



OCTOBER 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 accord-

ing to His game plan. And with that kind of resource at your fingertips, you'll be ready to win.

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 36 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* FALL ISSUE
- THE SONG "TIL I GOT TO KNOW YOU" BY SANCTUS REAL FROM THE ALBUM *PIECES OF A REAL HEART*

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about Paul's ministry to the Gentiles being a gift of God's grace through His power. The emphasis is on understanding that an opportunity to serve God is an offer of His grace, encouraging college students to accept opportunities to serve God.

FOCAL PASSAGES

EPHESIANS 3:1-13



GRASSROOTS GRACE: SERVING GOD THROUGH THE CHURCH

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Til I Got to Know You" by Sanctus Real playing in the background as students arrive.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 36 in the Fall 2010 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for a solid life application and a challenging word study that relates to the lesson topic.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 36 of the Fall 2010 *Collegiate* magazine.

The title “servant” might not seem immediately appealing — especially to someone who’s already spent long hours working and studying to secure a good job after graduation.

- What connotations come with the word “servant”? How accurate are those connotations?
- What responsibilities come with servanthood? What privileges come with servanthood?
- How is being God’s servant different from being anyone else’s servant?

An opportunity to serve God is an offer of His grace. This week, we’ll look at the first part of Ephesians 3 in light of the opportunities we have to serve God through the church.

1) RECOGNIZING GOD’S GRACE

READ EPHESIANS 3:1-2.

¹ For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— ² you have heard, haven’t you, about the administration of God’s grace that He gave to me for you?

Have someone read “Recognizing God’s Grace” on page 36 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- What type of “grace” was Paul talking about here?
- What does it mean to “administer grace”?
- How are service opportunities expressions of God’s grace?
- What does God gain by allowing us to serve Him through the church? What do we gain?

For the sake of the gospel, and for the sake of the Gentiles’ salvation, Paul was willing to give up his freedom.

- What freedoms do we give up for the sake of evangelism?
- What’s the hardest part about giving up freedom for the sake of the gospel?

Paul was upfront with the Ephesians about his ministry being an expression of God’s grace — the same grace he was charged to proclaim. When we recognize our own service opportunities as expressions of God’s grace, we become part of a mission that’s much bigger than ourselves — a mission founded in God’s revelation.

2) RECEIVING GOD’S REVELATION

READ EPHESIANS 3:3-6.

³ The mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have briefly written above. ⁴ By reading this you are able to understand my insight about the mystery of the Messiah. ⁵ This was not made known to people in other generations as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶ the Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and partners of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Have someone read “Receiving God’s Revelation” on page 36 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- What was Paul’s source of revelation? How does Paul’s source of revelation compare to ours?
- In verse 3, what “mystery” was Paul referring to?
- Why did people of earlier generations misunderstand this “mystery”?

The “mystery” Paul referenced in this passage is the fact that God’s plan from the beginning of time included more than just the Hebrew people. His love was so great that it spilled out beyond the Jews into the whole world. God’s reason for keeping His plan hidden was primarily a timing issue — Christ needed to come and accomplish the sacrifice before the Gentiles could be fully grafted into God’s family.

- In what ways are these verses relevant to us today?
- How would your unbelieving classmates respond to the language of these verses? What impression would they get of God and His followers?
- What are some ways you could express these truths effectively to people who don’t follow Jesus?

Paul knew his ministry to the Gentiles wasn’t his own idea. It was part of the eternal plan God revealed to His people. He also knew this ministry was an expression of God’s power.

3) RESPONDING THROUGH GOD’S POWER

READ EPHESIANS 3:7-10.

⁷ I was made a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace that was given to me by the working of His power. ⁸ This grace was given to me—the least of all the saints!—to proclaim to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of the Messiah, ⁹ and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things. ¹⁰ This is so that God’s multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens.

Have someone read “Responding Through God’s Power” on pages 36-37 of *Collegiate* magazine.

The language Paul used in verse 7 is interesting. He didn’t boast about his decision to serve God or qualifications for ministry. Instead, he said he was “made” a servant of the gospel.

- Why is that distinction significant?
- How is Paul’s approach to his calling different than the attitudes our culture often encourages?

In verse 8, Paul continued to deflate himself so God could be inflated. Paul wanted his readers to be clear on the source of our power in service — even though we’re weak and sinful, God is backstage, working out all the details and providing us with the guidance and strength we need.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

- Does this passage apply to full-time professional ministers or to all Christians? Why?

In verse 10, Paul used the word “multi-faceted” when talking about God’s wisdom. It’s the same word that shows up in the Greek translation of the Old Testament when referring to Joseph’s coat of many colors (check out Genesis 37:3 and following). Paul stressed that God’s wisdom isn’t easily categorized.

- What are the implications of this understanding of God’s wisdom?

Paul was called by God to serve, and he knew his ministry was possible because of God’s power. Because Paul’s ministry was an extension of God’s grace, His eternal plan, and His power, Paul found reason to rejoice — even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

4) REJOICING WITH REASON

READ EPHESIANS 3:11-13.

¹¹ This is according to the purpose of the ages, which He made in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness, access, and confidence through faith in Him. ¹³ So then I ask you not to be discouraged over my afflictions on your behalf, for they are your glory.

Have someone read “Rejoicing with Reason” on page 37 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- In what circumstances do you have the most trouble relying on God? Why?
- How often is your attitude related to your circumstances?
- How can we rejoice in God’s grace even when things are tough?

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGE 38 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* FALL ISSUE
- THE SONG "ALL WHO ARE THIRSTY" BY BRENTON BROWN FROM THE ALBUM *ADORATION*

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson features Paul's second prayer for his readers. The emphasis is on being strengthened spiritually. The lesson encourages college students to pray continually for greater spiritual strength.

FOCAL PASSAGES EPHESIANS 3:14-21



STRENGTHENED BY GOD'S POWER

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "All Who Are Thirsty" by Brenton Brown playing in the background as students arrive.

We're all familiar with the notions of strength and weakness. The guy who won the Ironman competition? That's strength. The newborn baby who can't yet sit up? That's weakness. The classmate who's working two part-time jobs to put herself through college? Strength. The sorority sister who mocks others to make herself look better? Weakness.

When it comes to spiritual strength and weakness, it's a little more tricky to itemize the evidence.

- What does a spiritually weak person look like?
- What characterizes spiritual strength?
- How can a Christian move from spiritual weakness to spiritual strength?

This week, we're going to look at the ins and outs of spiritual strength — what it is and where we get it.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 38 in the Fall 2010 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for an engaging video clip suggestion and a recommended read related to the lesson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 38 of the Fall 2010 *Collegiate* magazine.

1) WHAT WE NEED

READ EPHESIANS 3:14-16.

*¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father
¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. ¹⁶ I pray that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,*

Have someone read “What We Need” on page 38 of *Collegiate* magazine.

It’s a bit of a paradox that power comes through kneeling and strength comes through weakness.

- Why does spiritual strength work this way?
- How does this view of strength compare to the kinds of strength our culture values?
- What’s the danger in forming our concepts of strength from the media, the political arena, and friends who lack Christian worldviews?

In verse 15, Paul describes God as the Father from whom every family is named. Think back to the Garden of Eden, when God gave Adam the authority to name the animals and Eve (see Genesis 2:19-23).

- What’s the significance of naming? What does it mean that God has named every family?

In verse 16, Paul reveals that the Holy Spirit strengthens Christians in “the inner man.”

- How does this verse help us better understand spiritual strength?

Here we see that the Holy Spirit occupies our inner beings and gives us strength beyond what we can generate

ourselves. God accomplishes His purposes through Himself in us, and that’s incredibly encouraging. It’s not so much that God accomplishes His purposes through us, but through His own power working in us.

God’s power working in our lives gives us greater spiritual strength for daily living. That same power also helps us experience God more fully.

2) WHAT WE RECEIVE

READ EPHESIANS 3:17-19.

¹⁷ and that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and width, height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the Messiah’s love that surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Have someone read “What We Receive” on page 38 of *Collegiate* magazine.

In the last several verses, we saw that the Holy Spirit strengthens Christians from the inside out. Here we see that the Holy Spirit isn’t the only One at work in our lives.

- Why do we sometimes resist thinking about Jesus as living “in our hearts”?
- What are the benefits of knowing Jesus dwells in the hearts of His followers?
- How would you describe the “fullness of God”?

In verses 18 and 19, Paul presents God’s love as something he wants us to comprehend, but also as something that surpasses knowledge.

- How do we reconcile these two ideas?
- What practical difference does God’s love make in your life?
- How does knowledge of God’s love affect the way you prepare for class and plan your future?

- How is knowledge of God’s love related to spiritual strength?
- Practically speaking, how can we learn to experience God’s love and fullness as Paul did?

Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be strengthened spiritually, relating that strength to the indwelling of Christ. Through gaining increased spiritual strength, Christians have a deeper understanding of God’s love and a deeper experience of His fullness. The good news is we’re not left to our own devices when it comes to increasing in spiritual strength.

3) WHO TO ASK

READ EPHESIANS 3:20-21.

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think — according to the power that works in you — ²¹ to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Have someone read “Who to Ask” on pages 38-39 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Paul expressed complete confidence in God’s power to supply the spiritual strength he knew he needed — and even strength that was beyond what he could fathom.

- What makes God the right Person to ask for spiritual strength?
- If God is such a perfect source of spiritual strength, why do we hesitate to ask Him for it?
- Since God is the source of spiritual strength — and since He makes that strength available to us — how do we avoid viewing Him as an ATM that hooks us up when we’re running low?
- What are some realistic ways we can make sure God receives the glory for the power at work in us?

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGE 40 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* FALL ISSUE
- THE SONG "WE WANT THE WORLD TO HEAR" BY BIG DADDY WEAVE FROM THE ALBUM *WHAT WOULD LIFE BE LIKE*
- A FEW COPIES OF THE ARTICLE "CAREER VS. CALLING" BY GARY BARKALOW, AVAILABLE AT BOUNDLESS.ORG TO USE AS REFERENCE DURING DISCUSSION
- THE VIDEO CLIP, "ONE," FROM THE STUDY *BLEMISHED* BY JASON HAYES, AVAILABLE AT THREADSMEDIA.COM/BLEMISHED

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about living up to the Christian calling within the church. The emphasis is on the meaning of being part of the body of Christ, the church. The lesson encourages college students to work together to build up their church.

FOCAL PASSAGES

EPHESIANS 4:1-16



WALKING THE LINE OF FAITH

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "We Want the World to Hear" by Big Daddy Weave playing in the background as students arrive.

Merriam-Webster defines "career" as "a field for or pursuit of consecutive progressive achievement especially in public, professional, or business life," and "a profession for which one trains and which is undertaken as a permanent calling." It defines "calling" as "a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action especially when accompanied by conviction of divine influence."

- Do you see a difference between a career and a calling? What is it?
- How does the concept of "calling" apply to people who aren't preparing to work as full-time pastors or missionaries?
- How does a calling relate to the work Christians do within the church?

God has expectations of His people, and one of those expectations is that His followers will work together to build up their church. As college students, you give a lot of thought to preparing for the workforce one day. This week, let's focus some attention on the work we do as the body of Christ.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 40 in the Fall 2010 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for a quote and an engaging video clip suggestion related to this lesson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 40 of the Fall 2010 *Collegiate* magazine.

1) LIVE UP TO YOUR CALL

READ EPHESIANS 4:1-6.

¹ I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, accepting one another in love, ³ diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds us. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope at your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Have someone read “Live Up to Your Call” on page 40 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- In verse 1, what’s the calling the Ephesians have received?
- Why does Paul stress the importance of humility, gentleness, and patience when encouraging the Ephesians to live up to their calling?

One of Paul’s primary concerns was for Christians to live in unity.

- Why is it important for Christians to live in peace?
- What is the significance of Paul’s usage of the word “one” over and over again in verses 4 and 5?

Paul urged the Ephesian Christians to live up to their calling as followers of Christ through behavior that would promote goodwill in the church.

- What kind of behavior is he alluding to?
- How well do the Christian groups on your campus practice these kinds of behavior? How well does your church?

While stressing behavior that would promote goodwill in the church, Paul also encouraged the Ephesians to practice behavior that would preserve the theological unity of the church.

- When have you experienced division over issues of theological interpretation?
- Why is theological unity important in the church?
- When theological disagreements occur, what’s the best strategy for handling them?

When we’re living up to our calling as Christians, we’ll engage in behavior that will promote goodwill and theological unity within the church.

2) APPRECIATE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

READ EPHESIANS 4:7-12.

⁷ Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the Messiah’s gift. ⁸ For it says: When He ascended on high, He took prisoners into captivity; He gave gifts to people. ⁹ But what does “He ascended” mean except that He descended to the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ The One who descended is the same as the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. ¹¹ And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ,

Have someone read “Appreciate Spiritual Gifts” on page 40 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- According to these verses, what’s the source and purpose of our spiritual gifts?
- How does a spiritual gift relate to a natural ability?
- Once you know what your spiritual gifts are, what’s God’s expectation?

During the week, you had the opportunity to look over the article “Career vs. Calling.”

- With regard to practicing spiritual gifts in the church, what stuck out to you in this article?
- How can this article encourage you when it comes to living up to your calling and practicing your spiritual gifts?

When Christians are living up to their calling by exercising their spiritual gifts, the results in the church are tremendous. As we exercise our spiritual gifts in cooperation with other Christians, we’ll move toward maturity, grow spiritually, and help build up our church.

3) WORK TOGETHER

READ EPHESIANS 4:13-16.

¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head — Christ. ¹⁶ From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.

Have someone read “Work Together” on pages 40-41 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- When have you been part of a group of Christians that wasn’t functioning like the church is supposed to? What were the results?
- If Christians fail to work together, what impact does that have on individual Christians? What impact does it have on the church? What impact does it have on people who are observing the church?
- What practices encourage Christians to work together like God has intended?

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGE 42 OF *COLLEGIATE 'S FALL ISSUE*
- THE SONG "IT'S YOUR LIFE" BY FRANCESCA BATTISTELLI FROM THE ALBUM *MY PAPER HEART*

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about living in ways that are different from non-Christians. The emphasis is on having a lifestyle that is obviously Christian. The lesson encourages college students to live in ways that show they're Christians.

FOCAL PASSAGES EPHESIANS 4:17-32



STANDING OUT FOR ALL THE RIGHT REASONS

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "It's Your Life" by Francesca Battistelli playing in the background as students arrive.

In high school, you were likely encouraged to "be yourself," or "be true to yourself." This is pretty good advice when it comes to refusing to follow an unhealthy crowd or figuring out what makes you a unique individual. But what do these kinds of slogans tell us about our identity as Christians?

- As a Christian, what does it look like to "be yourself"?
- As a Christian, what does it look like to "be *true* to yourself"?
- When it comes down to it, as a Christian are you being true to yourself or true to something or someone else?

There's a difference between the lifestyle of someone who follows Jesus and someone who doesn't. This week, we're going to look at some of these differences and see how well our own lives stack up.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 42 in the Fall 2010 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for a quote, a recommended read, and word study related to this lesson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 42 of the Fall 2010 *Collegiate* magazine.

1) A NEW WAY TO LIVE

READ EPHESIANS 4:17-19.

¹⁷ Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their thoughts. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. ¹⁹ They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more.

Have someone read “A New Way to Live” on page 42 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- In Paul’s view, what made followers of the Gentile lifestyle futile? Darkened? Ignorant? Hardened? Callous? Promiscuous?
- How did the Gentiles end up this way?
- Before you became a Christian, did you view yourself this way? How did it feel to live life like this?
- In contrast, how can the lives of Christians be described? For example, if our lives aren’t futile or darkened, what do they look like?

It’s no surprise that our lives should look radically different from the lives of people who aren’t followers of Jesus. Paul urged his readers to forsake the Gentile way of living.

- As Christians, what attitudes and behaviors do we forsake?
- How does the unbelieving world view the Christian lifestyle? Why?
- What flack have you taken for forsaking ungodly ways of living?

Paul didn’t just urge his readers to forsake an ungodly lifestyle — he told them why it was important to do so.

2) WHY WE’RE DIFFERENT

READ EPHESIANS 4:20-24.

²⁰ But that is not how you learned about the Messiah, ²¹ assuming you heard Him and were taught by Him, because the truth is in Jesus: ²² you took off your former way of life, the old man that is corrupted by deceitful desires; ²³ you are being renewed in the spirit of your minds; ²⁴ you put on the new man, the one created according to God’s [likeness] in righteousness and purity of the truth.

Have someone read “Why We’re Different” on page 42 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- Why did Paul want the Ephesian Christians to no longer live as Gentiles?
- What did Paul mean when he used the metaphor of an “old man that is corrupted by deceitful desires” to describe their former lifestyle?
- In what sense is adopting a new way of life a one-time thing? In what sense is it a continuous process?
- What role does knowing the truth play in our living as Christians?
- What role does our relationship with Christ play in our living as Christians?
- When you hear that we’re supposed to look like God (verse 24), what are your first thoughts?

As followers of Jesus, our lifestyle is consistent with our knowledge of and relationship with Jesus. Thankfully, Paul gave specific instructions on what that new lifestyle looks like.

3) GETTING SPECIFIC

READ EPHESIANS 4:25-29.

²⁵ Since you put away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one

another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin. Don’t let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and don’t give the Devil an opportunity. ²⁸ The thief must no longer steal. Instead, he must do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ No rotten talk should come from your mouth, but only what is good for the building up of someone in need, in order to give grace to those who hear.

Have someone read “Getting Specific” on pages 42-43 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Paul gave specific instructions to the Ephesian Christians about telling the truth, being angry, stealing, and speaking.

- Why are these four behaviors especially troublesome for new Christians?
- What did Paul mean by verse 27?
- In what ways do typical Christian college students struggle in these four areas?
- What disciplines will help Christians engage in the practices Paul encouraged here? Think practically.

The reason our attitudes and practices are important is because they have the potential to grieve the Holy Spirit.

4) BUILDING UP, NOT DESTROYING

READ EPHESIANS 4:30-32.

³⁰ And don’t grieve God’s Holy Spirit, who sealed you for the day of redemption. ³¹ All bitterness, anger and wrath, insult and slander must be removed from you, along with all wickedness. ³² And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

Have someone read “Building Up, Not Destroying” on page 43 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Christians grieve the Holy Spirit by attitudes that destroy relationships.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

- Why are the attitudes listed in verse 31 particularly damaging to Christian relationships?

It pleases God when our attitudes build up relationships.

- In what ways do kindness, compassion, and forgiveness build up relationships?
- When have you seen these attitudes modeled especially well?
- What would happen if every Christian on your campus modeled godly attitudes and behaviors all of the time?

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGE 44 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* FALL ISSUE
- THE SONG "YOUR LOVE FOR ME" BY POCKET FULL OF ROCKS FROM THE ALBUM *MORE THAN NOISE*

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about living in pure or morally upright ways. The emphasis is on living so as to reflect God's holy nature. The lesson encourages college students to reflect God's holy nature in their behavior.

FOCAL PASSAGES

EPHESIANS 5:1-14



RAISING THE STANDARD OF SHOWING GOD'S LOVE

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Your Love for Me" by Pocket Full of Rocks playing in the background as students arrive.

D. L. Moody, the 19th-century American evangelist and publisher, once said, "God doesn't seek for golden vessels, and does not ask for silver ones, but He must have clean ones."¹

- Do you agree or disagree with D. L. Moody's statement? Why or why not?
- Why is purity so important for individual Christians?
- Why is the ability to reflect God so important for the church?

Christ followers are called to reflect God's holy nature. Paul gets at this idea in his letter to the church in Ephesus. This week, we're going to look at ways we reflect God's holiness and love in our behavior.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 44 in the Fall 2010 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for a quote, a word study, and an additional verse related to this lesson.

¹ <http://www.quotesdaddy.com/tag/Purity/7>

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 44 of the Fall 2010 *Collegiate* magazine.

1) LIVE IN LOVE

READ EPHESIANS 5:1-2.

¹ Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children. ² And walk in love, as the Messiah also loved us and gave Himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.

Have someone read “Live in Love” on page 44 of *Collegiate* magazine.

In the first verse of chapter 5, Paul revealed our motivation for imitating God — we’re His “dearly loved children.”

- What characterizes that kind of imitation?
- What’s the difference between imitating God out of fear, obligation, or selfish ambition, and imitating God out of love?
- To what degree are Christians required to imitate God’s love and sacrifice?
- How well would you say the Christians on your campus imitate God’s love?
- When do you find it most difficult to imitate God’s love?

Paul reminded his readers that they’re God’s children, and with that position comes the responsibility of imitating the love of the Father. As God’s children, we’re called to express the same kind of love Jesus expressed in sacrificing Himself.

- What opportunities do you have for sacrifice in your daily life?
- How often do you seize those opportunities?
- When you engage in sacrifice that’s motivated by God’s love, how can you make sure the people around you understand your motivation?

When we live in ways that express Christian love for the people around us, we’re reflecting God’s holy nature. Another way we reflect God’s holiness is by living in purity.

2) LIVE WITHOUT IMPURITY

READ EPHESIANS 5:3-7.

³ But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints. ⁴ And coarse and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks. ⁵ For know and recognize this: no sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of the Messiah and of God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for because of these things God’s wrath is coming on the disobedient. ⁷ Therefore, do not become their partners.

Have someone read “Live Without Impurity” on page 44 of *Collegiate* magazine.

In these seven verses, Paul catalogs several examples of impure behavior.

- Which behaviors did he focus on?
- How prevalent are these behaviors in the Christian circles you’re in? Without going into too much detail, and without sliding into gossip, give some examples.
- If a non-Christian observed the behavior of Christians for a week, what would they conclude about how God views sexual immorality, greed, crude language, and idolatry?
- What’s at stake if Christians are lazy in eliminating these impure behaviors from their lives?

When our lives are full of impurity, the image of God that we reflect is smudged, fuzzy, and tainted. But when we avoid living in impurity, we reflect God’s holy nature. And when we reflect God’s holy nature, we’re giving off God’s light to a very dark world.

3) LIVE AS LIGHT

READ EPHESIANS 5:8-14.

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light — ⁹ for the fruit of the light [results] in all goodness, righteousness, and truth — ¹⁰ discerning what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Don’t participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead, expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what is done by them in secret. ¹³ Everything exposed by the light is made clear, ¹⁴ for what makes everything clear is light. Therefore it is said: Get up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead, and the Messiah will shine on you.

Have someone read “Live as Light” on pages 44-45 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Every Christian has been brought from darkness into light through salvation, and our lives reflect that light. Part of reflecting God’s light is exposing the darkness in others’ lives.

- What does it look like when Christians expose the darkness in the world around us?
- How does this passage relate to Matthew 7:3-5?
- What prevents us from being able to shed light on the darkness around us?
- What did Paul mean in verse 12?
- How can verse 14 be a rallying cry for us this week?

