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OF FAITH

**What we want students to learn:** That your students would understand the true nature of sacrificing to follow after Christ.

**What we want them to do with what they've learned:** To begin to accurately see perceived "losses" as gains.

**Scripture Focus:** Luke 9:57-62, Philippians 3:7-14

**Overview:** Anytime we talk about sacrifice or surrender, we find ourselves running headfirst into our sin nature. When we talk to teenagers about having to sacrifice to follow Christ, we feel a little knot in our stomach. "What if we scare them off?" The problem with this kind of thinking is that it contributes to the brand of weak faith that plagues our culture. The truth is that following Christ does require sacrifice and surrender. But here's the deal: if we embrace Jesus' definition of discipleship, we find that following Jesus is the most fulfilling thing we can do. It's what we were made to do! When we see discipleship for what it is, those things we think we might lose become victories. We often find they are what kept us from following in the first place. This lesson will help your students begin to see their life in this way, challenging them to put Christ first in their lives.

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## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **Activate** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **Discipleship** lesson 25 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 25, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

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## THE DETAILS

### Luke

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian and a companion of Paul.
- **Timeframe:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

### Philippians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians. Of course, we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Timeframe:** Philippians was one of the last letters Paul wrote before he was martyred, sometime around A.D 62.
- **Purpose:** Philippians was written to Paul's close friends at the Philippian church, thanking them for their kindness and prayers while he was in prison. And he was encouraging them not to lose their faith because of his persecution.

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## THE MAIN POINT

This is the third lesson in the discipleship series. And as such, it builds to a pretty strong finish. Your students have learned that God always intended His children to be followers, walking in His ways. They've learned that Jesus' definition of a disciple was a selfless follower whose identity was hidden in the mission and purpose of God. In this lesson, your students will find themselves face-to-face with a truth that can seem hard to swallow when compared to the ways of the world they live in. But in both the Luke and Philippians passages, your students will see Jesus calling them to a life where devotion to Christ is the number one priority. To truly follow Christ as He commands, nothing can come between your students and God. However, your students will be surprised at how fulfilling this life can be. It is, after all, how God designed them!

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## LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

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## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To help students realize that it's valuable to count the cost of something before taking the step.
- **Set-Up:** Provide a 3x5 index card and a pen or pencil for each student.

FIRST, ask students if any of them would like for their parents to give them a new car. Most everyone will answer in the

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affirmative! So explain that you're going to help them to make a few calculations as to the cost per month for this new car. Distribute the 3x5 index cards and a pen or pencil to each student. Instruct them to write at the top of the card, MY NEW CAR.

THEN, let them know that you're going to be general instead of specific with numbers for the sake of the mathematical challenge in your group. Start by saying:

- **Your new car is going to cost around \$25,000. To pay that off over five years at today's interest rate will make the car payment somewhere around \$450 each month.**

Instruct them to write "\$450 per month" under the words MY NEW CAR and proceed the same way with each of these other expenses:

- **Insurance at \$50 per month**
- **Gas at \$150 per month**
- **Car upkeep, like oil changes, averages out to \$10 per month**
- **Car tag at \$300 per year, or \$25 per month**

NEXT, have them add up the figures and ask someone to tell you how much that is per month. Say:

- **That's right; your parents would be paying \$700 per month or \$8,220 per year just for you to have a new car.**

THEN, have them write MY NEW CAR WOULD COST \$8,400 A YEAR at the bottom of the card. Then ask them to imagine they are working and planning to buy this new car with their own money. Explain that with a minimum wage job working 40 hours per week, they would have around \$50 a week to live on after paying for the new car each month. Remind them that they would be paying for rent, electricity, and food out of the \$50 each week. Then ask if any of them think the cost of a new car is too high. (Or if it's only too high if they had to pay for it.)

FINALLY, help students see that many times we make plans to do things or buy things without stopping to count the cost. Once we know the cost, we have to decide if we want to sacrifice or surrender whatever it takes to get what we want. Tell them that in this final lesson in your series on discipleship, they will discover that the cost of discipleship is high according to Jesus. But when we stop and count what it costs, something unusual happens: we find out that the fulfillment of living a life following Him is well worth the price. Transition into The Main Event.

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help students look at both the cost of discipleship and the joy of following Jesus through the eyes of Jesus and Paul.
- **Set Up:** None

FIRST, as this is the last of three lessons on discipleship, ask if anyone can remember some of the main points from the other two lessons. Lead them in a brief review, covering the following points:

- **God has always called people to follow Him and be His disciples.**
- **In the Old Testament, the mark of a disciple was one who feared God and walked in His ways.**

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- We live under grace (as opposed to the Law), which means our lives as disciples start with Christ in us, not through our efforts.
- Jesus called His disciples to deny self, take up their cross, and follow Him.
- Jesus used the illustration of a kernel of wheat to explain what it means for a disciple to “die to self.”
- The presence of God in our lives through the Holy Spirit gives us all we need to follow Him.

After the review, prepare your students for the time of Bible study by telling them that in this lesson they will see both the sacrifice and the joy of discipleship through the eyes of Jesus and Paul. Next, read or have a student read Luke 9:57-62. Explain that in this passage Jesus confronts three people with the cost of following Him. Reread verses 57-58. Then lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **The first guy approached Jesus with the significant statement that he’d follow Jesus wherever he went. How did Jesus respond to him?**
  - Answer: Jesus responded that He had no home and no set place to sleep each night.
- **If Jesus were auditioning for a position at a marketing firm, He probably wouldn’t get the job. What about this response to a potential follower surprises you?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **What about Jesus’ response was perfectly in line with Jesus’ definition from last week’s lesson?**
  - Answer: The idea of dying to self, and losing your life to find it. Jesus was reinforcing these concepts of what He expected from His followers.
- **What was Jesus saying to this man about what awaited him if He identified with Jesus?**
  - Answer: Jesus wanted this man to know that to be a disciple might mean poverty, pain, loneliness, and the loss of comfort.
- **What was Jesus saying to this man about what was NOT waiting on him if he embraced following Jesus?**
  - Answer: Comfort, fame, riches, social status, etc.

NEXT, read or have a student read verses 59-60 again. Explain that the second man was approached by Jesus to be a disciple. His response caused Jesus to point out another sacrifice in following Him.

- **This time Jesus asked the man to follow Him. How was the man’s response different than how we saw the disciples respond to Jesus in the last lesson?**
  - Answer: The disciples walked away from everything to follow Jesus’ call.
- **Let’s be clear: Jesus isn’t against taking care of the family. Look deeper into the response. Jesus had just looked this man in the face and said, “Follow me.” What did the man’s response say about where his heart really was?**
  - Answer: His response was less about his devotion to his father and more about his priorities. His desires were fixed on earthly things instead of heavenly ones.

THEN, read or have a student read verses 61-62 and explain that Jesus calls a final man to follow Him. Again we have a response from the man and a reply from Jesus. Explain that the third man wanted to go back and say goodbye to His family which sounds like a logical thing to do. Jesus responded that anyone who puts his hand on the plow then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God. Explain that the plow was used to till the soil for farming. Anyone who used a plow knew the importance of keeping their eyes ahead instead of looking back lest they get off course. Ask:

- **How is Jesus’ response to this third man similar to the message behind what He said to the first man?**

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- o Answer: Discipleship that Jesus saw as right and proper is discipleship that sets its eyes on Jesus and never waivers. Jesus didn't want His disciples to look back and second guess their walk with Him. Jesus said the way to follow Him was by looking forward.

Before you move on, tell your students that passages like these can seem kind of harsh at first. Ask them to sum up what they just learned in their own words. Make sure there are no misunderstandings. Their summaries might include some of the following takeaways:

- **We sometimes make bold promises to God without thinking about the cost of following through.**
- **The call to follow Jesus should take precedence over every other obligation in life.**
- **The call to follow Jesus, once accepted, means keeping a focus on what's ahead instead of what is behind.**

Tell your students that Jesus was precise in detailing the cost of following Him. He didn't beat around the bush, and He didn't mince words. He came out and painted the picture of the kind of sacrifice and commitment He desires. But, explain that there is a different way of viewing this sacrifice.

NEXT, read or have a student read Philippians 3:7-14. Give a little context by telling the students that Paul wrote this letter to the Christians at the church at Philippi as a thank you for their support of him during some tough times. Explain that Paul is describing what he has gone through in his pursuit of following Christ and how he now views the things he sacrificed. Lead students in a short discussion. Ask:

- **In verse 7, Paul says the things that used to be a top priority in his life have been lost. But look at what he says about them in verse 7 and 8. How does Paul describe the sacrifices he'd made?**
  - o Answer: Everything that he had lost he had come to see as gain. Why? Because sacrificing the things that kept him from following Christ resulted in his growing closer to Christ.

NEXT, move to close out the study on this passage by re-reading verses 12-14 and ask the following questions:

- **Did Paul say that by following Christ day after day he had finally perfected knowing Christ?**
  - o Answer: No, Paul said he still longed to know Christ more.
- **What does Paul use to illustrate his life as a disciple?**
  - o Answer: Running a race and receiving a prize. These Olympic style races were prevalent in Paul's day. To Paul, the reward would be to complete his journey on Earth and join Christ in Heaven.
- **What two things does Paul say the disciple needs to do in this race?**
  - o Answer: Forget what is behind you, or in the past, and keep looking forward to what is ahead. Remind the students that Jesus used this same illustration in the passage studied earlier in the lesson.

FINALLY, close this part of the lesson by pointing out the joy that Paul expressed as he wrote these verses. He had every reason to be down and out considering all he had been through. But his words are filled with hope and purpose. Explain that Paul used the word joy seven times in the book of Philippians. He closes his letter to the Philippians by telling the people to always be full of joy. While your students may think of what they have to give up to follow Christ as losses, Paul considered what he gained in knowing Christ was better than anything in this life. Close by saying:

- **Jesus and Paul both taught that the cost of being a disciple was high. The world does not understand a life that is devoted to serving and possibly suffering for the faith. You will be tested in this life if you choose to follow Jesus, but He will give you joy in the journey as you keep your eyes on what you are gaining instead of what you are losing.**

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Make the transition to The Last Word and wrap up the lesson.

## THE LAST WORD

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- **Goal:** To help students understand that the cost of following Jesus is high, but losses in earthly things cannot be compared to gaining the joy of the Lord.
- **Set-Up:** none

FIRST, explain that it's possible to get caught up in the application of these truths. It would be easy to be all wishy-washy about sacrifice and what the cost of following Jesus is. But if you'll encourage students to step back and view this concept from a big-picture perspective, it becomes a lot easier to wrap your brain around.

Challenge students to think about something they value, say playing sports, or hanging out with friends. Maybe it's playing video games, or volunteering at an animal shelter. Encourage students to step back and think for a second about the long-term implications of any of these activities. Ask:

- **Think of those things you like doing, those things you value, but that may compete with your devotion to God. Will they be an impactful part of your life in 5 years? Will they be your top priority in 15 years? Will you still be involved in them when you're in your 60's? Chances are, many of the things we let dominate our lives are nothing more than fleeting hobbies. But Christ will always be with us and in us. He will always be a part of our passion and purpose. And if following Him means sacrificing any of these earthly things, when we consider that we come to know God better, it's hard to see them as losses. In turn, it's very easy to see them as gains.**

Challenge students to respond to this. Ask them for any thoughts or pushback they have. Engage them as needed. Then, close by saying:

- **Over the past three weeks, we've made some amazing discoveries about what the Bible says about discipleship. We learned that God has always been about the task of calling people to follow Him. We found out that the call to be a disciple begins with our decision to accept Christ as Savior and continues throughout this life. You've been taught that the cost of following Christ is high, but God gives us His Holy Spirit to guide us. And if we will embrace this call, we'll find that we find our greatest purpose living precisely as Christ intended us to.**

Close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the **Social Media** guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

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## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).