. Mark 9:43-48
5. John 3:36
6. Hebrews 10:26-31
7. 2 Peter 2:4-10
8. 2 Peter 2:13-17
9. Jude 5-7
10. Revelation 20:7-10
11. Revelation 20:11-15
12. Revelation 21:8

# ETERNITY

SESSION 3:

## EVERYDAY ETERNAL LIFE

### Quick Start



#### Read

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.



#### Print

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#### Watch

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## • OPEN

**Leader:** *Before the meeting, get several different magazines and place them in four piles in different places in the room. Make sure the magazines have pictures of people in them. Also put a pair of scissors, a glue stick and a large sheet of paper at each place.*

*As students arrive, direct each student to a different pile. When everyone has arrived, direct students to look through the magazines.*

Today you're going to have the opportunity to create the "perfect" human being. Your job is to go through the magazines that I have put in your pile, and find what you would consider the perfect physical attributes. When you find one—a perfect pair of eyes, or a perfect pair of hands—cut them out. After you have the perfect attributes, work with your group to put your "perfect" person together on the paper and glue them in the correct place. When you're all finished we will compare the people you've created.

**Leader:** *Allow students time to put their "perfect" people together. When they're ready, invite each group up front to present their person. When they're done, give groups tape and have them hang their pictures on the wall.*

### **Do you think there's any such thing as a physically "perfect" human?**

Physical beauty or what people find attractive is often very subjective. You might find someone attractive but someone else doesn't see it. Different societies and cultures find different things attractive about people. In some places, long necks, stretched lips, or even big feet are a sign of beauty.

### **Why do you think so many people try and fit into the model of what their culture says is attractive? What are some of the things we do, in our culture, to try and be seen as physically "perfect"?**

We all know that your external appearance doesn't define who you are, or whose you are. Yet many of us spend a great deal of time and expense trying to fit into a specific standard of physical attractiveness.

Now that we've thought about physical "perfection," let's take some time to think about spiritual perfection. I want you to consider what you think it might look like to be spiritually perfect. What comes to mind? What are some characteristics?

### **What is the difference between exterior perfection and internal perfection?**

So many of us seek exterior perfection. We want to look right, walk right, smell right. Putting the emphasis on our exterior is really putting our energy in the wrong direction. While spiritual perfection is something that we see only in Jesus, we are called to grow more and more into His image. The Bible often refers to this as "sanctification." This is a monumental task, one that we need God's help with, every step of the way. That's what we'll talk about today.



## • VIEW

**Watch Session 3: *Everyday Eternal Life*** (17 minutes)

## • REVIEW

At the beginning of the video, Nathan said,

*Our youth group put on this boot camp...and it's where the older high schoolers lead the junior highers. I was in a group with just me and another guy, and it was awesome because it allowed the two of us to sit with this junior, and as he was going through these Bible studies with us, I was like a sponge. I was just soaking it up, and that's when the hunger for Scripture and the hunger for learning about who God was just enflamed.*

**What helped jump start Nathan's spiritual development?**

It's easy to think that sanctification is a complex process, but in truth, it's simple obedience, one day at a time. Nathan's love of the Bible started in junior high because a high school kid was willing to spend time with him in Bible study.

**Have you ever done something like that—spend time with a younger kid studying the Bible? If so, how did that change you? If not, is it something you'd be willing to do? Why or why not?**

Nathan went on to say,

*Scripture for me is not just words on a page. Without Scripture, without diving into that, without studying it, hearing it, knowing it, I wouldn't be who I am today.*

The Bible shapes who we are. It changes the course of our lives. For those of us who are living apart from God, it draws us back to Him. For those of us who are close to God, His Word confirms the truth of who He is.

For some of us, the Bible is often something we don't really think about. We take it for granted. And that sometimes causes us to struggle with reading God's Word. Francis mention that when he said,

*For those of us who grew up in church it becomes this, "Yeah I should read the Bible. Yeah, I should pray." But you've got to understand what an honor it is, what a rush it ought to be in all of our minds that we can actually speak to Him.*

**Do you think there's a chance that the Bible is so familiar that we don't really take it seriously? Why?**

Francis mentions that it's an honor to be able to read God's Word and to spend time praying with Him. We, like Moses, can approach the Almighty God!

**How should this honor impact the way you read the Bible and approach God in prayer?**

Francis said,

*That's what eternal life is all about. It's about you right now, getting in love with Jesus through spending time with Him, and it just makes more and more anxious for that day when we'll finally see Him face to face."*

**How does reading the Bible help us fall in love with Jesus?**

**How does reading the Bible help get us ready for the day when we see Jesus face-to-face?**

Take a moment to think about what it will be like to spend eternity with God, to actually be in God's presence, to see Jesus right in front of you and to be able to talk with Him face-to-face. The more we understand who He is, and what He's about, the clearer our purpose and mission becomes in life. A greater love and understanding of God helps us clear away all that really doesn't matter and helps us focus on investing our lives in things that will last for eternity. That's how we are to live.

But unfortunately, that's not the way many of us live. In the video, we met Noah. He went away on a mission trip and he had an amazing time. He really connected with God. Then, when he returned home, he said,

*Then I went back to school with all of my friends talking about parties and stuff. And prom came up with all of the drugs and everything. Hanging out with my friends and going out and smoking. I smoked with a couple of my friends. It was the first time that I have done it. Everyone was doing it, I tried my best to stay away.*

**Why do you think it's so easy for us, as Christians, to get sucked back into sin?**

Francis said,

*The Bible says that this belief in eternity should change our actions, our behavior. It changes the whole direction of our lives. You see what we believe in eternity, it changes what we do with our time, it changes our actions, it changes what we do with our money. Because we go, "Wait there is a future coming, and what I do now impacts all of that!"*

The Bible helps us stay focused. When the world wants us to follow all the shiny things it offers—partying, drugs, money—God speaks through His Word and calls us closer to Him. When we're called to "Seek first the Kingdom of God," we often wonder, "How do I do that?" The answer to that question is simple: The more we read God's Word and the more we are willing to obey what He's asked from us, then the more we will be able to follow God.

## • BIBLE JOURNEY

When we're talking about sanctification, we have to go to Scripture to uncover God's perspective on our journey toward looking more and more like Jesus. We are going to jump around to different passages today, but hang on for the ride—this is important stuff that can change your life!

We all know that just because you place your faith in Jesus (are justified), that doesn't mean we don't still face temptation and occasionally sin. God isn't surprised by this struggle. Sanctification is the process that God uses to take us, sinful but saved humans, and transform us more into the likeness of Jesus.

Someone read Galatians 2:20.

**The Bible teaches that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ. What does Galatians 2:20 teach us about the role of faith in sanctification?**

So, it's not like you place your faith in Jesus, are saved, and then are left to figure out the rest of life on your own. Christ comes and lives in you! But, becoming spiritually mature, like Jesus, also requires faith.

**How does trusting God to help you grow spiritually—and knowing that He's there along with your every step of the way—impact the way you view the struggles you face daily?**

Let's turn in our Bibles to Romans chapter 6. The Apostle Paul just finished chapter 5 by talking about how grace conquered sin in Jesus Christ.

Someone read Romans 6:1–4.

**What is the expectation for believers in Christ when it comes to sin?**

Paul vividly describes the believer as being buried with Christ and raised from the dead to live a new life. We aren't the old self, who was a slave to sin. The power of the risen Christ lives in us.

Someone read Romans 6:5–7.

Paul writes that through the power of Christ's resurrection, we are no longer slaves to sin, that we have been set free!

**How do these verses relate to your everyday experience? Do you feel set free from sin? Or do you still struggle with sin? If we are free, then why do we still struggle?**

Let's keep reading and Paul will give us a clue as to why we still struggle with sin. Someone read Romans 6:8–14.

**What does Paul instruct us to do with ourselves?**

**How do you “offer every part of yourself” to God? What does that look like? Why do we want to hold some “parts” back?**

So far we've learned that becoming like Jesus requires faith, that He lives in us and helps us become like Him, and that we have the power to resist that change and still sin. As we move on in this study, we're going to look at two very important things God uses in our sanctification.

Someone look up 2 Timothy 3:16–17, and someone else look up Ephesians 4:11–16. When you have the 2 Timothy passage, go ahead and read that out loud.

**What does 2 Timothy 3:16–17 say is a vital part of us growing in righteousness?**

Remember Nathan's story in the video. Spending daily time in the Word of God made all the difference in his life, and it will make all the difference in your life too! Reading, digesting, and then doing what you read in the Bible is a major part of becoming like Jesus.



Now let's listen to Ephesians 4:11–16.

**According to these verses, what else does God use in our sanctification?**

It's tempting to want to do it all on our own. But not only does growing in Christ require faith in Him and diligent time in God's Word, it also requires being around and serving other Christians.

**Why do you think God uses other people to help us become like Jesus?**

**How are you serving others in the Christian community?**

Don't fall into the trap and think that just because you are in high school that you don't have to serve. It's a privilege to help others, and the church won't be the same without you using your God given talents and passions to help everyone grow. Remember how something as simple as a junior in high school sitting down with Nathan changed his life?

One valid question that we have to ask ourselves is, are we truly growing in our spiritual lives? How will I know if I'm becoming more like Jesus, or if I'm still "holding back" parts of myself? I've got a little exercise to help us see what it looks like to become more like Jesus.

## • SCRIPTURE LAB

When we started today's lesson, we looked through various magazines, and I asked you to try and create the perfect human being. Now, I'd like for you to create a different picture. Instead of photos, I want you to create a word picture. I'd like for you to look at some instructions that Paul gave to the church in Ephesus about how to live a life that's in the process of becoming more and more like Christ (Ephesians 4:17–5:20). Instead of many passages to look up, there is just one. This passage does a pretty good job of taking an original word picture and showing us what the new and improved picture should be.

**Leader:** *Have students get in groups of 3–4, and give each group a Bible and each student a copy of the A New Me handout (example handout on page 28). Ask groups to look up the passage, and write the improved words where they belong on the person's outline. For example, you can write, "speak truthfully," where the mouth should go. When each group is finished, have each student write on their own paper some things they would like to change in their own life. Give groups several minutes to accomplish this. When students are done, go through each passage, listening to what students saw.*

**NOTE:** *Students might have some difficulty understanding what you are asking them to do at first. You can give them a few examples, such as, write “speak truthfully” where the mouth should be. Write “share with those in need” over the hands. Write “new attitude of the mind” on the head.*

**What new thing did you learn about the Christian life from this activity?**

**Was there anything that your friends wrote down that you didn’t? What did you think of those answers?**

Did you notice that there were several phrases like “put off” when it was talking about the old self, and “put on” when talking about the new self? It’s as though these character traits of the old and new self are like clothing. Just like you have a choice, each day, about what you are going to wear, you have a choice put on the new self or the old.

Sometimes, it may not be as easy as that. Sure, we may not have a problem with stealing, but coarse joking is an issue. Speaking truthfully is easy, but anger is a real problem. Putting on only part of the new self would be like getting dressed in the morning and forgetting to put on our pants. It would be embarrassing! But what if we did that every morning? Pretty soon, we wouldn’t think too much about it. We may even think that our parents don’t mind, either.

This process of sanctification—being made into the image of Christ—takes, not only God working in us, but a willingness on our part to turn completely away from the old self and embrace everything about the new self.

## • LAST WORD

Before you go, I want us to look at one last passage together. It’s kind of a tongue twister, but it talks about the struggle Paul faced with “putting off” the old self and “putting on” the new self. Would someone please read Romans 7:14–25 for us?

**What is happening in this passage?**

Here’s the encouraging thing about the Bible: When we start to read about the people we’ve learned about in church and Sunday school, we find that there was nothing particularly special about them. They struggled in their relationship with God. They sinned. They often had messed up family lives. So here is Paul, the self proclaimed “chief among sinners,” and he is being super transparent about his struggle with sin and right living.

We don’t know what his sin is. He doesn’t tell us, because it’s not important. The important thing is the struggle. Sometimes it feels like there is a war being waged between our old life and our new. It’s a real battle! Paul cries out,

# ETERNITY

“Who will rescue me...?” Then he answers his own question, “Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

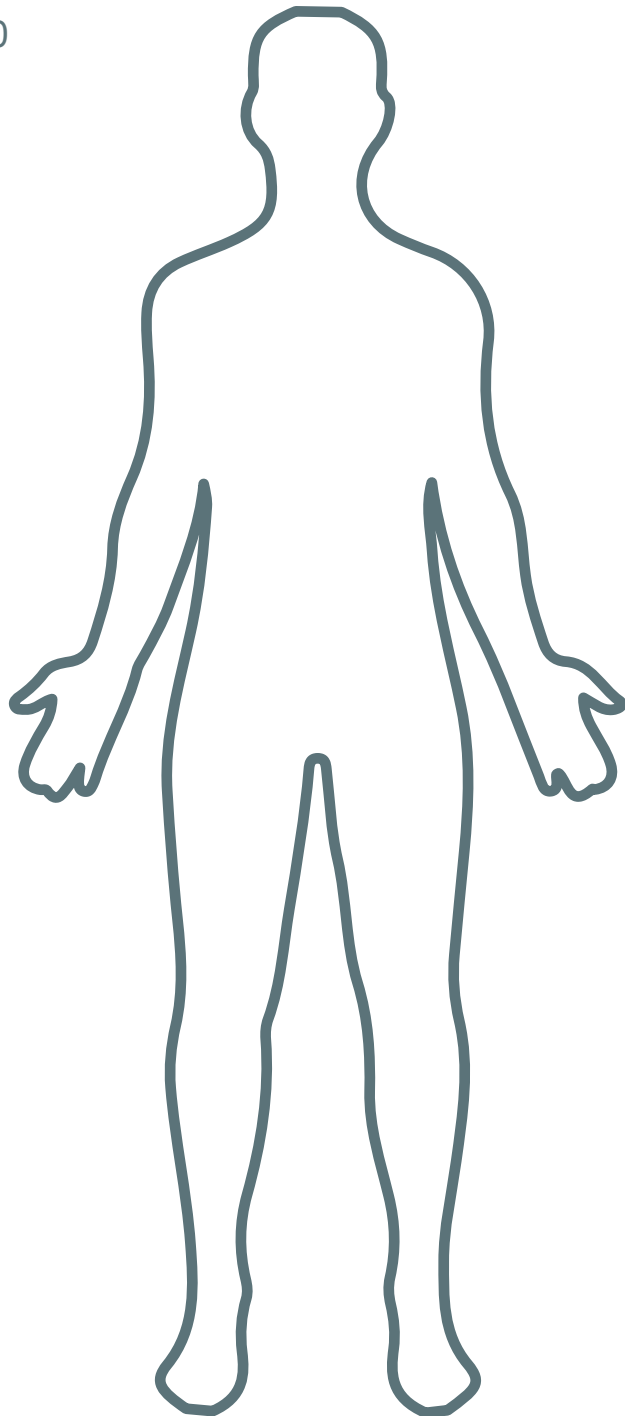
We often feel as though the quest for growing in the image of Christ falls squarely on our shoulders, with no room for error.

The challenge isn't that we have to make ourselves like Christ. The challenge is inviting Jesus to rescue us from this battle as we walk with Him daily. The closer we walk to Christ, letting Him rescue us, the more like Him we will become. Let's spend some time praying about that now.

## A NEW ME

Take a few minutes to see how Paul describes the “perfect” person by reading the passage below. As you are reading, fill in the picture below with the words that you discover make up this person. When you are finished, write out some things you would like to change in your life.

Ephesians 4:17–5:20





# ETERNITY

SESSION 4:

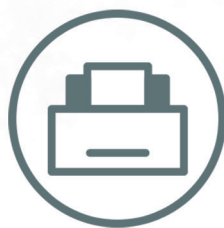
## NOW IS THE TIME

### Quick Start



#### Read

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.



#### Print

Before your time with the students, make enough copies of this session's handout for your entire group. (The handouts came with your download.)



#### Watch

Preview this session before watching it with your students. Make sure that everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

***Note: For more detailed information, please see the How to Use The Leader's Guide document.***

## • OPEN

**Leader:** *For this activity you'll need two objects of little value—like a paperclip, plastic comb or rubber chicken—feel free to pick a silly item. You'll also need an object that your students are really passionate about and something they believe has significant value—like a cell phone or iPad. These three objects will serve as mystery products for the game show. You'll also need four volunteers: one expert judge, "Noah," and three outgoing students to serve as contestants to "pitch" their products.*

*Place the three products on a table in view of the entire room. Use a handkerchief or hand towel to cover each object, you won't reveal the product until right before it's time for the student to give his or her sales pitch.*

Hello everyone and welcome to Ark Tank, the game show where you must convince our expert judge—let's call him... Noah—what product he needs to take on his long boat ride. I'm going to need one volunteer to be Noah, our expert judge, and three contestants to try and convince Noah that he should take their product on his boat. Each contestant will have to give their best "sales pitch" for their product, but they only have 30 seconds.

After all three contestants have presented their must-have products, our trusted judge will announce the winner. Now, contestant number one is up!

**Leader:** *Have your "Noah" sit in a chair at the front of the room and the first contestant come up to present their mystery object. When everyone is in place, you can have the contestant pick which mystery product they would like to present. As soon as you reveal the product, begin a 30-second timer.*

OK, contestant number one, under each of these handkerchiefs is a mystery product. Once you choose a product, I will remove the handkerchief, and you will have 30 seconds to convince Noah why he desperately needs that product. Ready. Set. Go!

**Leader:** *After contestant number one has finished his or her sales pitch, have the group give them a round of applause, but make sure your expert judge reserves commentary until all three sales pitches are over. Repeat with contestants two and three.*

Ladies and gentlemen, we have just heard some amazing sales pitches. If I were the judge I would want to take all three products! But, Noah can only pick one product. So, Noah, what did you think of the three products you heard about today?

**Leader:** *Encourage your expert judge to elaborate on what he or she thought about each product and the convincing aspects of each sales pitch. Then, have your judge proclaim the winner. As a prize, you could let the winner take home one of the products of little value.*

Everyone give a final round of applause for our winner and all our contestants! Thanks for playing Ark Tank!

## **Which of our contestants do you think had the easiest product to sell? Why?**

While all of our contestants did a great job, I think the contestants with the silly little objects had the toughest task. They had to rely almost completely on their salesmanship. But, when you start with an object that already has a lot of value, or something that we're already passionate about, it's much easier to convince others why they need it.

## **Why is it easier to speak to others about the things we're passionate about?**

This is natural. Chances are that some of you could talk all day about your favorite sports team. Others of you could go on and on about a video game or a TV show. Talking about the things we're passionate about isn't a chore at all. In fact, we almost have to talk about the things we enjoy most.

Today we're going to be talking about letting our passion for Christ spill out into our conversations and into how we serve others.

## • VIEW

**Watch Session 4: *Now Is The Time*** (15 minutes)

## • REVIEW

In the first story of the video, we heard from Gabbi. She said,

*For a long time I really struggled with not wanting to hang out with people who aren't Christians because I didn't want them bringing me down.*

## **Have you ever struggled with this? Do you think this is a reasonable concern?**

The truth is, the people we surround ourselves with have an incredible influence on us. If we are constantly surrounded by people who don't think like we think, or don't live like we know we should live, we are much more likely to begin to live and think like them. But, we can't live an isolated life either.

Later in her story Gabbi said,

*I realized that I'm not going to be influencing anyone if I'm not hanging out with people who aren't Christians.*



**What do you think we can do as Christians to be careful when we're hanging out with our non-believing friends?**

We've got to know ourselves and we've got to exercise wisdom. If there are situations where we could easily succumb to temptation, or where we could compromise our witness to Christ, we need to have an exit strategy.

**In his teaching, Francis pointed out that those of us who are Christians have been rescued from something. What have we been rescued from?**

He points out that we have been rescued from hell. That's wonderful! But, as Gabbi's life points out, we haven't been rescued so that we can just sit back and enjoy that. Being rescued motivates us to talk to others, to seek to influence others. Francis said,

*When we know God and we know what we've been rescued from—the terrors of hell—and know our holy eternity is set, and actually know the God of the universe, man it should be natural for us to want all of our friends to know this God that Gabbi knows.*

**How should knowing what you've been rescued from impact how you view your friends and classmates who don't follow Jesus?**

Later in the video we met Nathalie. She started an organization to help the homeless in Atlanta. She said,

*My family and I would go down to Atlanta all the time, and that's where you would see most of the homeless. When I saw people in need, it bothered me. There was no doubt about it—no thought. I wanted to help. God put something in my heart. I was like, "I want to start an organization!"...If our God comes to serve, why can't I?*

**What was Nathalie's motivation for serving? How does her story help you think about serving?**

Nathalie knew that Jesus, even though He is God, did not come to earth to be served, but to serve others (Matthew 20:28). So when she saw a need in her community, she was motivated to serve like Christ served. Nathalie went on to say,

*When I go out to serve in my community, I no longer just look at the physical needs but the spiritual. I may not have enough food or clothes or whatever else I'm giving out, but I know that with a simple hug or a simple, "I love you, Jesus loves you," that's way more important and that's what they want the most.*

**Why is it important to focus on the spiritual needs of those we are serving, not just the physical needs?**



Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus meeting real, physical needs of the people He comes in contact with. We see Him feeding physical hunger and healing physical sickness—this is something Jesus took seriously and commanded His followers to do as well. But Jesus was also concerned with satisfying spiritual needs. As we serve others, we've got to think about both their physical and spiritual needs.

Francis ended the session with an encouragement to you. He said,

*It's all going to be worth it. Jesus spent His days on earth sacrificing for us and that's the example for us. And He did it because of the joy that was set before Him. So take advantage of the opportunity you have today. Right now.*

**How does the joy set before you—the joy of heaven—help motivate you to take advantages of the opportunities to serve others that God has given you today?**

Our days on the earth are short. In the short amount of time that we've been given, we have to be intentional. Those of us who know Christ are called to share Him with others. And as Francis has pointed out, that call isn't just for older people or pastors. *All* of us, like Gabbi and Nathalie, are called to help others discover Jesus' love.

## • BIBLE JOURNEY

Francis brings out an important idea in this lesson. God has created us to be in a close relationship with Him, but that isn't all that He has created us for. He made us to have a full life. So many of us, and many people we know often settle for a life that lacks adventure. That's not the kind of life that God made us for. This kind of life that Francis describes has an added benefit. It causes others to notice and desire that kind of life, too.

In the Bible we find a great example of someone who lived a life of adventure for God in the story of Philip. Let's take a look at the beginning of his story.

Would someone read Acts 7:59–8:6?

**What happened on the day of Stephen's stoning?** (Persecution broke out, everyone was scattered, Saul was trying to destroy the church, Saul dragged off men and women and put them in prison.)

**Where did people scatter?** (Judea and Samaria)

**What did the scattered people do?** (Preach the Word.)

**Where did Philip go?** (Samaria)

**What did he do there?** (Proclaim Christ.)

Though these Christians were forced out of Jerusalem, they didn't go quietly. They preached the Word and proclaimed Christ wherever they went. Philip was openly talking about Christ with the people in his town. In fact, so many came to faith in Jesus that the apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to go check it out.

Would someone read Acts 8:26–28.

**What's happening in this story?** (Angel appeared to Philip, told to go to Gaza, met Ethiopian eunuch.)

**What would your response be if an angel of the Lord appeared to you?**

Here's the thing about angels. Often when people would encounter one in the Bible, they would be filled with fear and trembling. But the passage doesn't mention that Philip is at all troubled by this encounter. His relationship with the Lord is so real, so close, that he obeys. He's not sure what's going to happen, but he obeys. He just starts walking and listening to the Lord. And then the Holy Spirit tells him what to do.

Would someone read Acts 8:29–40.

**What did the Holy Spirit tell Philip to do?** (Go up to the chariot.)

**What happened next?** (Philip heard the man reading from Isaiah, asked if he understood, was invited into the chariot to explain.)

**How do we know whether the eunuch believed in Jesus or not?** (He asked Philip to baptize him after hearing the good news about Jesus.)

**What happened to Philip after he baptized the eunuch?** (The Spirit of the Lord suddenly took him away and he appeared somewhere else.)

**Why do you think Philip was able to see God do so many awesome things through his ministry?**

It's easy to look at Philip's story and be amazed because God really did some amazing things through him. But if you pay close attention to the story, Philip was able to do great things for God because he was simply living a passionate, obedient life—no matter his circumstances.

Think about it, Philip had to leave his home because of persecution for his faith. Because he was passionate about Jesus, he told others in his new town, Samaria, about what Christ had done. God showed up and did miraculous things. Then, Philip was obedient to the Holy Spirit when he met the Ethiopian eunuch, and was able to tell the Ethiopian about Jesus too.

Phillip's story helps us understand that evangelism flows out of our passion for Jesus. Because we love God, we are obedient to His Word and to His Spirit. And our obedience to the Lord often puts us in places where we simply get to share our passion about Jesus with others.

## • SCRIPTURE LAB

Often when we think about Jesus' time on earth, we focus on His death. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. Jesus' death purchased our forgiveness and reconciled us to God. But Jesus' life also stands as an example of how to live a life pleasing to the Lord. Ephesians 5:1–2 says,

*Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

**Leader:** *Distribute the Jesus the Example handout (example handout on page 37). Have students work through the questions on the handout in pairs. Make sure each pair has access to a Bible. Students will need 10–15 minutes to read the passages and answer the questions. Be available to help answer questions that students may have. When students are finished, gather everyone together again.*

**What about Jesus' life in these passages stood out to you?**

**Take a moment and look back at your responses to question c. for each passage. What are some of the ways you've learned that we should love and serve others?**

When you read the Gospels, it's hard to miss the kind of intentionality with which Jesus lived. He loved people. What others—and often the disciples—saw as interruptions, Jesus saw as opportunities to minister and to serve others. He wasn't afraid to associate with people that society viewed as outcasts, like lepers and tax collectors. He cared about the physical needs of people—whether that was hunger or an illness or a disability. He sought to be an example of service, so that we might serve others.

## • LAST WORD

Before you go, let's look at one last passage together. It's actually one that Francis brought up in his lesson, and it fits with what we've been talking about.

Would someone please read 1 Timothy 4:12 for us?

### **What does this verse mean?**

It's easy to think that just because you are young, you're exempt from doing great things for the Lord. You think, maybe when I'm older...but that's not what God has in mind for you.

That's what Paul is saying in this passage. He's encouraging his spiritual son, Timothy, to be a witness of God's love and power in his life.

### **What were the ways Paul encouraged Timothy to be an example?**

Some of you may be weirded-out at the thought of having to talk about your faith with someone because you're not sure what to say or how they'll take it. But, if you live your life as a "Timothy" example, someone just might ask you why and then the "what to say" will just take care of itself.

Your passion to serve God and serve others might just be an example to other believers around you. They might see how God is using you and seek to be used in the same way. Think about the change you could bring in your school, in your neighborhood, in your city, just by being an example in speech, in life, in love, in faith and purity.

Let's spend some time praying about that now.



## JESUS THE EXAMPLE

Jesus loved and served perfectly. Read the passages about Jesus below and take time to answer each question, thinking about Jesus as an example of service and love. If you need more room to write, feel free to use the back of this paper.

## 1. Jesus and the Leper

*Matthew 8:2–4*

- What happened? Retell the story in your own words.
- Why was it significant that Jesus reached out and touched the leper?
- What does this story tell you about how we should love and serve others?

## 2. Jesus Feeds the Multitude

*Mark 6:30–44*

- What happened? Retell the story in your own words.
- What was Jesus' attitude toward the crowd? What were His actions?
- What does this story tell you about how we should love and serve others?

## 3. Jesus and Levi

*Luke 5:27–32*

- What happened? Retell the story in your own words.
- What did Jesus do that angered the Pharisees? How did Jesus respond to them?
- What does this story tell you about how we should love and serve others?

## 4. Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

*John 13:1–17*

- What happened? Retell the story in your own words.
- Can you relate to Peter's discomfort of Jesus washing his feet? How would you feel?
- What does this story tell you about how we should love and serve others?