

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 1: IDENTIFYING GOALS

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled Christian Life and Worldview. This series of lessons examines the choices and practices that are essential for Christian living. To live as the Word of God teaches us means we understand that the choices we make each day affect our faith. It also means learning to pray, practising the commands of God and learning to serve others. These are important lessons for understanding the practice of Christianity. Include time to discuss these principles and how to effectively apply them to your life.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.



CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 1: IDENTIFYING GOALS

PURPOSE

Participants will understand that God's plan is ultimately the best, and examine the motivations for their ambitions with a Biblical perspective.

LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson deals with the root motivation for our dreams, plans, and ambitions. There will be some resistance to the suggestion that our ambitions may be selfish and sinful. People are excellent at deceiving themselves! Rely on the Holy Spirit to convict individuals in your group rather than point out their sin of self-deception. Use Scripture to show the truth, and personal examples of how you yourself pursued selfish dreams at one time to demonstrate how we can change our thinking with God's help. You may have participants who are not believers but have an interest in Christianity. Let this lesson be an introduction to living God's way and the help that God provides. Christianity isn't about being good, it's about being Godly.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions.

- ❖ Share about a time in your life when you desired or wished for something frivolous that you now regret wishing for. Discuss as a group what might have happened if you had received what you desired.
- ❖ Have the group name things they dreamed about as a child, if they are comfortable sharing. They may be silly or frivolous things.
- ❖ When is it good when we don't get what we want? What is it that people around you want most today?
- ❖ Can you think of an example of someone famous who was kept from getting what they wanted most because of a bad choice they made?



STUDY

- ❖ **Life Choices:** People can be very self-deceptive. Sin clouds our thinking and we often make poor decisions because of it. Each decision in our life can have long-lasting effects, not only for ourselves, but for our families and our communities. Give examples of decisions from your own life.
 - The life choices we make are dependent on our ambitions — the things we want in our life. Some of the things we may want are:
 - o To earn lots of money
 - o To get a car
 - o To become famous / well known / to have status / popularity
 - o To get into a particular profession
 - o To find true love
 - o To achieve something exceptional
 - o To have happy and healthy children

ASK PARTICIPANTS

Think of five dreams or ambitions you may have for your future and write them down. Consider why you have these ambitions. What is your motivation for each of them? What do you hope to achieve?

TEACH

- ❖ There isn't anything wrong with having an ambition or a goal, but we should consider that God who is all-knowing and all-powerful and loves us has a better plan. We must seek God's plan.
- ❖ We can examine our motives to see if they are selfish or if they are good. Good motives will help us make good choices. These choices will be in line with God's Word, the Bible, and what God desires for us. God may not give us everything we want. Even if we have a godly motive He may have a different plan. Psalm 119:36 instructs us to turn our hearts towards the truth of God, not selfish gain. Good motives are those that the Bible calls good, those that are not selfish. We will look at some examples next.

TASK

Give your participants a chart like the one at the end of this lesson. Ask them to consider the possible sinful or selfish motive for each ambition, and what a selfless/Godly motive might be. You may also use a chalk board or other visual aid if available to record answers. Participants will need to read the Scripture verses. You may wish to make this a group discussion or break your larger group into smaller groups for this task. It is also possible to use this as a homework assignment for a group or a single participant. The first chart has been filled in for you, the leader, to give you help in guiding the participants.



DISCUSSION

- ❖ Look at the list of dreams you made earlier. In light of this lesson, how can you ensure that you are leaving room for God's will in your life? How can you make sure you are pursuing your ambitions for the right reasons?
- ❖ What happens when a person starts off with a good ambition and good motivations, but gets side-tracked and begins thinking selfishly? What temptations may get in the way? How can we prevent this?
- ❖ Consider one of the ambitions already mentioned. How might poor choices get in the way of accomplishing that dream? What poor choices do you need to avoid in your life in order to accomplish your dreams?
- ❖ How is having a selfish motivation connected to making poor choices?
- ❖ What are the consequences of making godly choices? What are the benefits?

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Pray for each participant that they would make good life choices and examine the root of their ambitions. Pray they would not deceive themselves about selfishness in their life, but be open to God's special plans for them. Pray they would have the courage to give up a focus on worldly pleasures and live a godly life.



IDENTIFYING DREAMS – LEADER'S CHART

Sinful/Selfish Motivation	Ambition	Godly / Good Motivation
<p>Amass wealth in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Feel secure -Feel powerful - No longer have to work (laziness) - Hold power over others -Look good -Make yourself feel important 	<p>Wealth</p> <p>1 Timothy 5:8 Proverbs 13:11 Ecclesiastes 5:10 Matthew 6:24 1 Timothy 6:10 Revelation 3:17</p>	<p>Amass wealth in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide for your own family -Take care of your own needs and not be a burden to others -Be philanthropic and charitable / do good works -Support the work of God financially (church, missions)
<p>Collect possessions or property (house, car, electronics, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To attain status in your community -To have the biggest and best possessions and be envied by your neighbours -To fill your life with items that you feel will bring happiness -To demonstrate your wealth to others 	<p>Possessions or Property</p> <p>Matthew 19:21 Luke 12:15 Psalm 119:36 Philippians 4:11-13 1 Timothy 6:17-18</p>	<p>Collect possessions or property</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To use your possessions as tools to help others -To use your house in hospitality to serve your family, neighbours, or community -To grow food, build useful things or engage in honest work using your possessions and property
<p>Aspire to Leadership and Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To exert power over others -To coerce others to serve you -To attain security or financial gain -To feel important or powerful -To direct others to patterns of behaviour that benefit you 	<p>Status/Leadership/Achievement</p> <p>Titus 1:7-14 1 Timothy 4:12 Mark 10:42-45 Titus 2:1-15</p>	<p>Aspire to Leadership and Servanthood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To guide those who are without leadership -To teach or lead those younger or newer in the faith -To be a servant -To have a burden of leadership or a calling laid upon you by God
<p>Desire marriage or family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To want security and self-worth in relationships that should be satisfied by God -For social status, power, or appearances -For any self-focussed purposes 	<p>Marriage and Children</p> <p>Genesis 2:18 Psalm 127:3-5 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Proverbs 22:6 Jeremiah 31:3</p>	<p>Desire marriage or family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To have someone to love and serve faithfully -To teach children about the Lord and right living -To serve God and others together as a family -To fulfil God's call on your life for marriage and family



IDENTIFYING DREAMS – PARTICIPANT'S CHART

Sinful/Selfish Motivation	Ambition	Godly / Good Motivation
	Wealth 1 Timothy 5:8 Proverbs 13:11 Ecclesiastes 5:10 Matthew 6:24 1 Timothy 6:10 Revelation 3:17	
	Possessions or Property Matthew 19:21 Luke 12:15 Psalm 119:36 Philippians 4:11-13 1 Timothy 6:17-18	
	Status/Leadership/Achievement Titus 1:7-14 1 Timothy 4:12 Mark 10:42-45 Titus 2:1-15	
	Marriage and Children Genesis 2:18 Psalm 127:3-5 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Proverbs 22:6 Jeremiah 31:3	