



NOVEMBER 2010 TEACHING PLANS

THE PATH OF GROWTH: DISCOVER GOD'S GAME PLAN

BY REBECCA GEORGE

Life is a whole lot easier when you know the game plan. Class schedules, syllabi, cafeteria opening times, student handbooks — they all come in handy when figuring out how to spend your days, weeks, and semesters. But are they enough to really make the most of your college years?

Thankfully, the resources we have for figuring out the game plan of life extend far beyond the materials professors and RA's provide. In the Book of Ephesians, Paul outlines God's eternal plan for His people. By poring over this playbook and understanding what God has done and is doing, you'll be ready to make the most of life. God has put you in the game, and now is your time to shine. So what will we cover in the playbook of Ephesians?

First, we'll look at the extent of God's redemptive plan and power. What does it mean for God's plan to be eternal? How does God's plan involve power, and how does that power change people and relationships? What role does grace play in God's plan, and how does God's power strengthen believers? After understanding the ins and outs of God's plan, we'll look at ways we can get with the program by being in step with the life of the church and living a Christian lifestyle. What does it mean to be pure? How can we live intentionally as Christians? How does God's plan relate to marriage? What does it look like to respect others? How does God train us to be ready for life?

So suit up and hit the field. See what God is teaching you through Paul's letter and how it applies to your life right now.

With a playbook like Ephesians, God is equipping you to live life according to His game plan.

WHAT'S INSIDE ...

The goal of the Collegiate online features is to bring you a structured teaching plan with additional helps and relevant questions to equip you to lead a strong discussion-based lesson. Here's a breakdown of what's inside: "Getting Started" helps introduce the topic and get your students engaged in the lesson. "Need to Knows" provide the lesson overview and key verses of each lesson. "Explore the Bible" leads your students through the Scripture passages of the lesson, helping them understand the text, its historical and cultural context, and what it means to them today. "Apply to Life" gives you ideas for furthering the application of the Scripture, so students can take active steps to process what they're learning and how it impacts their lives. Be sure you also use the commentary provided (*threadsmedia.com/collegiate*) to help with your preparation and personal study of the lessons.

As always, we're here for you. Please send us your questions, thoughts, and suggestions. Let us know what we could do better and how these teaching plans could be even more relevant to your students and ministry.

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THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGE 46 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* FALL ISSUE
- THE SONG "MESS OF ME" BY SWITCHFOOT FROM THE ALBUM *HELLO HURRICANE*

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about Christians being careful in how they live. The emphasis is on living by Christian principles that demonstrate they're careful. The lesson encourages college students to demonstrate great care in how they live.

FOCAL PASSAGES EPHESIANS 5:15-21



BE INTENTIONAL: LIVING A LIFE OF PURPOSE

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Mess of Me" by Switchfoot playing in the background as students arrive.

- If you asked your business class to describe wise living, what would they say?
- What if you asked the same of your philosophy class?
- How would students in your nursing class describe wise living?

In all likelihood, business students might focus on personal finance if asked to describe wise living. Philosophy students might turn to Aristotle or Immanuel Kant or Karl Marx for inspiration. Nursing students might stress the importance of fitness and nutrition.

But if we want to get to the heart of what it means to live wisely as Christians, we've got to go deeper than the textbook. This week, we're going to use Paul's Letter to the Ephesians as insight into what it means for Christians to live wisely.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 46 in *Collegiate's* fall 2010 issue for some enlightening statistics and a recommended read that relates to the lesson topic.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 46 of *Collegiate's* fall 2010 issue.

1) BE WISE WITH YOUR TIME

READ EPHESIANS 5:15-16.

¹⁵ Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise—¹⁶ making the most of the time, because the days are evil.

Have someone read “Be Wise with Your Time” on page 46 of *Collegiate*.

Paul urged the Christians in Ephesus to make wise use of their time.

- How would you characterize “walking wisely”?
- What do “evil days” have to do with our ability to be wise with our time?
- As a Christian in college, what does being wise with your time look like?
- How do these two verses relate to entertainment and down time?
- How satisfied are you with the way you typically spend your time?

When we refuse to waste our time on evil and foolish pursuits, and instead use every minute in constructive and godly endeavors, we’re being wise about how we live. But wise living isn’t simply using time well. Paul also urged his readers to be aware of God’s will.

2) BE AWARE OF GOD’S WILL

READ EPHESIANS 5:17.

¹⁷ So don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.

Have someone read “Be Aware of God’s Will” on page 46 of *Collegiate*.

- Why is it important to understand God’s will?
- How does understanding God’s will prevent us from being foolish?
- Once you know what God’s will is in a certain situation, how do you move from knowledge to action?

We live wisely when we seek, discover, and do God’s will. We also live wisely as we seek to be filled only with the Holy Spirit.

3) BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

READ EPHESIANS 5:18-20.

¹⁸ And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions, but be filled with the Spirit: ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music to the Lord in your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Have someone read “Be Filled with the Spirit” on page 46 of *Collegiate*.

- Why does Paul compare being filled with the Holy Spirit to being drunk?
- Based on verse 18, is being drunk ever compatible with Christianity?
- What attitudes or beliefs encroach upon the Holy Spirit’s influence in your life?

Paul indicated the use of psalms, music, and thanksgiving as evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

- In your experience, how has music encouraged you to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- What’s the relationship between music and giving God thanks?

When we continually allow the Holy Spirit to work in us and guide us in what we do, we’re living wisely. The last element of wise living that Paul addressed in this passage is being subject to one another.

4) BE SUBJECT TO ONE ANOTHER

READ EPHESIANS 5:21.

²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

Have someone read “Be Subject to One Another” on pages 46-47 of *Collegiate*.

- What does the fear of Christ have to do with submitting to one another?
- Practically speaking, what does it look like for Christians to be subject to each other?
- What do we sacrifice when we’re willing to subject ourselves to other Christians? What do we gain?
- What aspects of college life encourage us to submit to one another? Think in terms of living situations, worship opportunities, and Christian organizations.

We’re living wisely when we give preference to others’ desires and needs over our own. College students are often pretty good at developing practices of service, vulnerability, honesty, and interdependence. In fact, the sense of authentic Christian community fostered on college campuses often outranks the sense of community developed among other groups of adults.

- How have you found that to be true? Give examples.
- If you’ve developed good practices of Christian submission since you started college, what can you do to make sure you don’t stop those practices once you graduate?

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGES 48-49 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* FALL ISSUE
- THE SONG "ONLY YOU" BY ADIE FROM THE ALBUM *JUST YOU AND ME*

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about how Christian spouses are to relate to one another. The emphasis is on Christians relating to their spouses based on their own relationship with Jesus Christ. The lesson encourages college students to promote biblical ideals of being married.

FOCAL PASSAGES

EPHESIANS 5:22-33



LOVING LIKE CHRIST, SUBMITTING LIKE THE CHURCH

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Only You" by Adie playing in the background as students arrive.

These days, we hear celebrity opinions on everything from war to religion. Check out what a few celebrities have said about marriage:

"It's confusing. I've had so many wives and so many children that I don't know which house to go to first on Christmas." — Mickey Rooney

"I'm an old-fashioned romantic. I believe in love and marriage ... but not necessarily with the same person." — John Travolta

"I'm more afraid of marriage than death." — Shakira¹

- What is your initial response to these quotes?
- How often do you hear these kinds of thoughts about marriage expressed on your campus? How often do you hear them expressed in your church?
- Why do some people have misinformed ideas on the topic of marriage?

If these opinions are any indication of how our culture views marriage, something is seriously wrong. This week, we're going to look at Ephesians 5 in light of what God wants us to know about marriage.

¹ <http://www.associatedcontent.com>

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 48 of *Collegiate's* fall 2010 issue.

1) FOR WIVES

READ EPHESIANS 5:22-24.

²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord,*

²³ *for the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church. He is the Savior of the body.*

²⁴ *Now as the church submits to Christ, so wives should submit to their husbands in everything.*

Have someone read “For Wives” on page 48 of *Collegiate*.

Throughout the Bible, God used familial language to describe His relationship with us and with each other — He’s our Father, we’re His children, we’re brothers and sisters, etc. He did the same thing when He described Jesus as the Groom and the church as His bride. Since family relationships are an integral part of understanding how God relates to us, we should pay careful attention to Paul’s message about the relationship between Christian husbands and wives.

- Why do people react strongly to these three verses?
- Practically speaking, what does submission look like?
- Why is it significant that Paul didn’t call all women to submit to all men?
- On what grounds did Paul encourage wives to submit to their husbands?
- What is the significance of submission being voluntary?

Despite what some Christians may claim, these verses apply as much today as they did 2,000 years ago. What Paul called for wasn’t only for first-century Ephesians — it’s a way of life that serves as a portrait of Christ’s relationship with us, and that relationship never changes. Ephesians 5 transcends time, place, and culture.

- How do we know that these verses still apply to our lives today?

- What principles from these verses are at play in dating relationships?
- When a Christian wife submits to her husband, what message does she send to an unbelieving world?
- When you view marriage through the lens of these verses, are you more excited or less excited about the prospect of marriage? Why?

Paul called for wives to submit to their husbands on the basis of their own relationship with Jesus. When Christian wives submit to their husbands, they’re serving Christ. These are big shoes to fill, but it’s not more difficult than what Paul called husbands to do.

2) FOR HUSBANDS

READ EPHESIANS 5:25-30.

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her,* ²⁶ *to make her holy, cleansing her in the washing of water by the word.* ²⁷ *He did this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and blameless.* ²⁸ *In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.* ²⁹ *For no one ever hates his own flesh, but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church,* ³⁰ *since we are members of His body.*

Ask a volunteer to read “For Husbands” on page 48 of *Collegiate*.

Paul called for husbands to love their wives according to Jesus’ example. The kind of love Paul’s talking about here in Ephesians 5 is radical. Agape love — the unconditional love Christ has for His church — is at work even when feelings are lacking.

- Why did Paul call husbands to love their wives like Christ loved the church?
- What’s the most daunting aspect of loving like Christ loved the church?

Sometimes we think happiness is the goal of marriage. But while a healthy marriage will probably result in lots of happiness, God’s ultimate desire is for marriage to make us holy, not happy.

- How does that truth affect the way you view finding a spouse?
- What roles do selflessness and sacrifice play in being the kind of husband Paul described here?
- In 21st-century America, what does it look like for a husband to love his wife as much as he loves his own body? Give some examples.

Husbands and wives relate to one another in ways that illustrate the relationship between Jesus and His church. Together, husbands and wives express a unity that’s complete in every way.

3) FOR BOTH

READ EPHESIANS 5:31-33.

³¹ *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.* ³² *This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.* ³³ *To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband.*

Have someone read “For Both” on pages 48-49 of *Collegiate*.

- Is verse 31 referring to something more than sex? If so, what?
- Give some scenarios of a husband loving his wife as himself. Give some scenarios of a wife respecting her husband.
- How do these verses affect the way you approach preparing for marriage?

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGES 50-51 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* FALL ISSUE
- THE SONG "LORD OF ALL" BY KRISTIAN STANFILL FROM THE ALBUM *ATTENTION*

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about treating people with respect. The emphasis is on showing respect to parents, children, supervisors, and employees. The lesson encourages college students to show respect to family members and to people at work.

FOCAL PASSAGES

EPHESIANS 6:1-9



BIBLE STUDY

EPHESIANS 6:1-9 // WEEK OF NOV. 21

A WHOLE LOT OF RESPECT

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Lord of All" by Kristian Stanfill playing in the background as students arrive.

In 1967, Aretha Franklin released the hit "Respect," which quickly became a widely popular rallying cry of the feminist movement.

- Why would that song have struck a chord with feminists?
- On what grounds did feminists want respect?
- Does a biblical understanding of respect differ from a social-justice understanding of respect? If so, how?

In Ephesians 6, Paul said a lot about respect. This week, we're going to look at what he said with regard to parents, children, employers, and workers.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 50 in *Collegiate's* fall 2010 issue for a quote and a compelling biblical background synopsis related to this lesson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 50 of *Collegiate's* fall 2010 issue.

1) RESPECT FOR PARENTS

READ EPHESIANS 6:1-3.

¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. ²Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land.

Have someone read “Respect for Parents” on page 50 of *Collegiate*.

Paul called on children in a Christian home to obey and honor their parents. It’s a mandate for *all* children to *all* parents.

- Why is it “right” for children to obey their parents?
- What’s the relationship between obedience and honor?
- What is the promise for children who obey their parents? (See Exodus 20:12.) What does this promise mean?
- Is it possible to honor a parent who demands illegal or immoral behavior? How?

Relationships between parents and children change as children grow. But the principles of obedience and honor still apply, no matter how old the children are.

- How did you honor your parents as a child?
- As you’ve gotten older, what’s been the most challenging part of honoring your parents?

2) RESPECT FOR CHILDREN

READ EPHESIANS 6:4.

⁴And fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Have someone read “Respect for Children” on page 50 of *Collegiate*.

Paul commanded Christian fathers to avoid enraging their children and to provide them with Christian nurture and teaching.

- What does it look like for a father to stir up anger in his children?
- How would you respond to your parents if their training and instruction were unbiblical? Use the previous verses (1-3) as a framework.
- What training and instruction from your parents are you especially grateful for?
- When have you felt especially respected by your parents? How did that demonstration of respect affect your relationship with your parents?

3) RESPECT FOR EMPLOYERS

READ EPHESIANS 6:5-8.

⁵Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ. ⁶Don’t work only while being watched, in order to please men, but as slaves of Christ, do God’s will from your heart. ⁷Render service with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good each one does, slave or free, he will receive this back from the Lord.

Have someone read “Respect for Employers” on page 50 of *Collegiate*.

- What kinds of people was Paul referring to when he used the term “slaves”? Be as specific as you can. Think in terms of slavery in the New Testament.
- How do we know that “employee” is an appropriate rendering of the word “slave”?
- How does a Christian worker’s motivation differ from a non-Christian worker’s motivation?
- Why does attitude matter when it comes to work?

Paul called for Christian slaves to obey their masters, to do good work whether or not they were being watched, and to serve as if they were doing it for Jesus. We show respect for those who employ us by getting along with them, consistently doing good work, and keeping in mind our relationship with God. Paul’s teaching on respect is for workers, but it’s also for the people who employ them.

4) RESPECT FOR WORKERS

READ EPHESIANS 6:9.

⁹And masters, treat them the same way, without threatening them, because you know that both their and your Master is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him.

Have someone read “Respect for Workers” on pages 50-51 of *Collegiate*.

Paul instructed Christian slave owners to motivate their slaves not by threatening them, but by exhibiting attitudes and taking actions that reflected the relationship they both had with Jesus.

- Does the term “Christian slave owner” seem oxymoronic? In what sense?
- Why did Paul seem most interested in commenting on relationships between Christian employers and Christian employees?
- How does this verse apply to your current situation? How do you expect it to apply to you in the future? Be as specific as you can.

We show respect for those we employ by compassionate, fair, and impartial treatment that reflects our relationship with the Lord.

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGES 52-53 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* FALL ISSUE
- THE SONG "BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY" BY HEARTS OF SAINTS FROM THE ALBUM *HEARTS OF SAINTS*

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about the spiritual armor that God provides Christians. The emphasis is on being prepared to resist whatever evil might come. The lesson encourages college students to use all the spiritual armor available to them.

FOCAL PASSAGES EPHESIANS 6:10-24



FACING MORAL DILEMMAS

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Beautiful Mystery" by Hearts of Saints playing in the background as students arrive.

You know a lot about preparation. To get into college, you had to prepare by taking the right classes. If you're on an intramural team, you know it's not a good idea to show up for a game without at least one practice under the belt. When you're getting ready to take an exam, you know that preparation needs to take priority over the social calendar.

- What are you willing to sacrifice when it comes to preparing for the different aspects of life in college?
- Is that level of commitment typical of what you see around you on campus?
- What motivates us to prepare?

When it comes to preparing for spiritual battle, Paul provided us with insight into what's available and what's required. Let's take a look at what Paul had to say.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 52 of *Collegiate* for a quote and a suggested downloadable article related to this lesson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 52 of *Collegiate*.

1) GET STRONGER

READ EPHESIANS 6:10-13.

¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. ¹² For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. ¹³ This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand.

Have someone read “Get Stronger” on page 52 of *Collegiate*.

- Why do you think Paul used military language when talking about being spiritually prepared?
- How would you characterize spiritual warfare? Name some examples.

Paul readily acknowledged that Christians are engaged in spiritual warfare. He called on the Ephesian Christians to become stronger through the Lord’s strength, knowing God would provide what they needed to resist evil.

- When it comes to resisting evil, what is the Christian’s responsibility?
- What does it look like for a Christian to take a stand against “rulers,” “authorities,” “world powers of this darkness,” and “spiritual forces of evil in the heavens”?
- How have you or other Christians resisted evil on your campus?
- What can you do to be better prepared to fight the spiritual battle around you?

While we don’t have within us the strength to resist evil, we can always look to God to provide it. He helps us to stand firm against any evil that comes our way.

2) STAND FIRM

READ EPHESIANS 6:14-17.

¹⁴ Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, ¹⁵ and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In every situation take the shield of faith, and with it you will be able to extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God’s word.

Have someone read “Stand Firm” on page 52 of *Collegiate*.

Because God had given them spiritual armor, Paul called on the Ephesian Christians to stand firm. We’re called to do the same.

- Go through each piece of armor and identify what Paul was referring to.
- What can you infer from the ratio of defensive to offensive weapons listed? Remember, the Bible is the only offensive weapon listed.
- Is it surprising that, in the midst of all this talk about warfare, Paul referred to the gospel as “the gospel of peace”? What’s the significance of that phrase?

Using the spiritual armor God provides, we can take a firm stand against evil. Let’s take a look at the role prayer plays in spiritual warfare.

3) PRAY ALWAYS

READ EPHESIANS 6:18-20.

¹⁸ With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit, and stay alert in this, with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. ²⁰ For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough in Him to speak as I should.

Have someone read “Pray Always” on page 52 of *Collegiate*.

Paul acknowledged the necessity of prayer for a Christian to resist evil. He called on these Ephesian believers to pray as they took on and used these pieces of armor, to pray on a persistent basis, and to pray for each other.

- How does prayer affect the battles we’re fighting?
- If Paul encouraged the Ephesians to pray “in the Spirit,” does that mean it’s possible to pray outside of the Spirit? If so, how?
- On your campus, how can you apply these verses? Think creatively and specifically.

Paul wrapped up his letter with a request for personal prayer. He also gave the Ephesian Christians some words of encouragement.

4) BE ENCOURAGED

READ EPHESIANS 6:21-24.

²¹ Tychicus, our dearly loved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything so that you also may know how I am and what I’m doing. ²² I am sending him to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage your hearts. ²³ Peace to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all who have undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Have someone read “Be Encouraged” on page 53 of *Collegiate*.

- How can you appropriate Paul’s conclusion and apply it to your current opportunities, relationships, and challenging situations?

