

## Life Connect Lesson One: Decisions, Decisions

No matter how hard you try to avoid them, life presents you with decisions you have to make daily. Some decisions are easy to make, but others are extremely difficult. Having clear priorities makes the decision process easier. But where can we find the help we need to establish good priorities? This lesson will show you what you should use to establish your priorities as well as who can help you to set good priorities.

### Starter

1. *What is one of the toughest decisions you have ever had to make?*
2. *How did your decision reveal your real priorities?*

### Study

Read the following sets of Bible passages and application notes. Answer the questions for each set before moving on to the next.

#### **Proverbs 2:1-6 Proverbs 2:1-6 (NIV2011)**

- <sup>1</sup> My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you,
- <sup>2</sup> turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding—
- <sup>3</sup> indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding,
- <sup>4</sup> and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure,
- <sup>5</sup> then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.
- <sup>6</sup> For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

*In order to set good priorities in life we need wisdom. We can attain the wisdom we need in two ways. First, we can spend time reading and studying God's Word, which is wisdom's starting point and the source of knowledge and understanding (2:6). Second, we need to earnestly seek God's wisdom (see James 1:5). Because God's wisdom is hidden, it takes effort to find it. Finding wisdom can be strenuous. But when we are on that path, we will discover that true wisdom is God's and that he will guide us and reward our sincere and persistent search.*

3. *Why do we need wisdom for establishing priorities?*

4. *If people do not use wisdom to establish priorities, what do they use instead?*

5. *To what degree have you turned to God for wisdom in setting your priorities?*

6. *What steps can you take this week to attain more of God's wisdom for setting your priorities?*

**Mark 2:13-14 Mark 2:13-14 (NIV2011)**

<sup>13</sup> Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them.

<sup>14</sup> As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

*When Jesus called Matthew (also called Levi) to be one of his disciples, Matthew got up and followed, leaving behind a lucrative career. Sometimes the decision to follow Christ requires difficult or painful choices. Like Matthew, we must decide to leave behind those things that would keep us from following Christ. The next time you hear God calling you to follow him, do it with as much abandon as Matthew.*

7. *What would be hard for you to leave or give up if Jesus asked you?*

8. *What does this tell you about your priorities?*

9. *Why does Jesus sometimes ask us to give up something that is dear to us?*

**10.** *What priorities do you need to change in order to be willing to give up anything Christ asks of you?*

**1 Peter 4:3-5 1 Peter 4:3-5 (NIV2011)**

<sup>3</sup> For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.

<sup>4</sup> They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you.

<sup>5</sup> But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

*Peter explains to us that a person whose life changes radically at conversion may experience contempt or even abuse from old friends. This is because a person who accepts Christ changes his or her priorities and heads in a new direction. A person's change in priorities will ultimately lead to a change in his or her lifestyle, which will make non-Christian friends feel guilty about their activities. If this happened to you because of your conversion, keep in mind that every person will eventually face God's judgment. Endure your non-Christian friends' criticism and stay faithful to your convictions, knowing that you will receive God's approval and acceptance on Judgment Day.*

**11.** *How did your priorities change when you accepted Christ?*

**12.** *What effect did your conversion have on your non-Christian friends?*

**13.** *How do an eternal perspective and Christlike priorities help you deal with negative peer pressure now?*

**14.** *With which worldly priorities do you continue to struggle?*

## Summary

As Christians, we need to establish our priorities using God's wisdom. We can find his wisdom in Scripture and through persistent prayer. At times Christ may even call us to reorder or reconstruct our priorities. When we do this, the world will hate us. But God assures us that the eternal reward for

obeying him will far outweigh the immediate benefits of following the crowd.

**15.** *What steps could you take this week to begin to evaluate your priorities?*

## Supplemental Questions

### **Read 1 Kings 11:1-6. 1 Kings 11:1-6 (NIV2011)**

<sup>1</sup> King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites.

<sup>2</sup> They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love.

<sup>3</sup> He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.

<sup>4</sup> As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

<sup>5</sup> He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites.

<sup>6</sup> So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

*Although Solomon had clear instructions from God not to marry women from foreign nations, he chose to disregard God's commands. He married not just one but numerous foreign women, who subsequently led him away from God. Solomon's example serves as a warning of what can happen to us when we place our own desires and relationships with others above our relationship with and obedience to God. Compromising with the world is never worth the consequences. Learn from Solomon's mistake, and obey God wholeheartedly.*

**16.** *How can our desire for acceptance lead us to compromise our godly priorities?*

**17.** *When is it most difficult for you to stand up for your beliefs?*

**18.** *How can you strengthen your resolve to stand against peer pressure?*

Life Application Bible Topical Studies - Priorities.

## Life Connect Lesson Two: Different from the World

Topic: priorities, imitate Christ

We may say that we do not care what others think of us, but in reality, most of us want to fit in and be accepted. However, if we are true imitators of Christ, we will never fit in to this world's value system. As Christians, we should fight our natural tendency to conform to this world because its values and priorities oppose Christ's! This lesson will challenge you to evaluate your priorities and help you determine whether your lifestyle more closely reflects the world's values or God's.

### Starter

1. *In your opinion, what most clearly distinguishes you from your non-Christian friends?*
2. *What worldly priorities do you think are most challenging for Christians not to adopt as their own today?*

### Study

Read the following sets of Bible passages and application notes. Answer the questions for each set before moving on to the next.

#### **1 John 2:15-17 1 John 2:15-17 (NIV2011)**

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.

<sup>16</sup> For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

<sup>17</sup> The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

*When we love the world and the things in it, our priorities are worldly. Worldly priorities are characterized by three attitudes: the cravings of sinful man preoccupation with gratifying physical desires; the lust of his eyes bowing to the god of materialism; and boasting of what he has and does obsession with one's status or importance. By contrast, God values self-control, a spirit of generosity, and a commitment to humble service. We must take a hard look at our lives to align our priorities with God's.*

3. *Why are the things of the world so desirable?*

4. *How do Jesus' priorities differ from the world's?*
5. *How can we guard against having worldly priorities?*
6. *What desire or habit has recently interfered with your commitment to God?*

**James 4:4-6 James 4:4-6 (NIV2011)**

<sup>4</sup> You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

<sup>5</sup> Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us?

<sup>6</sup> But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

*God wants us to enjoy a pleasurable life, but at the same time he warns against seeking worldly pleasures. Pleasures that cause us to compromise God's standards are wrong. If your main priority in life is to enjoy all the world has to offer, you will not have time to actively seek God and his will for your life. But if you choose to make God your first priority, he will give you true joy that is greater than any worldly pleasure!*

7. *What do you think it means to become a friend of the world?*
8. *How can we tell the difference between helpful and harmful pleasures?*
9. *How can we guard against giving temporary pleasures high priority in our lives?*

10. *What distracts or prevents you from giving God free reign in all of your life?*

**John 16:20, 22, 33 John 16:20 (NIV2011)**

<sup>20</sup> Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

**John 16:22 (NIV2011)**

<sup>22</sup> So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

**John 16:33 (NIV2011)**

<sup>33</sup> “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

*Scripture tells believers to expect tension and trouble simply because the world's priorities oppose God's purposes. Because of this tension, you will find yourself caught between desiring to live as God would have you to and, at the same time, wanting to avoid problems with the world. Living according to God's priorities, however, should always win this struggle. Although it may be difficult to live as God desires you to now especially when you are persecuted for it you can joyfully anticipate a peaceful and rewarding eternity with him later.*

11. *What did you have to give up when you accepted Christ? What did you gain?*

12. *What kind of trouble does the world cause for Christians?*

13. *How does your hope in the future affect your priorities now?*

14. *If we do not experience any hardship as Christians, what does this reveal about our priorities?*



## Summary

We are to reject the world's values and priorities because they oppose God's. Even though this sometimes creates conflict, God promises to bless us when we make his values and priorities our own. Choose God's priorities for your life. Believe that he knows what is best for you!

15. *What steps can you begin to take this week to get your priorities in line with Christ's?*

## Supplemental Questions

### **Read Matthew 5:3-10. Matthew 5:3-10 (NIV2011)**

- <sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.  
<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.  
<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.  
<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.  
<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.  
<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.  
<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*Jesus began his sermon with blessings and promises for those whom the world shuns. As Jesus' blessings and promises show, God's priorities for living contradict the world's. If you want to live for God, you must be ready to say and do what seems strange to the world. You must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate, to help when others abuse. By giving up your own rights in order to serve others, you will one day receive the wonderful blessings God has in store for you.*

16. *How does society's list of priorities compare and contrast with those of God's kingdom?*

**17.**      *Which beatitude puzzles you the most?*

**18.**      *In what ways can you live more by God's priorities found in Matthew 5:3-10 this week?*

Life Application Bible Topical Studies - Priorities.

## Life Connect Lesson Three: Follow the Leader

Topic: priorities, God's priorities

If someone asked you what your priorities are, you probably would not have to think too long to come up with an answer that sounded good. As easy as it is to give the right response, it is quite a challenge to follow Christ's example when setting our priorities and living by them each day. This lesson will help you to identify from Scripture God's priorities for your life.

### Starter

1. *On those rare occasions when you daydream, what do you usually find yourself dreaming about?*
2. *To what extent do you think our dreams reflect our priorities?*

### Study

Read the following sets of Bible passages and application notes. Answer the questions for each set before moving on to the next.

#### **Philippians 3:12, 14 Philippians 3:12 (NIV2011)**

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

#### **Philippians 3:14 (NIV2011)**

<sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

*Paul said that his highest priority was to know Christ and to imitate him in every area of his life. He was not interested in personal success or recognitionobeying Christ absorbed all of his energy. Paul's example challenges us today. We should not let anything take our eyes off our goalknowing Christ. We must lay aside everything harmful and forsake anything that may distract us from our top priorityour relationship with Christ.*

3. *What standards or examples do many people use to determine how they should live?*
4. *What were Christ's goals and priorities during his life on earth?*
5. *What kinds of things distract us from our commitment to Christ?*
6. *What distraction or stumbling block could you eliminate from your life?*

**Matthew 6:33 Matthew 6:33 (NIV2011)**

<sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

*To seek first God's kingdom and righteousness means to turn to God first for help, to fill your thoughts with his desires, to pattern your character after his, and to serve and obey him in everything you do. People, objects, goals, and other desires all compete with God for first place in our lives. And in our fast-paced, me-first world, any of these can quickly bump God out of first place. Therefore, you must actively choose to give God first place in every area of your life every day.*

7. *How do our spiritual priorities manifest themselves in everyday life?*
8. *In practical terms, what do you think it means to seek first God's kingdom?*
9. *What does God promise to do for us when we focus on his priorities?*

**10. What threatens to bump God out of first place in your life?**

**1 Timothy 4:7-8 1 Timothy 4:7-8 (NIV2011)**

<sup>7</sup> Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.

<sup>8</sup> For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

*Because of our society's strong emphasis on physical fitness, people spend an excessive amount of time and money trying to get in shape. But how many of us are spiritually fit? Spiritual fitness (godliness) deserves much more of our attention than physical fitness. Our physical body is susceptible to disease and injury, but faith can sustain us through these tragedies. With the single-mindedness of an athlete in training, we should train ourselves to be godly.*

**11. In your own words, what is godliness?**

**12. How can we train ourselves to be godly?**

**13. What does your use of time reveal about your spiritual priorities?**

**14. What changes can you make in your daily schedule to strengthen your spiritual muscles?**

**Summary**

Right priorities grow out of consistently giving God first place in our lives. When we do this, God will not only be faithful in providing for our daily needs but will reward us for giving him first place. Make God a vital part of everything you do. He will lead you because you will be working to accomplish his purposes.

**15.** *How can you make God a more vital part of everything you do this week?*

### Supplemental Questions

**Read Proverbs 3:5-6. Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV2011)**

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

<sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

*To receive God's guidance, we must acknowledge him in everything we do. This means turning every area of life over to him. Look at your values and priorities. In many areas of your life you may already acknowledge God, but it is the areas in which you attempt to restrict or ignore his influence that will cause you problems.*

**16.** *How have you seen God specifically guide you after you gave him control of an area of your life?*

**17.** *What areas of your life have you not completely surrendered to God?*

**18.** *What first step can you take to turn over to God an area of your life that you have been holding back from him?*

Life Application Bible Topical Studies - Priorities.

## Life Connect Lesson Four: Home Is Where the Heart Is

Topic: priorities, God's love, priorities in the home

Most American homes do not resemble the Brady Bunch anymore. Families today face separation, teenage rebellion, divorce, abuse, and other relational problems. Unfortunately, Christian families are not exempt from these problems, but they can demonstrate what a difference God's love makes in their lives while dealing with them. This lesson will teach you what priorities God wants you to have in your home. You will also learn how God rewards those who make him the head of their families.

### Starter

1. *When you were a child, which room of your house was your favorite and why?*
2. *What spiritual instruction or guidance did you receive as a child?*

### Study

Read the following sets of Bible passages and application notes. Answer the questions for each set before moving on to the next.

#### **Deuteronomy 6:6-7 Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (NIV2011)**

<sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

<sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

*The Hebrews made religion a high priority in their homes. Religious education was life oriented, not information oriented. They used the context of daily life to teach about God. Likewise, the key to teaching your children to love God is stated simply and clearly in these verses. If you want your children to follow God, make him a part of your everyday experiences. Teach your children to see God in all aspects of life, not just those that are church related.*

3. *Why is it so easy to leave God out of the daily routines in our homes?*
4. *What does it mean to get God's Word in your heart?*

5. *How can we teach our children about God, using the context of daily life?*
6. *In practical terms, how can you make your faith a vital part of your home life today?*

**1 Timothy 3:1-2, 4-5 1 Timothy 3:1-2 (NIV2011)**

<sup>1</sup> Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.

<sup>2</sup> Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

**1 Timothy 3:4-5 (NIV2011)**

<sup>4</sup> He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.

<sup>5</sup> (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

*Paul tells us that spiritual leadership begins at home. If we do not care for, discipline, and teach our own children, we are not qualified to lead others. We must be careful not to think that our work in the church is so important that we are justified in ignoring our families. Give your family priority over your other responsibilities. Only then will your ministry to others be pleasing to the Lord.*

7. *Why do you think God requires church leaders to have well-managed families?*
8. *What happens at home when we prioritize other things over our families?*
9. *In what ways do you feel you have fallen short of the standard set in this passage?*
10. *What could you do to better manage your family or strengthen your relationships with family members?*



### **Psalm 128:1, 3-4 Psalm 128:1 (NIV2011)**

<sup>1</sup> Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in obedience to him.

### **Psalm 128:3-4 (NIV2011)**

<sup>3</sup> Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

<sup>4</sup> Yes, this will be the blessing for the man who fears the LORD.

*We all would love for our family to be like the one described in this psalm! Fortunately, Scripture tells us how. First, we have to recognize that healthy family relationships do not come naturally. We have to work to make our home life pleasing to the Lord. The priorities God outlines in Scripture include love, service, honesty, integrity, and prayer. These help all relationships, and they are especially vital for families.*

### **Summary**

If our faith in Christ is real, it will usually prove itself at home in our relationships with those who know us best. God wants our family to take precedence over our other responsibilities because he values family relationships. Not only will God reward us when we make him the head of our home, but we will also offer a positive testimony to others who need to know how to find peace in their own families.

**15.** *In your home, what priorities would you most like to adjust?*

**16.** *What first step can you take this week to begin establishing these priorities in your family?*

### **Supplemental Questions**

### **Read Exodus 34:7. Exodus 34:7 (NIV2011)**

<sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

*The dire consequences of sin are not limited to the individual family member. This verse explains that children often bear the consequences of their parents' sin. That is why it is important for us to eliminate all sin from our lives. The sin that may cause us a little pain now could sting in a most tender area of our lives later our children and grandchildren. Be careful not to treat sin casually but repent and turn from it immediately.*

- 17. How have you seen the sins of one generation affect a future generation?*
- 18. What does a lifestyle of destructive sin tell about a person's priorities?*
- 19. What sin do you need to get rid of in your life in order to protect future generations of your family from its consequences?*

## **Life Connect Lesson Five: Working for a Living**

Topic: priorities, fulfillment, work priorities

Most people struggle to find meaning in life. In their search for fulfillment, some put too high a priority on their careers. Others, however, lose their motivation and neglect their responsibilities. What both groups of people fail to realize is that a job will never satisfy them completely. In fact, people who find their identity in what they do rather than in who they are will never find fulfillment. This lesson will help you evaluate your priorities at work and motivate you to work for the right reasons.

### **Starter**

- 1. How do you think your boss or coworkers would describe your attitude toward your job?*
- 2. On a scale of one to ten, how fulfilled do you feel in your work?*

## Study

Read the following sets of Bible passages and application notes. Answer the questions for each set before moving on to the next.

### **Genesis 39:20-23 Genesis 39:20-23 (NIV2011)**

<sup>20</sup> Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison,

<sup>21</sup> the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.

<sup>22</sup> So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there.

<sup>23</sup> The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

*As a prisoner and slave, Joseph could have seen his situation as hopeless. Instead, he did his best with each small task given him. His diligence and positive attitude were soon noticed by the chief jailer, who promoted him to prison administrator. No matter what you do for a living, follow Joseph's example by doing your best with each small task given you. Remember that your top priority should be to honor God in your work, not to please your boss.*

3. *What are some of the frustrations you deal with on a daily basis at work?*

4. *How do you usually respond to those frustrations?*

5. *What happens to our attitude and job performance when we do not have the proper priorities at work?*

6. *How could working to please God rather than others straighten out your priorities at work?*

### **1 Corinthians 15:58 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NIV2011)**

<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

*Paul says that nothing we do for God is in vain. The same promise is not given to us by our employers. In fact, some of the work we do each week is usually wasted. But if we can maintain a heavenly perspective, we will not become easily discouraged by our efforts that seem to produce no results for God's kingdom. Keep doing the good that you have opportunity to do, knowing that your work will have eternal results.*

7. *What do you usually do when you feel discouraged about work?*
8. *How does this verse challenge you to deal differently with your feelings of discouragement?*
9. *What is the difference between giving yourself fully to the work of the Lord and being a workaholic?*
10. *What priorities at work do you need to change to please the Lord and effectively do his work?*

### **Ecclesiastes 2:17, 21, 24-26 Ecclesiastes 2:17 (NIV2011)**

<sup>17</sup> So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

### **Ecclesiastes 2:21 (NIV2011)**

<sup>21</sup> For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.

## **Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 (NIV2011)**

<sup>24</sup> A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God,

<sup>25</sup> for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

<sup>26</sup> To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

*Solomon tells us that hard work bears no lasting fruit for those whose main priority is to earn money to gain more possessions. Hard work done with proper motivation such as caring for your family and serving God is not wrong. We have to work to survive. More important, we are responsible for the physical and spiritual well-being of those under our care. But the fruit of hard work done to glorify only ourselves will be passed on to those who may later lose or spoil it all. Such toil often leads to grief. Serving God, however, leads to everlasting joy.*

**11.** *For what reasons are most people motivated to work hard?*

**12.** *What should motivate Christians to be diligent and responsible workers?*

**13.** *How can we find satisfaction and fulfillment in our work?*

**14.** *How does this passage challenge you to adjust your attitude and priorities toward your work?*

## **Summary**

True fulfillment on the job results from working for God, not for ourselves or for others. Therefore, we should take pleasure in our work and accept our responsibilities as a gift from God, thanking him for the ability to serve him through our jobs. Each day that you go to the office, work hard with the proper motivation: to serve God and provide for your family.

15. *What does it mean to work for the Lord at your place of employment?*

16. *How do you need to change your priorities at work or about work?*

### Supplemental Questions

#### **Read Ruth 2:6-12. Ruth 2:6-12 (NIV2011)**

<sup>6</sup> The overseer replied, “She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi.

<sup>7</sup> She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.’ She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter.”

<sup>8</sup> So Boaz said to Ruth, “My daughter, listen to me. Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me.

<sup>9</sup> Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.”

<sup>10</sup> At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?”

<sup>11</sup> Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before.

<sup>12</sup> May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

*Ruth's life exhibited admirable qualities: She was hardworking, loving, kind, faithful, and brave. These qualities gained for her a good reputation, but only because she displayed them consistently in all areas of her life. Wherever Ruth went or whatever she did, her character remained the same. Likewise, your reputation is formed by the people who watch you at work, in town, at home, and at church. A good reputation comes by consistently living out your beliefs no matter what group of people or surroundings you are in.*

17. *What qualities would you like to be known for by your coworkers?*

19. *How can you make sure your priorities at work are consistent with your values in other areas of your life?*

20. *If your reputation at work is already tarnished from past mistakes, what steps could you take to improve your witness in the future?*

**Read John 2:1-11.**

*Jesus was on a mission to save the world, the greatest mission in the history of mankind. Yet he took time to attend a wedding and take part in its festivities. We may be tempted to think we should not take time out from our important work for social occasions. But enjoying these social events can contribute to a balanced lifestyle. Bring balance to your life by bringing Jesus into times of pleasure as well as times of work.*

20. *Why are so many of us tempted to overwork?*

21. *What is so bad about working too much?*

22. *What steps can you take to bring a balance of work and play to your life?*

**Read 2 Thessalonians 1:11.**

*Our calling from God is to become like Christ. This is a gradual, lifelong process that will be completed when we see Christ face-to-face. To be worthy of this calling means to want to do what is right and good, even on the job. We are not perfect yet, but we will move in that direction as God works in us and as we try to make his priorities our own.*

23. *How can we protect our integrity on the job?*

## Life Connect Lesson Six: Refuge from the Storm

Topic: priorities, church as a priority

We can meet God anywhere, at any time. But we know that going to church can help us escape the storms of life, at least temporarily, so we can concentrate on the Lord. According to Scripture, the church can provide much more than refuge for God's children. This lesson will reveal why church should be a priority in our lives.

### Starter

1. *How would you describe the church you attend? How do you think a visitor would describe it?*
2. *What usually motivates you to go to church?*

### Study

Read the following sets of Bible passages and application notes. Answer the questions for each set before moving on to the next.

#### **Psalm 100:1-2, 4 Psalm 100:1-2 (NIV2011)**

- <sup>1</sup> Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
- <sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

#### **Psalm 100:4 (NIV2011)**

- <sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

*God alone is worthy of being worshiped. The psalmist reminds us of this fact by praising God for his goodness and dependability and worshiping him with thanksgiving and praise. Do you willingly and joyfully come into God's presence like the psalmist? Or are you just going through the motions, reluctantly going to church out of a sense of obligation? God deserves our worship. Therefore, joining together with other believers to offer God our adoration and praise must be a high priority in our lives.*



3. *Why is it so easy to just go through the motions when we try to worship God?*

4. *How can we avoid insincere worship?*

5. *How can one tell if worship is a high priority in his or her life?*

6. *How do you make worship a high priority in your life?*

**Hebrews 10:19, 22, 24-25 Hebrews 10:19 (NIV2011)**

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

**Hebrews 10:22 (NIV2011)**

<sup>22</sup> let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

**Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV2011)**

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,

<sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

*Christ has formed all believers into one body into a group of individuals who are united in their purpose and in their love for one another and for the Lord. As members of Christ's church, we gather together to be strengthened in our faith and to encourage one another. Clearly, Christ wants mutual encouragement and support to be a priority for believers.*

7. *What do you enjoy most about attending church?*
8. *Why are we sometimes tempted to give up meeting with other believers?*
9. *What do you think happens in the lives of Christians who stop meeting together?*
10. *How have you spiritually benefited from making church attendance a priority in your life?*

**Ephesians 4:11-12, 15-16 Ephesians 4:11-12 (NIV2011)**

<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,

<sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

**Ephesians 4:15-16 (NIV2011)**

<sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

<sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

*Christ gives each of his followers special gifts so that they can build each other up in the faith. We need to realize how important it is to use our gifts for the edification of the church. If you know what your gifts are, look for opportunities to serve. If you do not know, ask God to show you, perhaps with the help of your minister or Christian friends. Then, as you begin to recognize your special area of service, use your gifts to strengthen and encourage the church.*

11. *In what ways are we responsible to help others in the body of Christ?*

12. *What does this verse teach believers concerning priorities?*

**13.** *When have you seen Christians with different gifts work together to accomplish the same goal?*

**14.** *What do you see as your special role in the church?*

### Summary

Church helps us in many ways. God uses the local body of believers to teach us, to help us grow, to discipline us, and to provide opportunities to serve others. As you reflect on or reorder your priorities, make sure meeting together with other Christians is one of your top priorities.

**15.** *What can you change in your schedule when you feel too busy for church?*

**16.** *Which opportunities for involvement in your church should you consider a high priority?*

### Supplemental Questions

#### **Read Psalm 84. Psalm 84:1-12 (NIV2011)**

<sup>1</sup> How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty!

<sup>2</sup> My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

<sup>3</sup> Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young— a place near your altar, LORD Almighty, my King and my God.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.

<sup>6</sup> As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.

<sup>7</sup> They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.

- <sup>8</sup> Hear my prayer, LORD God Almighty; listen to me, God of Jacob.
- <sup>9</sup> Look on our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one.
- <sup>10</sup> Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.
- <sup>11</sup> For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.
- <sup>12</sup> LORD Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

*Sometimes our greatest need is to get away from the bustling world to meet God, but so many things prevent us from meeting this deep need within us. We must make it a priority to spend time with God in his house. There we will find joy in the prayers, music, teaching, sermons, and fellowship.*

- 17.** *When have you ever had feelings similar to those of the psalmist in this passage?*
- 18.** *What does this psalm teach us about the role of the church in the Christian life?*
- 19.** *What activities or responsibilities could you reduce or eliminate to make more time for God in your life?*