



LEARN • VOLUME 5 • SESSION 1

Group Session



Small Group Study

Volume Overview

How do I live for God?

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” (Matthew 6:33)

As we explore how to live for God, our goal is to find out what that looks like in our everyday life. But this journey is full of questions. How do we put God first? How do we get through all the confusion and uncertainty in this world? What does God expect when it comes to giving? How can we show others we care? One way we discover the answers is through the Bible speaking to us. But we don't have to do that alone. We also learn from other believers as we live connected to them like God intended. In these sessions, we'll consider what the Bible has to say about devoting our life to God.

You Will Need

- Individually wrapped candy, enough for everyone in the group to have one and some students to have more
- **Countdown30 Video**

Getting Ready

- First time leading Learn for Youth? Look here for the Facilitator Guide.

To access the Bible Engagement Project library from a computer, visit App.BibleEngagementProject.com.

Engage

Welcome

Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank them for coming.

QUESTION

How many of you are morning people? If so, what's your favorite thing about mornings?

QUESTION

How many of you are night owls? If so, what's your favorite thing about nighttime?

Opening Prayer

Prayer thoughts: Thank God for everyone who is present today, and thank Him for bringing everyone safely. Ask Him to use this session to engage everyone in learning more about Him. Pray that He will illuminate His Word for each person.

Introduction

Today, let's talk about how we put God first in our life. Although putting God first can be challenging, it brings blessings too. We tend to be selfish and put ourselves above everything, including God. So, let's look at what the Bible says about putting God first and how we can do that.

Group Activity

Candy Challenge

You Will Need

- *Individually wrapped candy, enough for everyone in the group to have one and some students to have more*
- **Countdown30 Video**

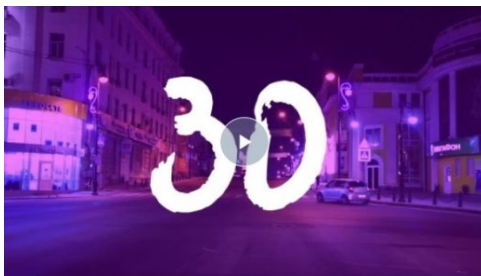
No prep is needed for this activity.

Before we get into God's Word, let's begin with a treat. Hold it in your hand until everyone has candy.

- *Pass out pieces of candy to everyone in the group. Make sure everyone gets at least one, and give some students two or more pieces.*

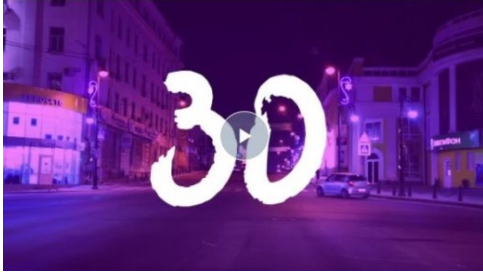
Before eating your candy, I want everyone to give all the candy you have to someone else. Keep giving away your candy until I say stop.

- *Play **Countdown30 Video** and have students stop when the video ends.*



Now before eating your candy, I have another instruction. I want you to ask for candy. Your goal is to get as much as you can. But the people you ask don't have to share. You don't have to give any away if you don't want to. Let's see how much candy you can get before I say stop.

- *Play **Countdown30 Video** and have students stop when the video ends.*



- *Have everyone sit down.*

Thanks for participating. You can eat your candy now, but first, make sure everyone around you has at least one piece of candy.

- *Ask the following questions as the students eat their candy.*

QUESTION

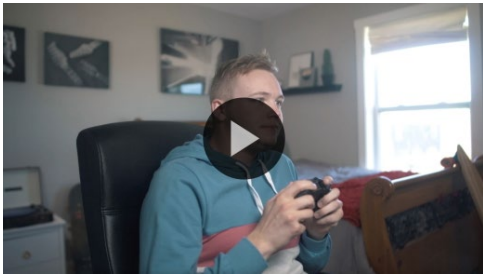
Was it more fun to give away your candy or keep your candy? Why do you think so?

QUESTION

Why is it tempting for us to be selfish with the things we have in life?

Giving up something that we really enjoy can be hard. But sometimes we need to do that in order to get something even better. Let's watch today's video. Then we'll explore this a bit more.

Watch



Consider What the Bible Says

Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.

I want you to think about everything you have in your bedroom right now.

QUESTION

What would be the hardest thing to give up? Why?

The things that are the hardest to give up are that way because we value them a lot. Often, that value comes from emotional attachment.

Give Up What Keeps You from Jesus

Today we'll look at a story in which someone struggled with giving up things that he loved. Those things got in the way of him following Jesus. While we may think we've given everything to Jesus, just like the man in the story, there could be things that we value more than Jesus.

Read Mark 10:17–22.

QUESTION

What was difficult for the man to give up?

QUESTION

Why do you think it was easier for the man to obey certain commandments than Jesus' command to give up his earthly possessions?

Often the things we treasure the most are the hardest to give up. They can be the last things we're willing to give to Jesus.

QUESTION

What is a treasure, besides money, that people may have a hard time giving up?

QUESTION

How does giving Jesus every area of our life, even the treasures we want to hang on to, help us live for Him?

Did You Know?

In both ancient and modern Judaism, small collection boxes in the synagogues have been designated to take collections for the poor and needy. On each box is written the Hebrew word *tzedakah*, which is modernly understood to mean charity. However, in the ancient world of the Bible, this word literally meant righteousness. From this, we can see the development of the idea that financial generosity played a large role in one's daily spiritual life and perceived relationship with God.

What You Treasure Reveals Your Heart

Jesus had a few things to say about treasures. Besides getting in the way of our relationship with Him and our purpose in life, they also tend to deteriorate over time. The first couple of verses of this next passage can help us understand how treasures should impact our life.

Read Matthew 6:19–21.

QUESTION

Why do people choose to store up treasures here on earth?

QUESTION

What does the Bible say happens to these treasures we've stored on earth?

Don't get confused and think that God doesn't want you to own anything. Even in the Bible we can read about times He's given people lots of stuff in this world. What's important is the way you think and feel about it. Are the things in your room just things, or are they treasures?

QUESTION

What do you think "desires of your heart" means in verse 21?

QUESTION

What are some examples of ways you can store up a treasure in heaven?

QUESTION

What's something you think Jesus treasures?

Jesus went on to explain that treasures can get in the way of our relationship with Him. We can get so attached to our stuff that it's like we're slaves to it. Instead of being bound to things, we need to be bound to what God says is important. If we do that, the second verse we're about to read has a promise with it.

Read Matthew 6:24, 33.

QUESTION

Why do you think it's difficult to serve two masters?

QUESTION

How do you imagine someone could become enslaved to money?

QUESTION

What do you think it looks like to seek God's kingdom above all else?

Verse 33 tells us the awesome result of putting God first. When we value the things He says are important, He will make sure we have everything we need.

QUESTION

How can we distinguish what we need in life from what we want?

QUESTION

Do all treasures keep people from following God? Why or why not?

QUESTION

Is it okay to have things in life we don't need? Explain your answer.

Reflect

I Put God First

We're all tempted to be like the man who came to Jesus. We may think we have everything in our life right and put God first, but the Holy Spirit reveals things that haven't been completely surrendered to Him. We must be willing to surrender them. Jesus is asking each of us to pursue what He values above anything else in this world—putting God first.

Listen to God

Let's take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in the Bible. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

- *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection before asking students if they want to share.*

QUESTION

What is the one area, thing, relationship, or dream that would be the hardest for you to give up to Jesus?

QUESTION

Why is it such a struggle for you to give it up?

Activate

Jesus said in Matthew 6:24 that we can't serve two masters. This week I challenge each of us to give away something that we value a little too much, a treasure. It may be money we've been saving for ourself that we give in an offering. Or it could be getting out of bed a few minutes earlier, as sleep may be a treasure for some, to do the devotions provided in your app. It could even be fasting a meal, social media, or a certain type of music this week. In other words, give something or do something to show Jesus He is first in your life.

Salvation Opportunity

Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Living for God begins with choosing to put Him first in all areas of our life. This means we learn to trust Him and allow Him to work in and through our life. In other words, we surrender our life completely to Him, not only as our Friend, but as Lord and Savior.

Is there anyone here that we can pray for who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?

Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as we close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.

Conclusion

Putting God first in our life often comes down to trusting Him. We must trust in God and believe His Word that says He will give us everything we need if we seek Him first (Matthew 6:33). This includes our things, our relationships, and even our dreams for our future.

Prayer

Father God, thank You that we can put our whole trust in You. You won't let us down. We're so thankful that as we surrender everything to You, You promise to give us what we need. We love You so much. Thank You for loving us. It's our prayer that those who don't know You would also put their complete trust in You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Next time we'll talk more about how we can live for God by pursuing Him. Don't forget the personal devotions provided for you in the app. These allow you to have time with God, learning more about how to live for Him. I look forward to seeing each of you next time as we continue our journey through God's Word.