



Thank you for previewing a *youthministry360* Leader/Student Guide. We're pumped you're considering purchasing a ym360 Bible Study resource.

We put a lot of intentionality into the content and the layout of our lesson plans. This short intro will help you know what to look for as you evaluate this preview.

Looking At Your ym360 Leader Guide

This Leader Guide combines deep, meaningful Bible study with relevant, creative activities. You'll find all our lessons plans both easy to follow and easy to teach.

Each ym360 Leader Guide is broken down into the following sections:

- **Teacher Prep Videos**—Short, straightforward videos designed to help you prepare to teach the lesson
- **Bible Background**—A one page, easy to digest snapshot of the specific passage's context and main biblical truth. Use this to help prepare to teach your lesson.
- **The Lead In**—An interactive, thematic intro to the lesson
- **The Main Event**—An intense, deep time of Biblical study designed to drive home the lesson's truth
- **Bonus Round**—An optional activity that goes deeper into the lesson's biblical theme
- **The Last Word**—A final activity allowing you to really hone-in on the lesson's application

Additionally, every ym360 Bible Study resource features a student component. This lesson features a Student Guide that corresponds with an activity in the Leaders Guide.

If you have any questions about your Leader Guide/Student Guide preview PDF, please do not hesitate to email (feedback@youthministry360.com) or call us (888.96.ym360).

Vivid Lesson 1: The Fight Within

Objective: The point of the lesson is to help your students identify their internal struggle with sin and commit to fight against it.

Scripture Focus: James 1:12-17

Overview: If only we didn't have the weight of our sin nature to struggle with. Life would be so much easier, wouldn't it? But as we all know, we do have a sinful nature and it does affect us. Dramatically. God calls all Christ-followers to grow in our faith. A major way this growth happens is through a realization that we're our own worst enemies. In this life, we'll always be contending with the sin that lives in us. But it's more than just that. It's important for you to help your students grasp that one of the measures of a Christ-follower's life is in this very struggle. Giving in to sin is not an option. Your students must accept the challenge to keep up the fight. After all, it's through the fight itself that their faith in Christ will deepen and mature.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Vivid Lesson One Teacher Prep Video*, click on the URL below and view the video entitled "*Vivid Lesson 1: The Fight Within*."

- www.youthministry360.com/vivid-prep-videos

Bible Background

The **Bible Background** is a simple and straightforward way to help you prepare to teach the lesson.

The Details

Who wrote James?

James, who was Jesus' brother and the leader of the Jerusalem Church.

When was it written?

Most people believe the date was sometime in the mid-40s A.D.

What was the purpose of its writing?

James was seemingly writing to a Jewish audience. His message was pretty straightforward throughout the book: don't let your faith be one of words only, and live your faith powerfully. It's a message that James hammered home in direct, easy-to-grasp language. It's what makes James such a practical book for all believers.

The Main Point

JAMES 1:14-15

The main point of this lesson is found in verses 14-15. Here we see that James described the way sin works. It's an important passage for all Christ-followers, but especially those who are young in their faith, to understand.

James made a very important point; namely, that God does not lead anyone into temptation. The truth that God is perfectly good is an important theological point.

- Psalm 25:8 calls God "good and upright."
- Psalm 52:9 says God's "name is good."
- Psalm 100:5 says, "The LORD is good and his love endures forever."
- Psalm 119:68 says, "You are good, and what you do is good."

God cannot act in any way that goes against His goodness. Therefore, He can't lead anyone into temptation, as that would be leading people to be enticed to do evil. So how do we explain how we're tempted? James cleared this up in verse 14.

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James wrote that we're tempted by the evil desires that live within us. Our sin nature is our spiritual heritage from Adam and Eve. Once they sinned, sin became a part of all people after them. It's this evil desire inside of each of us that leads us to temptation. When we accept the salvation that Jesus offers to all who believe in Him, we're saved from the punishment of our sins through Jesus' atoning death on the cross. But we still have a sin nature, and we still sin.

James described this process in verses 14 and 15. Our evil desires "drag" us away. Away from what? Away from our desire to lead a godly life. When an evil desire "conceives," it gives birth to sin. The conception that James referred to hints at a process—one that's deliberate, one that takes time, and one that's entered into with planning and intentionality. Our evil desires don't always lead to sin. But when we allow them to find fertile ground in our hearts and minds, those desires give birth to sin.

In verse 15, James summed up the result of sin: spiritual death. This echoed the words of Paul in Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Sin equals death. Always has, always will. Only through God's grace and our acceptance of Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross can we ever defeat the penalty of sin.

Wrap Up

Only God is good. Only He is able to save us from our sins. However, we must contend with our evil desires. We must fight against temptation and strive to live holy lives. This was Peter's call in 1 Peter 1:15-16 when he wrote, "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" Your students have to understand that this internal struggle is literally what following Christ is all about. The Spirit will help them. And through this struggle, they will grow in their spiritual maturity.

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains four elements: *The Lead In*, which is a creative, interactive activity that introduces the theme of the lesson; *The Main Event*, which is the heart of the lesson and contains the Bible Study section; *The Bonus Round*, which is simply an additional Bible Study activity that supports the main thrust of the lesson, and *The Last Word*, which focuses on driving home the application of the lesson's biblical truth.

The Lead In

Title: Life is Like a Basketball

Goal: The idea is to get students thinking about their lives as Christ-followers and how they're supposed to live as a result.

Set Up: You'll need the *Vivid Media Disc* and a way to show the Lesson One Video, such as a DVD player. Or if you would prefer to drop the video into your presentation software, open the Media Disc on your computer, download the .MOV or .MPEG file, and drop it into a slide.

FIRST >> explain that you're beginning a six-lesson study on the Book of James. Explain to your students that you're going to watch a video that both introduces this particular lesson and also casts a little light on what the next six lessons of study will be about.

NEXT >> show the video.

THEN >> engage your students in a short discussion using the following questions:

- **What does it mean to be a hypocrite?**
- **Why do you think that one of the most common critiques aimed at followers of Christ is that they're hypocrites?**
- **When people say they're followers of Christ and then act in ways that go against the teachings of the Bible, what effect do you think this has on people who are not followers of Christ?**
- **What about people who may be curious about following Christ?**

FINALLY >> explain that today's lesson is all about the struggle we all face between wanting to be Christlike and living holy lives and our own sinful desires that lead us astray.

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>> THE FIGHT WITHIN

The Main Event**Title:** The Fight Within**Goal:** The idea is to teach students that the struggle to sin comes from within them, and that they're called to resist this temptation with God's help.**Set-Up:** If you have a projector, you'll need the "The Fight Within" presentation for use with PowerPoint file. If you don't have a projector, consider using the "The Fight Within" PDF file to conduct the activity. Choose to either walk through the diagram using the PDF or to replicate it on a dry erase board. You'll also need the Student Guide and something for your students to write with.**FIRST** >> take a moment to set the stage for your students. Using the Bible Background, share with them the vital stats behind the Book of James.**THEN** >> read the passage aloud, or have a few students volunteer to read it. Draw students' attention to verse 12. Start the study by asking what comes to mind when they hear words and phrases such as persevere and stood the test. Help them to flesh out the idea that these words hint at a struggle of some sort; they convey some sort of resistance by an individual.

Explain to students that this passage in James paints a pretty vivid picture of the internal struggle with temptation and sin that all Christ-followers face. Read verse 13 aloud again. Explain to students that because God is perfectly holy and righteous, He could never lead anyone to sin. The sin we're guilty of comes from our own sin nature.

NEXT >> display the blank pyramid and direct your students' attention to their Student Guide. Explain that in verses 14-15, James showed us the process that gives birth to sin in our lives.

Read or have a student read verse 14. Then ask the following questions:

- **What does this verse say is at the core of our temptation?**
 - o Answer: Evil desires
- **Describe the nature of these desires. How are they depicted in the passage? What do we see them doing?**
 - o Answer: The desires aren't passive; they're active! They're aggressive and ugly. They "drag us away."
- **The word entice means to attract someone by arousing their desire. Give a couple of examples where a person might convince themselves that sin is attractive.**
 - o Answer: Sex outside of marriage feels good, so why not do it? Putting someone else down makes me look better. Lying achieves a desired end that's better than telling the truth.

THEN >> show the slide where "Evil Desires" is written in the pyramid, or if you're replicating the pyramid on a dry erase board, write the words Evil Desires in the bottom of the pyramid. Encourage your students to write the words Evil Desires on the pyramid in their Student Guide. Explain that the sinful, evil desires inside all people lead us into temptation. Explain that we're the source of our own inclination to do wrong. Show the slide where "Temptation" is written in the pyramid. (Or write it on the board.) Lead your students to write the word Temptation on their Student Guide.**NEXT** >> draw your students' attention to verse 15. Read it again, or have a student do so. Ask the following questions:

- **Desire leads to temptation. When temptation and desire get out of control, what's the result?**
 - o Answer: Sin

(Show the slide where "Sin" is written in the pyramid. [Or write it on the board.] Lead your students to write the word Sin on their Student Guide.)

- **The word conceive means to give birth or to cause to originate. What has to happen for temptation to become sin?**
 - o Answer: Temptation has to be acted upon. Temptation itself is not sin. But when temptation conceives (when it gives birth to actions), it brings sin into an individual's life.

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>> THE FIGHT WITHIN

- **What happens when sin is given room to grow in our lives? What's the result?**

- o *Answer:* Death

(Show the slide where "Death" is written in the pyramid. [Or write it on the board.] Lead your students to write the word Death on their Student Guide.)

- **When James uses the word death, what does he mean?**

- o *Answer:* A life of unchecked and unrepentant sin always leads to spiritual death. When people profess faith in Christ, His sacrifice on the cross counts for payment of their sin. Part of being a new creation in Christ is the death of our old love of sin and a new life in the Spirit dedicated to seeking righteousness. A true Christ-follower will no longer seek sin. Because of Christ, His followers have life. Apart from Him, there's only death (Rom. 6:23).

FINALLY >> encourage students by reading verse 16 again. Remind them that God is not capable of leading them into sin or causing them to sin. Just the opposite is true. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 aloud to your students: "God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." Ask:

- **What does this mean to you personally?**
- **What kind of hope does it provide for your ability to overcome temptation?**

Remind students that God's desire is for us to live righteously, to be lights in a dark world. With the Holy Spirit's help, and with Scripture as our guide, we can strive to fight against our sinful nature and live holy lives.

Bonus Round (Optional Activity)

Title: Everyone a Sinner

Goal: The idea is to teach students that all people struggle with their internal sin nature, even the main characters in Scripture.

Set Up: None

Encourage students with the idea that struggling with our internal sin nature is not something unique to them. Explain that you're about to look at the lives of three real heroes of our faith, each of whom struggled with their desires to sin.

FIRST >> call on three volunteers who wouldn't mind reading aloud. Instruct the three volunteers to each take one of the following passages: Romans 7:21-25, Psalm 51:1-6, or Daniel 9:4-6.

THEN >> give some context for the first passage. Explain that Paul was one of the most powerful forces for following Christ that the world has ever seen. He wrote more books of the Bible than any other person. Yet, he still struggled with sin. Have the volunteer read Romans 7:21-25. Then ask the following questions:

- **Can you relate to Paul here? Why is it so frustrating when we want to do good but our "evil" desires are right there with us?**
- **What did Paul point to as the only way out of this conflicting situation and the death that it leads to?**

NEXT >> provide some of the background for the second passage. Explain that David was the greatest ruler Israel ever knew. He was a godly man, even referred to as a man after God's own heart. Yet his sinful nature led him to commit adultery. He gave into his sinful desires. In this passage, David was asking forgiveness for sleeping with another man's wife. Have the volunteer read Psalm 51:1-6. Then ask the following questions:

- **What do verses 3 and 5 have in common with what we've been talking about so far?**
 - o *Answer:* They point to the idea that our sin nature is something we're saddled with. It's a real part of who we are that, on our own, we cannot do away with.
- **David wrote that his personal sin is a sin against God. How does this change the way you think about sin—knowing that a sin you commit might not hurt anyone else but is still a major affront to God?**

THEN >> set the stage for the final passage. Explain that Daniel was as faithful a follower of God as you could find. He had been taken captive and held in a foreign land, but had never once turned his back on God. Yet hear how he talked about his people—God's people! Have the volunteer read Daniel 9:4-6. Then ask the following questions:

- **Daniel used the word rebelled. Can you define what it means to rebel?**
 - o *Answer:* To disobey one in authority; to act or show disobedience
- **How is our sin rebellion against God?**

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FINALLY >> close by reminding students that sin is a struggle that every Christ-follower faces. Encourage them with the truth that the real measure of a Christ-follower is not whether that individual sins or doesn't sin; it's whether or not that person is repentant and intentional about striving to live free from sin.

The Last Word

Title: Worth Fighting For

Goal: The idea is to teach students that the struggle to sin comes from within them, and that they're called to resist this temptation with God's help.

Set Up: Go to www.teenslivingwithcancer.org. Browse under the Community tab and select a few posts from teenagers about living with cancer. You'll also need to refer back to the pyramid from the previous activity one last time.

FIRST >> ask students if they think fighting sin in their lives is worth it. Isn't it pointless? After all, we all have a sin nature. We'll never be perfect. Jesus paid for our sins on the cross. Why go through the struggle?

NEXT >> inform students that you're going to read a couple of posts from a website devoted to teenagers suffering with cancer. Read the posts you've selected from teenslivingwithcancer.org. When you've finished, ask why these teenagers keep fighting. Ask why they don't simply give up. After all, they have cancer. Help your students to see that for these teens, life is worth the struggle. Struggling with cancer is the choice these teenagers make because the alternative simply won't cut it.

Explain to students that our struggle with sin is similar. If a person has truly had their life renewed through a saving relationship with Christ, to continue to walk in sin is simply not an option.

THEN >> refer back one last time to the pyramid from the previous activity. Point to the section labeled "Temptation." Ask the following question:

- **What happens if you keep trying not to give in to temptation? What happens if you fight the fight inside of you and don't give in to the pull that leads you to fall away from God?**
 - o *Answer:* Temptation dies. Sin is not conceived. You persevere, just as James called you to.
- **Does God love you any more for not giving in to temptation? Are you any more saved than when you do give in?**
 - o *Answer:* No. God sees us through the sacrifice that Christ made on the cross. If we profess faith in Christ, we're made righteous in God's eyes because of what Christ has done.
- **Then why does it matter? Why is it so important for us to resist giving in to temptation?**
 - o *Answer:* Simply put, the Bible calls us to be righteous and holy. We're called to live the way that Christ lived (1 Pet. 1:14-16). Why? So that through our lives, we may point others to a relationship with God (Matt. 5:16) that they might in turn be saved from the death of their life of sin.

FINALLY >> finish the lesson by encouraging your students with the truth that the struggle they face is one all people face. They don't have to face it alone. (That's what their Christ-following friends, youth workers, and parents are for.) And the Holy Spirit actually gives them the power to stay strong.

Challenge your students to be aware of the common temptations they face this week and to strive to resist them when they arise.

entice. (2010). In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. Retrieved June 21, 2010, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entice>
 conceive. (2010). In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. Retrieved June 21, 2010, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conceive>
 rebel. (2010). In Compact Oxford English Dictionary online. Retrieved June 21, 2010, from http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/orexxbel?view=uk

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

Do you have questions about a lesson?

Something that worked particularly well you want to share?

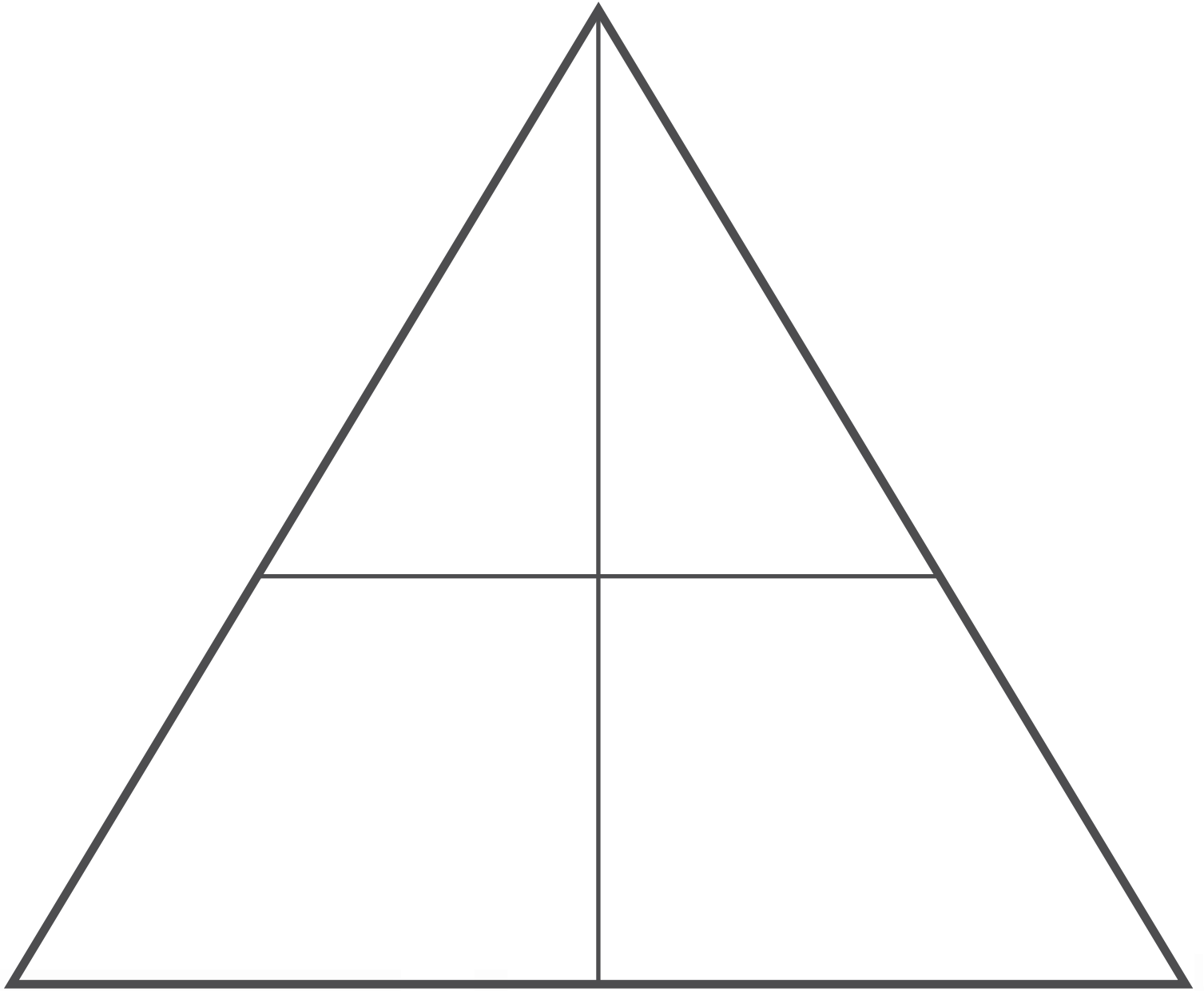
Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.

>> THE FIGHT WITHIN

SCRIPTURE FOCUS // James 1:12-17

youthministry360



FOCUS Lesson 1: Knowledge Is Power

Objective: The point of the lesson is that your students understand that they cannot live powerful lives of faith without a knowledge of God that leads to action.

Focus Scripture: Colossians 1:9-14

Overview: Colossians is a book that reminds its audience to keep the main thing the main thing (to borrow a cliché). This is incredibly important to today's teenagers who are constantly bombarded with messages and values from their culture. They're tempted to pick and choose whatever values suit their personal preferences. Paul's letter reminds us that there's a right way to live and prayerfully asks God to fill His people with spiritual wisdom—the key to a meaningful life. For your students, a right understanding of Christ's supremacy in their lives empowers them to grow healthy and productive—finding identity, strength, purpose, and joy in Christ. If students have any desire to honor God with their lives, they must first know Him.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your Focus Lesson One Teacher Prep Video, click on the URL below and view the video entitled "Focus Lesson 1: Knowledge Is Power."

- www.youthministry360.com/focus-prep-videos

Bible Background

The **Bible Background** is a simple and straightforward way to help you prepare to teach the lesson.

The Details

Who wrote Colossians?

The Apostle Paul identified himself as the author. His companion, Timothy, probably served as his scribe (1:1). Tychicus probably delivered the letter to Colossae (4:7).

When was it written?

Most people believe the date was sometime between A.D. 61 and 63, during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:17-31).

What was the purpose for the writing of these books?

Paul was writing to combat the spread of false teachings among the church at Colossae. The exact heresy being refuted is not certain and may have been a blend of multiple influences. The legalism, mysticism, and asceticism corrupting the pure faith in Colossae were moving attention away from Christ, placing it instead on self-discipline and the awe of other spiritual things.

Ultimately, this letter's purpose is to emphasize the supremacy of Christ over everything. Any teaching, philosophy, ritual, or lifestyle that distracts from Jesus as the sole focal point of one's life is dangerous and should be avoided. Everything about a believer's new life should be focused on the one and only begotten Son of God, the uniquely divine yet fully human Jesus Christ.

The Main Point

COLOSSIANS 1:9

This passage was Paul's opening prayer for his audience of Christ-followers, originally the church in Colossae. But it's also a prayer that applies to us today. This prayer sets the stage for the book. And so it will introduce Focus, our study of Colossians.

Paul's letter opened by cutting straight to the heart of the matter: if Christ-followers desire to live a life that glorifies God in every way, they obviously have to know His will. So while the entire passage is meaningful, the focus of the lesson comes from verse 9.

FOCUS : Lesson 1

>> KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Paul asked God for two things on behalf of the Colossians. (We'll walk through these in depth during "The Main Event" portion of this lesson.)

1. **Growth in knowledge** – A misunderstanding of the things of God was the primary problem plaguing the church at Colossae. The knowledge Paul prayed for was not a general awareness of God, it was an intense focus on and embracing of God's will—a knowledge that led to action, affecting every part of a person's life.
2. **Living worthy of Christ** – Right action springs from a right knowledge. This also foreshadowed another issue in Colossae – ritualistic activity motivated by false teaching and personal experience. When a person understands God's will and experiences fullness and satisfaction in submitting to Christ as Lord, they will desire to live obediently and proactively (anticipating what is pleasing), honoring Him in all things.

For the rest of our passage (10-14), Paul outlined a life that pleases God, describing it in the following four categories:

1. **Bearing fruit** – Actively, continually doing all kinds of good works (a common theme in Paul's letters). This does not earn a person salvation, but is instead the result of a relationship with Christ—it grows out of a true knowledge.
2. **Growing in knowledge** – This is also an ongoing attribute of the Christ-centered life. We are to continually grow in and by the knowledge of God. It's only in His will and by His wisdom that we're empowered to grow in our understanding of Him.
3. **Being strengthened** – It's only in His supernatural power that we can fight the good fight, daily resisting the schemes of the devil and practicing spiritual warfare. Moral living and perseverance are only possible through a close personal relationship with the one who has conquered sin and death, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.
4. **Giving thanks** – All of these things mentioned should result in gratitude, daily expressed through the lives of Christ-followers.

(These four categories will be examined in "The Final Word" as the practical takeaway from the lesson.)

Wrap Up

Think about this: action springs out of understanding. What someone believes shapes his or her actions, attitudes, and thoughts. Do your teenagers grasp the life-changing reality that they can know God's will and experience His power in their lives? Scripture has to be the foundation for knowing God better and knowing how to live in a way that's worthy of Him. Christ is honored when our attention is focused on Him.

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains four elements: *The Lead In*, which is a creative, interactive activity that introduces the theme of the lesson; *The Main Event*, which is the heart of the lesson and contains the Bible Study section; *The Bonus Round*, which is simply an additional Bible Study activity that supports the main thrust of the lesson, and *The Last Word*, which focuses on driving home the application of the lesson's biblical truth.

The Lead In

Title: Focus Intro

Goal: The idea is for students to be introduced to the basic theme of *Focus* through a video.

Set Up: You'll need the *Focus Media Disc* and a way to show the video, such as a DVD player or your laptop. Or if you would prefer to drop the video into your presentation software, open the media disc on your computer, download the MOV or MPEG file, and drop it into a slide.

FIRST > explain to students that you're beginning a six-lesson study on what it means to have Christ as the center of your life. Explain that over the next six-lessons, they will learn what it means to live a life of focus. Then, explain to your students that they're going to watch a video introducing the study; the video gives a little glimpse into the theme they will be immersed in over the next six lessons.

NEXT > show the video.

FINALLY > explain that this lesson will help your students understand that they can't live powerful lives of faith without a knowledge of God that leads to action.

FOCUS : Lesson 1

>> KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

The Main Event

Title: Knowledge Is Powe

Goal: The idea is for your students to realize that a right understanding of God is essential in order to have right actions that glorify God.

Set Up: You'll need copies of the Student Guide and pencils or pens for the students to write with. If you wish, arrange to show the PowerPoint slideshow. The slideshow corresponds with some of the questions, but it's **intentionally sparse** so that you can customize it based on how you choose to teach the lesson.

FIRST >> distribute Student Guides and something to write with. Then, begin the study by focusing students' attention on the idea of *power*. Ask everyone to get out their cell phones/media devices/car keys and place them in front of them. Ask the students these questions:

- **Who has a cell phone? iPod®? Car?**
- **How often do you use these things?**

THEN >> explain that in order for these items that we use every day to do what they're purchased to do, they must have power—most of the things we need or use regularly need fresh power every day. Build this idea by asking:

- **How would you respond to a classmate who carried a powerless iPad™ everywhere he went, never knowing anything about it but telling everyone how great it was and that they should get one, too?**
- **What would you say to him if he said that the iPad was awesome when he first got it but he never had time to charge it?**
- **How do people do the same thing as followers of Christ? Are you guilty of walking through life, maybe even telling other people about how great Jesus is and that they should believe in Him, too, but never taking time to know Him better or experiencing a life empowered by Him?**

NEXT >> connect the illustration to the biblical text by stating that a right knowledge of God empowers us to live the lives He created us to have. Explain that today you'll look at Paul's ongoing prayer for people to continue growing in both their knowledge of God and in exhibiting lifestyles that honor Him.

THEN >> take a moment to set the stage for your students. Using the Bible Background, tell students the details behind the Book of Colossians. Then instruct them to open their Bibles to Colossians. Have a volunteer read aloud Colossians 1:9-14 as everyone follows along in their own Bibles.

NEXT >> direct their attention to the end of what was just read. Explain that verses 12-14 describe a one-time event, like a transaction where someone exchanges money for the new iPad mentioned earlier. Ask the following questions:

- **What one-time exchange is described in verses 13-14?**
 - o *Answer:* We were rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of God's Son (Christ) and forgiven of our sins, also known as "getting saved."
- **What do you think "darkness" means in verse 13?**
 - o *Answer:* Sin and ignorance, ultimately death (the opposite of light, life, knowledge, and good works characteristic of the Christ-filled life).
- **What do words like "redemption" (vs. 14), "brought us" (vs. 13) "qualified" and "inheritance" (vs. 12) say about our relationship with God?**
 - o *Answer:* He is the One acting in us, through us, and for us. He purchased our freedom, changed our situation, and continually enables us to experience abundant life. These words also tell us that being granted a relationship with God is a one-time event so we don't have to keep working to earn God's approval—our focus can be on living the new life He has given us in Christ.
 - o Clarify that over the next few weeks you'll dig deeper into the significance of being rescued from sin and brought into relationship with Christ.

THEN >> direct students' attention back to the beginning of Paul's prayer. Re-read verses 9-10 and ask:

- **Paul asked God specifically for two ongoing things. What did he pray that people would continually do after the initial point of redemption (salvation) in their lives?**
 - o *Answer:* Grow in the knowledge of God's will and walk (live) in manner worthy of Christ.
 - o Have students write, "know God" above Arrow 1 and "Live for Him" with Arrow 2.
- **What relationship exists between knowing God and living faithfully?**
 - o *Answer:* The words "in order that" in verse 10 tell us that knowing God's will is foundational, essential, and empowering for walking worthy of the Lord. You can't follow Christ if you don't know Christ and recognize His direction in your life.

FOCUS : Lesson 1

>> KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

NEXT >> direct students back to the empty silhouette on their worksheets. Have them shade in a percentage of the person, representing the amount of knowledge they currently have about God. Clarify that it's impossible to know everything about God, but the drawing should be a visual of how what they do know honestly influences everything else in their lives. Lead discussion with the following questions:

- **How could wrong ideas about spiritual things negatively affect a person's life?**
- **What examples can you give of ways that knowing God impacts your daily actions?**
- **What percentage of our lives did Paul pray would be influenced by spiritual wisdom?**
 - o *Answer:* He prayed we would be filled with the knowledge of God's will.
- **What did Paul mean when he wrote about being "filled" with something?**
 - o *Answer:* Filled can mean "knowing no bounds" (2 Cor. 7:4). It also can mean to be controlled by something (drunk on wine or under the influence of the Spirit, as in Ephesians 5:18).
- **So what does this passage mean when it says we should be filled with spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and understanding?**
 - o *Answer:* Everything in our lives should be under the influence of God's will—everything we say, think, do (or don't say, think, or do) should be worthy of Jesus. The truth of God should be overflowing into every part of our lives in a way that's obvious to everyone around us and impossible to hide!
 - o *Answer:* Now have them shade the rest of the person, completely filling the silhouette on the worksheet, leaving only the dynamite icon visible.

Emphasize that all of the descriptions of life in Paul's prayer are ongoing, continual actions. Explain that in a few minutes you'll dig into what those continual actions should look like.

THEN >> begin wrapping up the discussion by re-reading verses 11-14 and asking the following questions:

- **How easy or hard is it for us to know the right thing and please God in everything that we do?**
 - o *Answer:* It's impossible in our own ability. (We were dead in sin and darkness - v.13.)
- **What do the phrases "strengthened with all power" and "His glorious might" tell us?**
 - o *Answer:* God's power in us will be everything we need to live out this life; it is more than enough; it empowers us to glorify Him.

Direct students' attention back to the image of dynamite inside the silhouette they've shaded on the worksheet. Explain that the word *dynamite* comes from these Greek word *dynamo* or *dynamis*, which Paul was referring to here with the words "strengthened" and "power." Encourage students with the fact that God doesn't expect them to live as Christ-followers in their own strength. Remind them that when their focus is on knowing God and pleasing Him with their lives, He fills them with His incredible power.

- **Like dynamite, God's power removes the things He doesn't want in our lives. What do verses 13-14 tell us that God is removing from our lives?**
 - o *Answer:* The power of sin and darkness.
- **Dynamite is also used to make room for new things. In this prayer, what was Paul asking God to fill our lives with instead of sin and darkness?**
 - o *Answer:* Wisdom, good works, patience, joy, thankfulness, light, an inheritance in Christ.

FINALLY >> take students back to the opening example of the ridiculous waste of carrying around a powerless iPad. Challenge them not to miss the point and waste their lives by going day-to-day without God's knowledge and power. Explain to the students that God didn't save them just so that they could walk around knowing spiritual facts. Encourage them with the reality that God fills them with spiritual truth in order that it will overflow into their daily lives, empowering every part of them to glorify the Christ who redeemed them.

Bonus Round (Optional Activity)

Title: God's Will

Goal: The idea is for your students to begin to understand God's will for their lives, removing the intimidation factor from the mysterious will of God.

Set Up: Look below at the various verses represented. Choose any or all of the verses and write the references on index cards. Distribute the index cards to your students before the activity.

FIRST >> explain that during the Main Event your group established that understanding God's will is vital for living a powerful life of faith pleasing to Him. Ease any worries, assuring students that for most people the idea of trying to know God's will is intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. Clarify that God tells us some things very plainly about His will.

FOCUS : Lesson 1

>> KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

THEN >> instruct students to look up their verses if they haven't already.

NEXT >> lead students in a short discussion, asking them to read aloud their verses and then helping them interpret the simple truth about God's will:

- **So according to God's Word, what do we know about His will for our lives?**

o *Answers:*

- Mark 3:35 – Doing His will is characteristic of being in His family.
- Romans 8:27 – The Spirit helps you according to God's will.
- Romans 12:2 – By focusing your mind on Him and through "testing" (practice) you'll learn to recognize what pleases Him perfectly.
- Ephesians 6:6 – Good works in obedience to God come from the heart in service to Christ.
- Colossians 1:1 – He has a specific purpose/plan for your life.
- Colossians 4:12 – His will is knowable.
- Hebrews 10:36 – We will be rewarded for continuing to follow God even when it's hard.
- 1 Peter 2:15 – Always doing the right thing prevents anybody from saying anything bad (that's true) about you and therefore against faith in Christ.
- 1 John 2:17 – Everything in this world is temporary, but obedience to God's will has eternal benefit.

FINALLY >> conclude by reminding them that Paul prayed for Christ-followers to grow in their understanding of these things and to continually put them into practice, living them daily.

The Last Word

Title: The Cycle of Life

Goal: The idea is for your students to recognize and enter the ongoing cycle of growing in knowledge and living what they know.

Set Up: You will need the Student Guide one last time.

FIRST >> remind students that Paul prayed non-stop that the hearers of this letter would continually grow in their relationship with God. Point out the awesome and humbling reality that in 2,000 years, nothing has changed from the first generation of believers in Colossae to the 21st century Christ-followers gathered in your group.

NEXT >> remind everyone that Paul prayed that we would be filled with knowledge of God's will, so that we would be fueled to walk in a way that pleases Him in every way. Clarify that the four steps represent the four categories Paul used to describe the continual cycle of walking in the way that pleases God.

- **Paul first prayed that the Colossians would be filled with knowledge so that they could live in a way worthy of the Lord, then he described what that life looks like—one of its characteristics being an increasing knowledge of the God. What does this tell us about our relationship with God?**

o *Answer:* It's always growing; there's always more to learn and more to trust God about in our lives; we never "arrive"; He's always greater; we're always following Him.

THEN >> direct everyone's attention back to the Student Guide. Allow a minute to reflect on the phrases in the four steps. Instruct everyone to write one practical action they'll commit to do in order to grow in each category. Lead discussion on how students can take steps in each of these categories by asking them to share their answers to the following questions:

- **What steps can we take today to grow in bearing good fruit in every good deed?**

o Remind students that bearing fruit means showing evidence of the healthy life inside them to the world around them. This doesn't mean that good works are done pridefully to draw attention to ourselves but rather to draw attention to God.

o Guide students to identify something helpful, generous, welcoming, self-controlled, honest, apologetic, humble, or bold that they'll do this week.

- **What steps can we begin taking to grow in the knowledge of God?**

o Encourage students to start by reading the provided e-votions and memorizing the available Scripture cards each week.

o Encourage them to not only read and memorize these personally but to also discuss them with each other, with other friends, and with parents or other respected adults who can help them even better understand the spiritual truths in God's Word.

FOCUS : Lesson 1

>> KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

- o Challenge them to read the Book of Colossians on their own—it's only four short chapters. This can be done every week or in little bits and pieces as you go through the next six weeks of FOCUS.
- **How can we continue to walk through tough situations or relationships with endurance?**
 - o Guide students to identify a situation or relationship in which they need more patience.
 - o Remind them that endurance and patience are not only for the sake of their own character and integrity but also for the sake of more opportunities to share the life-changing truth of Christ.
 - o Encourage students with the reality that everything they're facing is temporary; abundant life in Christ is eternal.
- **On what truth can we stand joyfully and thankfully in both good days and bad?**
 - o Ask students what gives them joy.
 - o Ask students what they're thankful for.
 - o Guide them to identify something that currently upsets them or stresses them out. Of what greater eternal truth will they remind themselves in order to gain the right perspective?

Begin wrapping up by explaining that just as with any favorite activity or interest, the more students spend time getting to know whatever they're into, the more they begin to love it. Emphasize the cycle: The more time spent getting to know about it, (1) the more they love it, (2) the more they want to know about it, (3) the more natural it becomes to understand/talk about/do it, and ultimately (4) the more they begin to rearrange their lives around this thing they love. Make the obvious connection for students, clarifying that the better they get to know God → the better they know His will → the easier it is to live for Him → the more they live for Him → the better they get to know God . . . and on and on.

FINALLY >> conclude with the encouragement that you're also praying for your students regularly. Assure them that although there's always another step to take, there's no reason to be overwhelmed—just focus one step at a time, and soon they'll recognize that they're learning to walk with Christ more naturally. Remind them that God has taken the first step to save them and is the one empowering them to live a life that glorifies Him. Challenge them to simply focus on knowing and living God's will by the power of Christ.

- Explain to students that you'll be posting two of the **Focus E-votions** to encourage conversation between lessons. Decide ahead of time how you will post these, whether through email, Facebook message, Facebook group page, or through your youth group's website. Challenge students to check in, read and think about the content, and to interact (if there's a method for interaction such as a Facebook wall, comment section on a blog, and so on).

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

Do you have questions about a lesson?

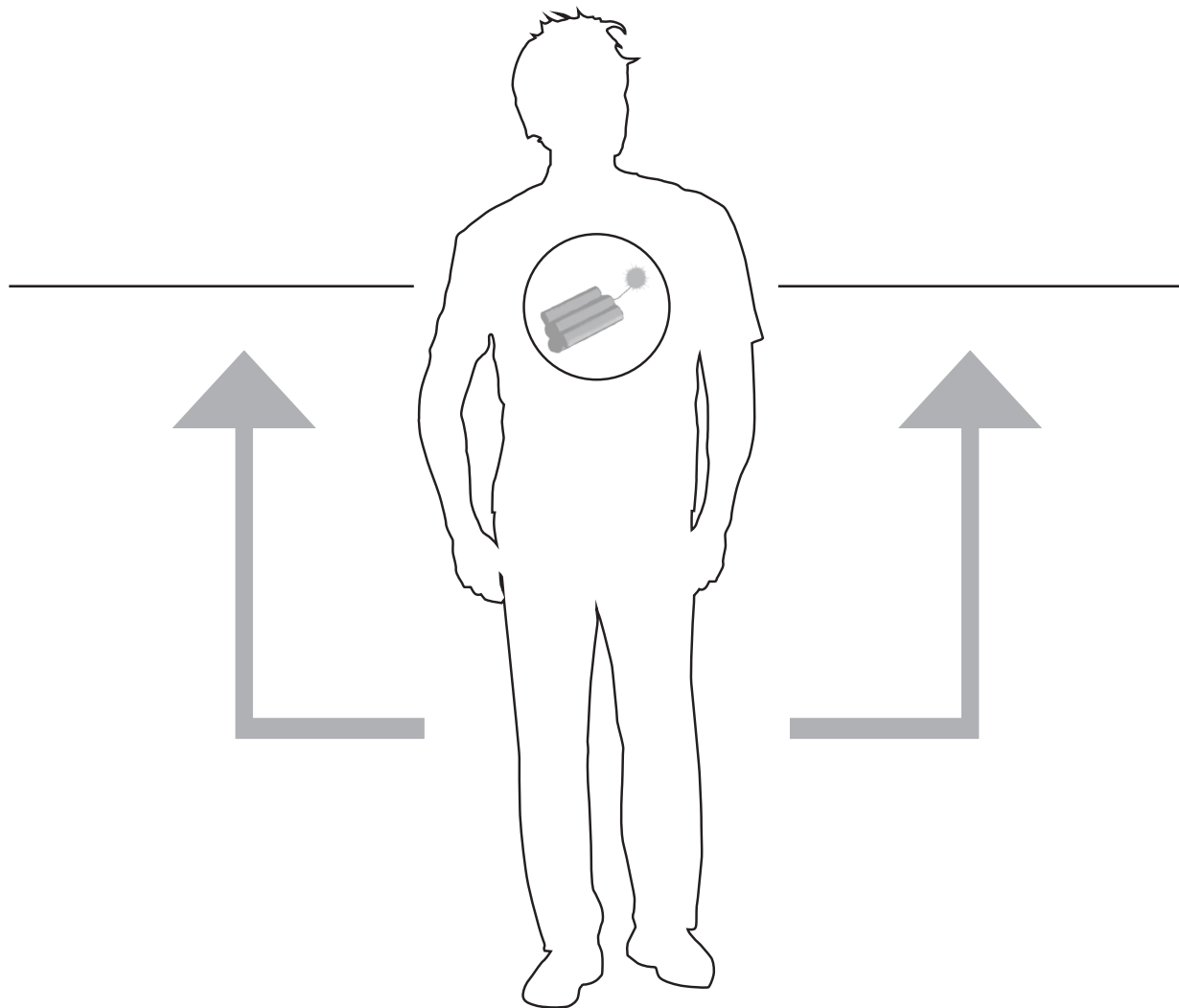
Something that worked particularly well you want to share?

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.

>> KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: COLOSSIANS 1:9-14



**BEARING
GOOD FRUIT**

**GROWING IN
KNOWLEDGE
OF GOD**

**ENDURING
WITH PATIENCE**

**GIVING THANKS
IN JOY**

Proof Lesson 1: No Ordinary Guy

Objective: The point of the lesson is that your students would see Jesus for who He really is and begin to grasp how incredible it is that they get to have a relationship with Him.

Scripture Focus: John 1:1-14

Overview: This lesson looks at the stunning picture John paints in the opening passage of his Gospel. In a relatively short amount of verses, John packs-in some pretty awesome truth. Through this passage, your students will see Jesus as the eternal Word who came to save all people from their sins. Your teenagers will see Jesus as a God who can be known, and who truly desires to save them and lead them to a full life in Him.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Proof Lesson One Teacher Prep Video*, click on the URL below and view the video entitled “*Proof Lesson 1: No Ordinary Guy.*”

- www.youthministry360.com/proof-prep-videos

Bible Background

The **Bible Background** is a simple and straightforward way to help you prepare to teach the lesson.

The Details

Who wrote John?

John the Apostle wrote the Gospel of John. John was one of Jesus’ closest disciples, one of what is called the “inner three,” with Peter and James. John wrote his Gospel, but also wrote 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation. According to Church history, John was the only Apostle not to die a martyr’s death.

When was it written?

Though an exact date is tough to pin down, most scholars think John wrote his Gospel after 70 A.D., probably from the city of Ephesus.

What was the purpose of its writing?

John had one purpose in mind: that his readers would know Jesus Christ as Messiah. John’s message is evangelical at its core. He was chiefly concerned with both Jews and Gentiles knowing Jesus’ true identity, and knowing it in such a way that they came to a rich faith in Him.

The Main Point

JOHN 1:14

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” This verse could perfectly sum up John’s message in his Gospel. Jesus, the Son of God, the Word, literally took on human flesh, and in visible form, displayed the glory of God on this earth. He walked and dwelt among us, His creation.

That Jesus lived on this earth as fully God and fully man is singularly remarkable. It is the hinge-point of our faith. God is not a detached, cold observer. He is so very intimately involved with us that His plan all along was to send His one and only Son from heaven to earth, to live, teach, lead, heal, die, and ultimately live again. This is the hope of our faith.

The key point in this passage is simply that there is a God, a God who exists in three Persons. One of those Persons descended from His dwelling place in Heaven to come and show His people the true path to salvation. And the world has never been the same since. This is the focus of this passage and the focus of John’s Gospel.

>> NO ORDINARY GUY

Wrap Up

There are moments when youth workers or ministry leaders will bemoan the general state of the faith of teenagers. There are statistics cited that show Christian teenagers behaving no differently than their non-Christian counterparts. We talk about how Christian teenagers don't know the Bible, or can't articulate their faith. While these things may be true, it may be that the chief reason some Christian teens aren't living out their faith is because they simply do not recognize Christ for who He is. They do not fully understand whom it is they claim to follow, what His life, death, and resurrection accomplished, and the power gained in surrendering to Him.

The purpose of Proof is the same as John's Gospel: that your students would truly know Christ and be moved to devotion out of this knowledge.

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains four elements: *The Lead In*, which is a creative, interactive activity that introduces the theme of the lesson; *The Main Event*, which is the heart of the lesson and contains the Bible Study section; *The Bonus Round*, which is simply an additional Bible Study activity that supports the main thrust of the lesson, and *The Last Word*, which focuses on driving home the application of the lesson's biblical truth.

The Lead In

Title: The Most Comfortable Chair In The World

Goal: The idea is to get your students thinking about belief in the face of evidence or proof.

Set Up: You'll need the *Proof Media Disc* and a way to show the Lesson One Video, such as a DVD player. Or if you would prefer to drop the video into your presentation software, open the Media Disc on your computer, download the .MOV or .MPEG file, and drop it into a slide.

FIRST >> explain that you're beginning a six-lesson study on the Book of John. Explain to your students that you're going to watch a video that both introduces this particular lesson and also casts a little light on an ongoing conversation they'll watch play-out over the next six lessons.

NEXT >> show the video.

THEN >> engage your students in a short discussion using the following questions:

- **By listening to his friend, and giving the chair a shot, what did the guy in the video discover?**
- **Why is it that we can be so disbelieving? Why are we so guarded about what we will allow ourselves to believe?**
- **The guy in the video was sitting next to the most comfortable chair all along. But he had to embrace it before he could experience it. Keep this thought in mind as we go through this lesson, and this 6-week study.**

FINALLY >> explain that today's lesson is all about seeing Jesus for who He really is, and responding to Him accordingly.

The Main Event

Title: No Ordinary Guy

Goal: The idea is for students to begin to understand exactly who Jesus was and what role He plays in the world and in their lives.

Set-Up: Provide Student Guides for each student and something to write with.

FIRST >> call on three volunteers and put them on the spot. Ask them to quickly describe one of their parents. If they hesitate, hurry them up. Encourage them to just start describing. When they have finished, choose another volunteer and quickly ask them to give you one characteristic of their mom or dad. Any characteristic will do. When the volunteer has finished, choose one more volunteer and ask them to quickly describe what their mom or dad does for a living.

When all three students have gone, explain that what you just did was a fun exercise in relationships. Explain that each of these students could very quickly describe their mom or dad, name one of their characteristics, and describe what they do for a living all because they know them. They spend time with them. They know the intimate details of their life. Without thinking, they were able to tell a lot about who they are. Explain that you are going to take the same approach with learning about Jesus.

PROOF : Lesson 1**>> NO ORDINARY GUY**

Take a moment to set the stage for your students. Using the Bible Background, share with them the vital stats behind the Book of John.

NEXT >> distribute Student Guides. Explain to your students that this lesson is the first lesson in six lessons from the Book of John. This lesson will examine John's description of who Jesus is.

THEN >> instruct students to turn to John 1:1-14. Explain that you will be going through a few verses at a time looking for descriptions of Jesus, characteristics of Jesus, or references to the things Jesus did on this earth.

NEXT >> begin with John 1:1-2. Read or have a student read the verses. Then, instruct students to call out any words that describe Jesus, or any words that discuss His characteristics. As students call these out, instruct the class to write these on the "God" side of their Student Guides. (Possible words might include "the Word," "with God," and "Word was God.") Ask students:

- **These two verses are short, but they pack a huge punch! They say so much about Jesus' identity. What do they say about who Jesus is?**

o *Answer:* He is God as part of the Trinity. He is eternal. He has always existed.

THEN >> read or have a student read John 1:3-5. Do the same thing you did for the first group of verses, calling out any words that describe Jesus, His characteristics, or His role. Instruct students to continue to call these out and to write them on their Student Guide. (Possible words might include "life," "light of men," and "all things made through Him.") Ask students:

- **What did we just learn about Jesus' role in Creation?**

o *Answer:* Jesus was present with God in the beginning when all things were made. Explain that this goes back to what they learned in verses 1-2, that Jesus is eternal. He has always been.

THEN >> read or have a student read John 1:10-13, continuing in the same manner as you have previously done. (Possible words might include "in the world," "came to his own," and "children of God.") Ask students:

- **These is a remarkable verses. What are the incredible truths that speak to you?**

o *Answer:* Answers might include that Jesus actually came to earth; that there were many who chose not to believe in Him; and that to all who believe in Him He allows to become His children.

- **What does it mean that we are children of God?**

o *Answer:* Help your students understand this in terms of salvation. By God's grace, our belief saves us from our sins. Salvation is the means by which we become God's children.

FINALLY >> read or have a student read John 1:14. Explain that this verse is literally at the heart of our faith. Explain that Jesus, the very Son of God, came to earth and lived here among His people. John says here that if we know Jesus, we know God. And in Jesus, we can see the glory of the Father. Ask:

- **When you think of Jesus, do these words and images we just wrote down come to mind? Do your prayers reflect an understanding of Jesus that is based on these characteristics of Him? If not, why do you think we can be so guilty of not really thinking of Jesus in this way?**

o *Answer:* It seems like we have an idea of what Jesus should be. We make Jesus so much smaller because it is easy to relate to Him. We don't have to have our lives rocked by Jesus if we make Him "less God." When we see Jesus for who He really is, we realize that our lives are pretty small in comparison, and that can make us uncomfortable.

- **Knowing that Jesus is eternal, that all things were made through Him, that He is one with the Father, and that we can literally see the glory of God in Him, how does it make you feel that you have a personal relationship with Him?**

o *Answer:* Don't rush students to answer this. Let it sit for a while. If it's silent for a few seconds, restate the question. Encourage conversation, but be OK if students need to think about this.

Transition to the next activity by reminding students that we can know Jesus personally because He obediently came to the earth and lived a human life for our sakes. We can know the Son because He loved us enough to sacrifice it all.

PROOF : Lesson 1**>> NO ORDINARY GUY****Bonus Round (Optional Activity)****Title:** Who Is He?**Goal:** The idea is to further shore up students' understanding of Jesus' identity.**Set Up:** None

FIRST >> Explain to students that it's difficult for us to grasp the fullness of Jesus' identity. After all, we are humans with a finite, or limited, understanding of God. Although God makes Himself knowable through Scripture, we have a hard time wrapping our brains around it.

THEN >> explain that the purpose of this lesson is to grasp what it looks like when we know Jesus' identity. But what happens when we don't? Turn to Acts 2:22-24, and 36. Explain that this is just a month or so after Jesus' death and resurrection. Peter was addressing a large crowd of Jews in Jerusalem at Pentecost. In what has been called the first sermon of the Church, Peter explains to the Jews their error in not seeing Jesus for exactly who He was.

NEXT >> read the passage aloud. Peter was pretty much putting the smack down. He was saying to the Jews, "you guys had the Son of God in your midst and you murdered Him." Instruct your students to look closely at verse 22. Ask:

- **What does the word accredited mean?**
 - o Answer: Accredited means "to recognize as having legitimacy, or authority."
- **So if Jesus was accredited by God, and the proof was in the miracles He did, what was Peter saying about the severity of the Jews actions?**
 - o Answer: He was basically saying to the Jews that they had no excuse. Jesus' identity was spelled out extremely clearly in front of them. But in their disbelief they committed a serious sin against God and Christ.

FINALLY >> explain to students that in a much smaller way, we are in danger of committing a similar mistake. When we fail to see Jesus for who He is, and we do not give Him the honor, glory, and devotion He is due, we commit a similar offense. While we are not guilty of crucifying Jesus, if we don't see Him for whom He is, and relate to Him accordingly, we are guilty of dishonoring Him.

The Last Word**Title:** Are You Awestruck?**Goal:** The idea is to drive home to students the remarkable concept that we actually get to have a relationship with Jesus.**Set Up:** If you choose, read the article about Tony Dungy and a truckdriver found here: http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2007/writers/rick_reilly/05/07/dungy0430/

FIRST >> summarize the Rick Reilly article linked above. (Below is a short summary for your benefit, but feel free to read the touching article and provide your own summary):

During his time as a coach in the NFL, Tony Dungy was one of the league's most successful coaches. Dungy became the first African-American coach to win a Super Bowl, when he did so as coach of the Indianapolis Colts in February of 2007. But it is Dungy's personal side that endears him to many.

Dungy is a man of strong Christian faith. He openly lives out his faith in his daily interactions with others. None more so than through his friendship with an Ohio truck-driver named Mark Lemke. You see, Dungy's son, James, committed suicide in December of 2005. Lemke's son, Cory, a star high school golfer, died in a motorcycle accident around the same time. Sport's Illustrated did a short feature on Cory and how grief-stricken Mark was. Dungy read the story, and was moved by it. So, in the midst of the 2006-2007 NFL playoffs, Dungy calls Lemke and talks to him about losing a son and how their faith can keep them going. The two men become friends. Lemke is Dungy's guest at the Super Bowl in February of that year. This unlikely friendship between a trucker and an NFL superstar is one that defies the common logic of our celebrity obsessed culture.

THEN >> ask students why is it remarkable that Dungy and Lemke are friends? What is so unusual about the relationship? The answer is, of course, that it is simply not common for an "average" guy like Lemke to be friends with a celebrity like Dungy. It is for this reason that people are in awe of the relationship.

>> NO ORDINARY GUY

Ask students if they are ever in awe of their relationship with Jesus. Explain that we would be giddy if we could be friends with our favorite celebrity or athlete, yet we often treat the fact that we have a relationship with the Son of God as no big deal. This needs to change.

NEXT >> read Philippians 2:9-11 to your students. Explain that God has placed Jesus over every name there is. All of creation bows down to Him. Yet, this is the same Jesus who allowed Himself to be murdered on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Romans 10:13 says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Jesus gave His life for all people who will believe. How amazing is this?

THEN >> ask them to take a moment and think about what keeps them from being in awe of Jesus. Ask them to take a second and try and identify the issues they have personally that stand in the way of them recognizing Jesus for who He is, and responding to Him with an overwhelming sense of thankfulness, love, and awe. (If they choose, they can write these on the right hand side of their Student Guide.) Challenge students to begin to realize that this response is the only fitting one for Christ. Help them see that this level of respect is what Christ deserves every day of our lives. Challenge them to begin to start focusing on Jesus in this manner.

FINALLY >> encourage students that this level of thinking is difficult. It's not exactly something that happens overnight. And it can't happen without learning more about Christ. Explain that the next five lessons will be spent going deeper in their understanding of Christ and the amazing role He plays in God's plan to redeem all things.

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SCRIPTURE FOCUS // John 1:1-14

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WORD

