

Mature in Christ

Life Now Bible Exploration 3.0

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INTRODUCTION

When Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple computers, sought an experienced executive to help grow the company, he pursued John Sculley, then the president of Pepsi-Cola. Finding Sculley hard to convince, Jobs looked Sculley in the eye and said in exasperation, "Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water, or do you want a chance to change the world?" In his biography, Scully writes that this challenge knocked the wind out of him and eventually prompted him to leave PepsiCo and join Apple Computers.

Like John Sculley, all of us have a God-given yearning to change the world, to make a difference, to accomplish something of real importance and permanence.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus issued a similar challenge to a few simple fishermen, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). What could possibly be more important than catching men and turning them to God and eternal life?

The purpose of this Bible study is to challenge and excite your heart, as well as begin to equip you for this all-important work—catching men for God.

So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." —John 20:20-21

This is the third of three booklets in the Life Now Bible Exploration series. Each booklet references many Bible verses. The task of looking up the verses can be lightened by using an electronic Bible such as can be found at www.bible.com or www.biblegateway.com. Or groups can study together, each person looking up a different verse and reading it aloud for the group to answer together.

IX. SHARING THE NEW LIFE

“And walking by the Sea of Galilee, (Jesus) saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ And they immediately left the nets and followed Him.”

—Matthew 4:18-22

Why?

1. Today, as much as ever, Jesus is calling to men and women: "Follow Me..." Why is this a crucial task?
 - a. John 14:6 _____

 - b. Romans 10:13-14 _____

2. Why did Paul continue to preach even in the midst of much opposition?
2 Timothy 2:10

3. What happens to those who do not believe in Christ?
 - a. Matthew 13:41-42 _____

 - b. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 _____

4. What was one of Paul's eternal rewards (crowns)?
1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

5. Christians who lead many people to righteousness (faith in Christ) will have a reward. What is it? Daniel 12:3

6. What could hinder us from sharing the gospel? John 12:42-43

7. Why should we not fear what men could say or do to us?

a. Matthew 10:28-31 _____

b. Hebrews 13:5-6 _____

Thought Questions

1. What difficulties do you have in sharing the gospel?

2. In what way could people whom we have won to Christ be our reward in heaven?

“If you are ever going to do anything for Christ and His kingdom, do it now.”
—Bill Bright (founder of Campus Crusade for Christ)

When?

1. How soon after conversion did the following Christians start proclaiming the gospel?
 - a. The Philippians (Philippians 1:5) _____

 - b. Paul (Acts 9:20) _____

2. Even after being driven from their homes, the Jerusalem believers continued to preach about Jesus. How many of them were preaching? Acts 8:1-4

3. According to Colossians 4:5-6, we should:
 - speak about Christ whenever we're asked
 - try to win only those who appear to be receptive
 - recognize that every contact with an outsider (unbeliever) is in some way an opportunity.
4. Use these New Testament examples to think of similar situations where you could share Christ.
 - a. Acts 5:42 _____

 - b. Acts 17:17 _____

“One must keep on pointing out that Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance, and, if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important.” — C. S. Lewis

c. Matthew 9:10-12 _____

d. John 4:3-10 _____

How?

1. With right actions

How can we be a light to those around us? Matthew 5:16;
Philippians 2:14-15

2. With right attitudes

a. How should we respond to a person who is antagonistic or
Indifferent? 2 Timothy 2:23-26

b. What is one thing to remember that can help our attitude toward
unbelievers to be one of love and patience? Titus 3:3

“The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.”

—Henry David Thoreau (19th century writer and philosopher)

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c. How did Jesus respond to those who didn't want to hear Him?
Matthew 8:28-9:1

- He got into an argument with them
- He made sure He got in the last word
- He quietly left and went to talk to people who were more receptive
- He got discouraged and quit preaching

3. With God's power

a. How did Paul feel about his adequacy to tell others about the new covenant (the gospel)? What empowered him? 2 Corinthians: 3:4-6

b. How does God help us in communicating the gospel?

2 Timothy 1:7 _____

Matthew 10: 19-20 _____

c. For what should we pray? Ephesians 6:19-20

“The worst thing a believer can do is to stifle or quench the Holy Spirit. This is done by rushing past the warnings of conscience, refusing to submit to Scripture, hardening the heart to conviction, refusing the advice of mature believers, or ignoring an obvious alarm from God.”

—John D. Jess (Radio commentator and Bible teacher)

What?

1. Your experience

- a. Sometimes, you may feel that you don't know enough to be an effective witness for Christ. But Paul often told others about Christ in a way in which each of us can be effective. In what form did he tell others about the gospel? Acts 22:1-21

- b. The blind man whom Jesus healed had little or no Bible training, but he was able to refute the biggest skeptics of his time with his own experience. What did he say? John 9:24-25

2. The message

- a. What message has power to save men from hell? Romans 1:16

- b. What is the gospel (good news)? 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

- c. How was Paul effective in seeing the Corinthians come to Christ?
1 Corinthians 2:1-2

- by arguing with them about evolution
- by using superior intellectual and scientific arguments
- by presenting the person of Christ and His work

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3. Answering objections

The following verses apply to objections unbelievers frequently use. Look up each verse and match it with the objection it answers.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Mark 2:17 | Ephesians 2:8-9 |
| Mark 8:36-37 | 1 Timothy 2:5-6 |
| Romans 1:18 | James 2:10 |
| Romans 1:19-20 | 2 Peter 1:16 |
| 2 Corinthians 6:2b | Proverbs 14:12 |

Reference

- a. What about those who have never heard of Christ? _____
- b. If a person is doing the best he can, God will accept him. Sincerity is what counts. _____
- c. Surely there is more than one way. I think all religions lead to heaven. _____
- d. I know that I'm sinful, but I haven't sinned enough to go to hell. _____
- e. I don't want to give up a lot of things that I would have to give up if I became a Christian. _____
- f. I'm too much of a sinner to be saved. I have to clean up my life before God will accept me. _____
- g. I don't want to receive Christ right now. I might sometime later. _____
- h. If God is such a loving God, how can He send people to hell? _____
- i. Believing in Christ is just blind faith. _____
- j. Salvation can't be by faith alone. I think we have to have faith and works. _____

4. Your personal testimony

Telling others your testimony (life story) is one of the most effective ways of witnessing because people are more open about themselves when you have been open about yourself. Your testimony can help break down communication barriers. Prepare a short outline of your testimony on a separate sheet of paper. Write it in three sections: (1) before you accepted Christ; (2) how you accepted Christ; (3) after you accepted Christ. Practice giving your testimony with a Christian friend. Keep it clear, concise and Christ-centered. When telling the story of your experience:

- Don't preach. Tell what Christ has done for you. Use "I," "me," "my"—not "you."
- Make it short. Three or four minutes should be enough to cover the essentials.
- Keep Christ central. Highlight what He has done.
- Use a verse or two of Scripture that helped you find Christ or summarizes what you've found.

Response

1. Read John 4:35-38

a. How ready are people to be saved?

"There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history." —Sir Isaac Newton (philosopher and mathematician)

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b. What did Jesus send us to do?

- only plant the Word
- do a lot of witnessing without seeing results
- reap souls

2. What three reactions can you expect when you tell the good news?
Acts 17:32-34

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

3. Jesus taught that we can expect four responses when we preach the Word. What are they? Matthew 13:18-23

4. What is one key to success in winning others to Christ?
2 Corinthians 9:6

Get together with those in your Bible study group sometime this week. Pair up and tell at least one person about the gospel. If you have had experience communicating the gospel, pair up with someone who hasn't. Pray beforehand and come back together in 30-40 minutes to thank the Lord for what He did.

Practical Suggestions

1. Make a list of the people you regularly come in contact with (friends, family, neighbors, students, co-workers, bank tellers, etc.) and pray regularly for them.
2. Become involved in campus or community activities in order to meet people, befriend them, and tell them about Christ through your words and actions.
3. Pray everyday that God will give you opportunities to witness to people and pray for creativity and boldness to use those opportunities.
4. Find ways to build your friendships with people, such as giving them small gifts or serving them in some way. Spend time with them, doing things you enjoy. Introduce them to your friends, or invite them to church activities.
5. Carry a small New Testament with you so that you can show people verses that explain the gospel.
6. Pray for unbelievers who do not receive Christ immediately and look for further opportunities to talk to them about Christ or show them His love. Pray that God would use the seed of the Word that has been sown to convince them of their need for Christ.
7. Memorize verses dealing with salvation and assurance so that you can share them even if you don't have a New Testament with you
8. Remember: the fields are ripe for harvest. God has prepared many who are ready to be saved.

Nineteenth century U.S. Senator Daniel Webster's response to the question, "What is the greatest single thought that ever occupied your mind?" was: "That one day I will have to give an account of myself to God."

Tips on Presenting the Gospel

1. Use a gospel booklet, such as Great Commission's Do you Know for Certain, available through contacting info@gccweb.org. Hold the booklet yourself and simply read it to the person as he looks on.
2. As you read, regularly ask questions to see if he understands and follows your explanation. Strive to be clear and to keep his interest.
3. After going through the gospel, ask if there is any reason why he would not like to receive Christ right now. If he says "No," have him pray the prayer at the end of the booklet with you. If he says "Yes," seek to discover his hesitation and to answer any questions he may have. Give him the booklet to read again on his own.
4. If he prays to receive Christ, show him verses that assure him of his salvation. Again, ask questions to make sure he understands God's assurance. Make an appointment to see him the next day or as soon as possible. Start going through this Bible study series with him. Invite him to a church social function, Sunday meeting, or other activity that would help develop a friendship.
5. Other tips:
 - a. Don't argue.
 - b. Agree where possible.
 - c. Smile!
 - d. Have good hygiene and grooming.
 - e. Properly dress for the occasion.
 - f. Remember the person's name.
 - g. Relax.
 - h. Be interested.
 - i. Give genuine and exclusive attention.
 - j. Never command.
 - k. Be gentle and soft-spoken.
 - n. Identify with the person.
 - o. Motivate by appealing to noble motives.
 - p. Trust in God

A very good Gospel tract, that has been widely used in our churches for many years is, "Do you Know for Certain?" It is available in all of our churches and can also be ordered here: <http://gccweb.org/media-and-resources/publications/>

Thought Questions

1. Jesus Christ endured the cruelest punishment ever invented by man (crucifixion) so that we could have eternal glory. But many of those around us don't understand what Christ did for them. What efforts will you take to tell them about the gospel so that they can have eternal life? What will you do this month, this week, this day?

2. Write the names of several unbelievers you know. What will be their eternal destiny if they don't receive Christ? Think about that for a moment. How should that affect the way you pray for them and relate to them in the future?

Memorize and think about:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." —Romans 1:16

X. FOLLOWING OUR LORD

What if today, in the 20th century, someone were to live a life just like Jesus Christ? What would he be like? Would he be rich or poor? Would he be a celebrity or a social outcast? Would he be consulted by the wise or considered insane? Would he be respected as a clergyman or despised as a cult leader? Would the world acclaim him as a liberator or execute him as a criminal? The startling fact is that it is up to you to find out. You are called by God to live a life just the same as Jesus Christ did.

God's Goal

1. Although there are some things about Jesus Christ that we can never emulate (He is God and He made the only payment for our sins), what is God's plan for each of His followers? Romans 8:29

- a. What was Paul's goal for the Galatian believers? Galatians 4:19

- b. What was Paul's desire for the Ephesian believers? Ephesians 4:13

- c. Therefore, what should be our goal?

2. In how many areas of our lives should we live like our head, Jesus Christ? Ephesians 4:15

"I prefer to believe those writers who get their throats cut for what they write." —Pascal (17th century mathematician and philosopher commenting on the New Testament writers)

Cost

3. Jesus has strict qualifications for any who wish to become His disciples. Read Luke 14:25-33.

a. What does Jesus want us to carefully do before we volunteer to be His followers? (verse 28)

b. What will it cost you to become Jesus' disciple? (verses 26-27, 33)

c. When Jesus spoke of a cross, what do you think His disciples understood this to be?

- an ornament to wear
- a horrifying instrument of torture and death
- a difficult problem in life

The word "hate" is used here in a comparative sense. Our love for Christ should be so great that any other kind of love should look like hate in comparison.

4. Read Luke 16:13-15

a. Often, people give their lives to gain financial prosperity or recognition and then fit in God whenever it is convenient. What is true of such a person?

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b. Why do you think it is impossible to serve both God and money?

d. What does God think of loving wealth or prestige? (vs. 15) _____

c. Why do you think God detests what men highly value? _____

It is not necessarily wrong to be wealthy or famous. The questions to ask are: "What controls your life? What is the number one thing in your life? Is it God or something else?"

Jesus' Example

1. If anyone ever had the right to a long, happy, comfortable life, Jesus Christ certainly did. What did He choose? Why?

a. Mark 10:45 _____

b. Romans 15:3 _____

c. 2 Corinthians 8:9 _____

"What is it that we really fear? Is it the power of the atom bomb or is it the force of evil within the heart of man...In the Name of God, if you believe in God, take Him seriously; if not, we're all dead." —Albert Einstein

2. In what way did Jesus endure privation? Luke 9:57-58

3. Because of Jesus' radical love for God, what did His relatives think?
Mark 3:20-21

4. What did the religious leaders think of Jesus? Mark 3:22

Paul's Example

1. Read 1 Corinthians 4:8-17

a. What physical difficulties did Paul endure? (verses 11,12)

In the 19th century, William Bordon, a very wealthy English man, decided to give away his huge inheritance. He died of disease just a few years after going to China as a missionary. In his Bible were found the words, "No reserves, no retreats, no regrets."

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b. What did others think of him? (verses 9,10,12,13)

c. Why do you think Paul had a sacrificial lifestyle?

- He wasn't able to make enough money to live on.
- He was lazy and didn't work.
- He sacrificed his comforts and reputation so that others would hear the gospel and be saved.
- He wanted to prove that he was more spiritual than others.

d. What did Paul command all the Corinthians (young, old, married and single) to do? (verse 16)

e. Who else did Paul teach to follow this lifestyle? (verse 17)

- the other apostles
- all Christians everywhere in every church
- those who get a special calling

2. What was Paul's attitude and example toward secular work?

a. Acts 18:1-3, _____

"You don't determine the greatness of a man by his wealth or fame, but by what it takes to discourage him."—Anonymous

b. Acts 20:33-35 _____

3. What should take priority over your job, school, and material possessions? Matthew 6:33

4. In everything Paul did, what was his priority? 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

5. What did Paul command us to do? Philippians 3:17; 4:9

6. What should be your immediate or eventual goal in everything you do?

We don't think it strange for a soldier to give up his life for his country or for an athlete to train incessantly to win the gold medal. We don't see it unusual for a political candidate to make extreme sacrifices to be elected. Nor does it seem overboard for a businessman to give his life to his business. But that "blood, sweat and tears" should characterize the life of a follower of Christ somehow seems to be a bit fanatical. Is not Jesus Christ more worthy of our all than any other cause?

Faithfulness with Your Time

1. What was Moses' prayer? Psalm 90:12

2. To have a profitable life, what two things must be true of you?
Proverbs 21:5a

a. _____

b. _____

3. What principles of time management can you see in the following verses?

a. Proverbs 14:8,15 _____

b. Proverbs 14:22 _____

4. What must we keep in mind when we make plans?

a. Proverbs 19:21 _____

“Oh, if we could only get a glimpse of the wonders of heaven and Life Eternal and the contrasting view of a lost soul...Whatever you do, don't let the Thief of time rob you of the joy of leading precious souls out of darkness into His marvelous light.” —Dawson Trotman (founder of The Navigators)

b. Proverbs 16:2-3,9 _____

c. James 4:13-16 _____

5. What kind of attitude does God want us to have?

a. Colossians 4:5 _____

b. Ephesians 5:15-16 _____

6. From Luke 13:31-33, what can you learn from Jesus' lifestyle?

Pray that God would guide you into specific life goals and plans. Write down a few goals and plans that you believe God has for you. Include ideas on how to keep yourself motivated, to evaluate your progress, and to get help from others.

a. Goals _____

b. Plans _____

c. Motivation _____

d. Evaluation _____

e. Supervision _____

Faithfulness at Your Job

1. What did Paul urge the new Christians in Thessalonica to do?
1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

2. When we do our jobs, what should be our attitude and our motivation?
Colossians 3:23-24

3. God wants His children to excel in their jobs. According to Proverbs 22:29, if we become skilled in our work, what will be the result?

4. According to Acts 20:34-35, why did Paul work so hard?

As followers of Christ, the work we do in the marketplace is sacred — a practical way in which we glorify God in the world. Also, your faithfulness in your job will enable you to meet the needs of your family as well as the needs of others. So, work hard and excel at your work as a worshiper of God and as a witness for Christ.

Faithfulness with Your Finances

1. In one sentence, summarize the lesson of Luke 16:1-12

2. According to Luke 16:10-11, what is the relationship between our faithfulness to manage our finances and God's willingness to entrust us with greater spiritual responsibilities?

3. From what part of our income are we to honor the Lord?

Proverbs 3:9-10

- from leftovers, after we pay all our bills
 from none, if we don't have any money left after paying bills
 from the first part of our income, before we pay our bills

Some Christians do not give the Lord His portion because they are not disciplined with their personal budgets. Others are not diligent enough to get better jobs to adequately meet their responsibilities. In the Scriptures, God set up the tithe as a means of supporting His leaders. The tithe is one-tenth of the total of one's income.

4. If we are faithful in tithing to the Lord, what can we expect sooner or later? Malachi 3:10 _____

5. What should a Christian's overall thoughts be towards debt?

Romans 13:8: Prov. 22:7: Heb.13:5

6. The New Testament is clear in encouraging Christians to support their church and their leadership. What is taught in 1 Timothy 5:16,17?

7. What two commands does Jesus give us in Matthew 6:19-20?

a. _____

b. _____

"The Savior is not looking for ~~the~~ women who will give their spare evenings to Him—or their years of retirement. Rather, He seeks those who will give Him first place in their lives."—William McDonald (author of "True Discipleship")

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8. What principle was Jesus teaching? Matthew 6:21

9. Stop and thank God for giving you His most precious possession, His Son (Romans 8:32). Think for a minute; what have you done for Him? What would you like to do for Him?

For more help and info on handling your finances:
Financial Peace University, www.daveramsey.com/fpu Crown
Ministries, www.crown.org

Thought Questions

1. How do we know that it is possible for any believer to fully imitate Paul and Jesus?

a. 2 Corinthians 9:8 _____

b. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 _____

c. Philippians 4:13,19 _____

d. Philippians 2:13 _____

2. Why are goals, plans, and time limits important to being an effective child of God?

3. What relationship exists between God's willingness to give you responsibilities and the management of your finances?

Memorize and think about:

"The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you."

—Philippians 4:9

For Further Information on Following our Lord

We would encourage you to read a copy of The Core. This booklet covers the 8 Core Values of our churches. Our 'Common Practices,' in relation to each of these Core Values, are also included in the booklet for clarity and to help us as followers of Christ. <http://gccweb.org/media-and-resources/publications/>

Supplement A: Great Biographies

The following is a list of recommended biographies. If you read these bios and learn how these Christians served our Savior, we promise, you will be greatly encouraged. "Remember those who led you, who spoke the Word of God to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith."

— Hebrews 13:7

<i>Here I Stand (Martin Luther)</i>	Roland Bainton
<i>Strangely Warmed (John Wesley)</i>	Garth Lean
<i>The Radical Wesley</i>	Howard Snyder
<i>George Whitefield</i>	Arnold Dallimore
<i>Goforth of China</i>	Rosalind Goforth
<i>The Life of Robert Murray McCheyne</i>	Andrew Bonar
<i>C.T. Studd</i>	Norman Grubb
<i>Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret</i>	Dr. & Mrs. Howard Taylor
<i>Against the Tide (Watchman Nee)</i>	Angus Kinnear
<i>Shadow of the Almighty (Jim Elliot)</i>	Elizabeth Elliot
<i>Daws (Dawson Trotman)</i>	Betty Skinner
<i>Billy Graham</i>	John Pollock

FOLLOWING OUR LORD

XI. THE WORLD GOAL

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and The Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

— Matthew 28:19, 20

Every Nation in This Generation

Does God actually want us to reach the entire world with the gospel in this generation?

1. For how many people in the world today has Jesus died? (John 3:16)

2. What does God desire? 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4

3. If we want to imitate God, then what type of vision or outlook should we have?

4. How does God plan to fulfill His desire? Romans 10:13-17

The word “preacher,” in the New Testament sense of the word, didn’t mean a professional, but simply a person who proclaimed a message.

5. For what one thing did Jesus want His disciples to pray? Matthew 9:37-38

Why? _____

“Live so as to be missed when you are gone.” —Robert Murray McCheyne (19th century Scottish preacher)

6. The Great Commission

a. What was Jesus' final command while here on earth? Matthew 28:19-20

b. These final words of Jesus are often called the Great Commission. Some argue that the Great Commission was only for the apostles to whom it was originally given and not for us today. Can you find two reasons in Matthew 28:19, 20, that show that the Commission is intended for Christians today?

c. Matthew 28:19-20 is the only place in the New Testament where we are commanded to baptize new believers in water. The section of the verse that commands "baptizing" is part of the main command to "make disciples of all nations." How does this support the thought that the Great Commission applies to us today?

7. Reflecting on all of the above questions, why should every Christian devote his or her life to helping fulfill the Great Commission in this generation?

Is It possible?

1. In your opinion, is it truly possible to bring the gospel to the entire world in this generation?
 - yes
 - not sure
 - no

2. Do you think that the Lord would give us a command that would be impossible to fulfill with His help? Why or why not?

3. How do each of these verses reflect on the above question?
 - a. Deuteronomy 30:11 _____

 - b. Matthew 17:20 _____

 - c. Luke 6:46 _____

 - d. Philippians 4:13 _____

4. Has it been done before? What do these verses say that might indicate that it has?
 - a. Romans 1:8 _____

 - b. Acts 17:6 _____

c. Acts 28:22 _____

d. Colossians 1:6 _____

e. 1 Thessalonians 1:8 _____

5. Could it be done again? Why or why not? _____

Consider this. The devil has reached the world through his men. For example, Lenin, started with 17 men and took over Russia with communism. A few decades ago, followers of communism controlled over two-thirds of the world's population and had infiltrated much of the rest of the world.

Consider Coca-Cola or Pepsi. There is hardly a city in the world where their products are not available. For a few cents of profit a drink, the soft drink companies have been motivated to reach the whole world.

The question has been asked: "If you received twenty five dollars for every person you witnessed to, would that increase your zeal in witnessing?" If money was offered, we would probably see an explosion in evangelism. Yet, is not a life worth infinitely more? The question is not, "Can we reach all the world with the gospel in this generation?" but, "Will we?"

Think about the above section. In your own words, what are at least two reasons why Christians can literally reach the entire world with the gospel in this generation?

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6. Do you have the ability to help accomplish this world task? Why?
- a. 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 _____

- b. 2 Corinthians 8:12 _____

- c. 2 Timothy 1:7-8 _____

7. For what task will the Holy Spirit empower you? Acts 1:8

8. In view of the above question, what is one reason a Christian may not be experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in his life?

World Strategy

1. The Great Commission is stated in various ways in the following passages: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8. Each verse gives a different aspect of the Great Commission. What aspect does Acts 1:8 communicate?
- it includes more of the world to reach with the gospel
 - it suggests a systematic, progressive world strategy for reaching the world
 - it tells of some who are exempt from being a part of reaching the world

2. Look closely at Acts 1:8

a. What is significant about the conjunction “and”?

b. In what three geographical areas was the early church to become a witness?

c. How might the progressive order of these geographic areas have been significant for the spiritual growth of believers and for the multiplication of laborers?

City _____

Nation _____

World _____

3. How can you tell that the systematic, progressive world strategy of Acts 1:8 is being carried out in the following verses?

a. 2 Corinthians 10:13-16

John Nelson, a stonecutter who received Christ under 18th century English preacher John Wesley's ministry said, “If it be my Master's will, I am ready to go to hell and preach to the devils.”

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b. Romans 15:19?

4. Compare Acts 26:19-20 to Acts 1:8. What is the same about these verses?

The whole book of Acts is written in the sequence of the three-point strategy of Acts 1:8. Chapters 1-7 describe how they reached their city with the gospel; chapters 8-12 describe how they reached their nation; and chapters 13-28 describe how they reached the world.

5. What part do you believe God would have you play in helping to reach your city, nation, and world?

Church Strategy

1. What did the following churches do to help fulfill the Great Commission?

a. Jerusalem: Acts 5:28; Acts 8:1-4; _____

b. Thessalonica: 1 Thessalonians 1:7-10 _____

2. Although the book of Acts primarily follows the evangelistic work of the apostles, how do the following verses show that the New Testament churches were also involved in evangelism?

a. Acts 9:31 _____

b. Romans 1:8 & 16:19 _____

c. Philippians 1:3-5 & 27 _____

d. Colossians 1:5-7 & 2:1 _____

3. Does your church have a plan and strategy for doing its part in helping to reach the world? Give your best understanding of that plan.

As necessary as an army is to a soldier and as a body is to a hand, so absolutely necessary is a church to a Christian. And not just a “nice” church with a “nice” congregation, but a company of committed Christians intent on reaching the world with the gospel in this generation. This is an absolute must if you want to be a part of what God is doing today...building lives and reaching a needy world for Jesus Christ.

Multiplication Strategy

1. Read Mark 3:13-19

- a. What did Jesus do to ensure that the gospel message would be propagated to the world after His ascension into heaven?

- b. What were two aspects of Jesus' training method? (vs. 14)

- c. What did Jesus do that shows He approached his choice of disciples with utmost seriousness? Luke 6:12-13

2. Read 2 Timothy 2:1-2

- a. How many generations of disciple makers and students are represented in this verse?

- b. What quality did Paul instruct Timothy to look for in the disciples he chose?

- c. What ability did Paul desire Timothy's disciples to possess?

"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him." — C.T. Studd (18th century English missionary)

d. Which of the following best describes Paul and Timothy's teaching method?

- One person teaching one other
- One person teaching several others
- Several people teaching several others

3. Prayerfully consider two or more people with whom you could apply 2 Timothy 2:2. Write down their names.

4. Stop right now and pray for them:

- a. Ask God to make them faithful, available and teachable.
- b. Ask God to help you become a servant and a friend to them.

5. Write down the name of someone you can partner with to help you in serving, loving and teaching these people.

Response

We have the privilege of being a part of the most significant commitment of all history, the movement to fulfill the Great Commission in our generation.

Will you enlist in God's spiritual army and join with thousands of other Christians to fulfill the Great Commission in your lifetime?

God is asking men and women everywhere to put aside their personal ambitions, their selfish desires, their own pleasures, and to say with the Apostle Paul, "I am a slave of Jesus Christ."

THE WORLD GOAL

Will you be a part? If it is your desire to commit yourself to help fulfill His command, make the following your prayer:

“Dear Father in heaven, I stand at attention. I make myself available to You to do as You wish. I want to be a person through whom You can bring your message of love and forgiveness to all men everywhere.

“I invite You to cleanse me, empower me, lead me, inspire me, teach me and to cause me to do that which will bring the greatest honor and glory to Your name. Enable me by your Holy Spirit to contribute my maximum effort to the carrying out of the Great Commission in my lifetime. I ask this in the wonderful name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.”

Thought Question

Make a list of at least five things you would like to do to help fulfill the Great Commission in this generation. Consider ways you can help reach your city, state, and world. Make them as specific as possible so that you can make concrete progress toward achieving them.

Memorize and think about:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” —Matthew 28:19-20

XII. MULTIPLYING LIFE

"You are born to reproduce for God!"

Theodore Epp

Grow in Wisdom

1. According to Colossians 3:16 what will equip you to be able to teach and admonish others?

2. In Psalm 119:98-100 King David stated that he had more insight and understanding than his enemies, his teachers, and even the aged. What three things did he do to gain this?

a. Psalm 119:98 _____

b. Psalm 119:99 _____

c. Psalm 119:100 _____

3. In Ezra 7:9-10 we read that God's gracious hand was on Ezra.

a. What three things did Ezra do to become an effective leader of God's people? Ezra 7:10

4. What do you think would happen if a leader were to neglect any one of Ezra's practices?

a. Study _____

b. Practice _____

c. Teach _____

Set an Example

1. What was one of Jesus' primary teaching methods? John 13:12-17

2. Read Luke 6:39-42

a. What must we have before we teach or lead others? (vs. 39)

b. What must we first do? (vs.41-42) _____

c. Why is this so important? (vs. 39 & 40) _____

3. Read 1 Timothy 4:11-16

a. What was the primary thing Paul told Timothy to do to increase his effectiveness and influence as a leader and teacher? (vs. 12)

“It would be easy to slip into the business world and just be a good guy in it with a lot of religion, rather than a producing son of God in enemy territory.”
—Jim Elliot (American missionary martyred in Ecuador in 1956)

MULTIPLYING LIFE

b. What two things was Timothy to pay close attention to? (vs. 16)

4. Read 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-12 and see if you can discover at least 10 qualities and practices that made Paul effective at reaching, teaching, and leading the Thessalonians

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

g. _____

h. _____

i. _____

j. _____

5. Why did Paul act this way toward the Thessalonians? (vs. 4 & 8)

Serve in Love

1. Read Matthew 20:25-28

a. How does leadership in the kingdom of God differ from leadership in the world?

b. How can a person become great in God's kingdom? _____

c. List a few practical ways that you can become a servant and slave of others, especially those you desire to lead?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

a. The Corinthians were proud of their ability to speak in tongues and other gifts. What did Paul say was infinitely more important?

b. What does the most gifted, powerful, knowledgeable, and sacrificial person amount to if he has no love? Why is this true?

Begin to Teach Others

The following section will equip you to use this Life Now Bible Exploration series to win others to Christ and build their faith so that they can experience the abundant life found in Christ. There is only one prerequisite: that you truly love God, your friends, and others. Only then will you make the sacrifice. But Jesus promises that such sacrifice will be worth it because of the future that will be yours. (Mark 8:35; John 12:24; Jeremiah 29:11)

"It doesn't matter, really, how great the pressure is, it only matters where the pressure lies. See that it never comes between you and the Lord— then, the greater the pressure, the more it presses you to His breast." — Hudson Taylor (19th century missionary)

MULTIPLYING LIFE

1. Why use a Bible study series?
 - a. It can help focus the attention of the student on the subject at hand.
 - b. It can bring together verses and information not otherwise known by the student.
 - c. The question and answer form of study is an effective way of learning and motivating. Jesus often used this form of training.
 - d. It can be referenced later by the student.
 - e. It is transferable and a helpful tool that the student can use to help others.
2. Goals of the Life Now Bible Exploration series:
 - a. to win unbelievers to Christ.
 - b. to help believers grow to be like Christ.
 - c. to equip Christians by providing them a tool to win and build others.
3. Seven points for action:

Remember what Jesus said: “If you love Me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

- a. The first goal of the Life Now Bible Exploration series is found in Begin in Christ. It is to help unbelievers put their faith in Christ and gain assurance of their salvation. However Begin in Christ will also help those who are already Christians to lay a strong foundation for their faith and will provide them with ideas and verses to enable them to share Christ with others who don’t yet know the Lord.
- b. The second goal, also found in Begin in Christ, is baptism—not just to know about baptism, but to be baptized!
- c. The third action point, found in Grow in Christ, is to begin to develop a habit of daily spending time with God, reading His word and praying.

“God’s best gifts are not in things but in opportunities.” —Anonymous

- d. The fourth action point, found in Mature in Christ, Part IX Sharing the New Life, is to begin to pray for and share Christ with others
- e. The fifth action point, found in Mature in Christ part X is to begin to give a tithe (10%) of your income to the Lord's work as well as begin to wisely use your time.
- f. The sixth action point, found in Mature in Christ part XI is to join together with a body of believers who are committed to reaching their city, nation, and the world with the gospel.
- g. The last action point is the one you are now doing. It is to equip you to effectively help lead other Bible studies. The goal is for you to team up with one or two others to lead a new Bible study. However, before you attempt this, be sure that you yourself are committed to and faithful in practicing each of the previous six action points. It is important for the honor of Jesus Christ that your life is a worthy example—that you have a genuine love for the Lord Jesus and for people.

4. How to Start

Break your present Bible exploration group down into teams of at least two people who wish to lead a new study. Then begin to invite your friends and acquaintances. Most people are inwardly longing for hope, purpose and abundant life. If approached wisely and lovingly, many will want to investigate the life and claims of Jesus Christ. Consider initially inviting them to a three-week study and then move on to the other studies with those who wish to continue.

Pray and briefly write out at least two or three ideas on how to make contact with and invite people to start a new study group.

- a. _____

- b. _____

- c. _____

MULTIPLYING LIFE

5. Leading the Study

- a. If possible, have the study in an attractive, comfortable and well-lit environment.
- b. Be there ahead of time.
- c. Stop on time.
- d. Get to know the people.
- e. If helpful, use “icebreakers” (get-to-know-you activities). For ideas search online for “bible study” and “ice breakers”
- f. Don't pretend to be a “know-it-all.” Don't be the big chief or teacher. Get everyone involved.
- g. Prepare additional thought-provoking questions beforehand.
- h. Have a Bible for everyone.
- i. Be on the same physical eye level as everyone.
- j. Pray briefly before and after.
- k. Let the Spirit lead and be creative through you.
- l. Be sensitive to your partner and work together with him.
- m. Have refreshments afterwards.
- n. Love, because love builds (1 Corinthians 8:1).

6. Briefly write out at least five things not good to do or say at the study.

- a. _____

- b. _____

- c. _____

- d. _____

- e. _____

7. Briefly write out at least five things good to do or say.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

8. Briefly write out two or three ideas to use in the first study to get to know one another. (i.e. icebreakers)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

9. Possible Bible study model

a. Prepare: Beforehand develop one or two additional, thought-provoking questions relating to each subject area.

b. Open with Prayer: Ask for God's presence and wisdom. If you know that others in the group are comfortable praying out loud, call on them to pray.

“It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom.”

—Horace Greeley (19th century American editor and politician)

MULTIPLYING LIFE

- c. Bible Study: Go around the circle and assign a verse to each person to look up. If they are unfamiliar with the Bible, help them find the verse. Fill in the answers together as each person reads his verse aloud. Discuss any questions that arise. Ask your previously-developed, additional questions when appropriate.
- d. Memory Verse: When there is a verse given to memorize, have the group quote the verse in unison or have them pair off and practice it with each other or have one or two people quote it. Do it differently each week.
- e. Summary: Summarize the main points covered in the study. Ask, “What should our lives reflect as a result of this study?” Ask the group if anyone has an action step they would like to take as a result of the study.
- f. Close in Prayer: Pray, thanking the Lord for the truths you have studied. When appropriate, call on one or two others to pray as well.

Present leaders should coach new leaders as they start their studies. Arrange some regular times to get together as leaders to help and encourage each other.

Thought Question

When will I begin teaching others God’s commands and who will I work with? Ezra 7:10

“All God’s giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them.”
—Hudson Taylor (19th century missionary)

Memorize and think about:

“And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” — 2 Timothy 2:2

Conclusion

This concludes the Life Now Bible Exploration series. We hope this series has been helpful to you and has stimulated your growth as a Christian. Though the series is completed, this is just the beginning of an exciting life with Christ. We trust that your growth will continue and encourage you to keep in touch with us. You may order copies of the evangelistic booklet, *Do You Know For Certain?* and the Life Now Bible Exploration series by contacting rickatgcnw@aol.com.

