

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW LESSON 2: MAKING LIFE CHOICES

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled Christian Life and Worldview. This series of lessons examines the choices and practices that are essential for Christian Living. To live as the Word of God teaches us means we understand that the choices we make each day affect our faith. It also means learning to pray, practising the commands of God and learning to serve others. These are important lessons for understanding the practice of Christianity. Include time to discuss these principles and how to effectively apply them to your life.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.



CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 2: MAKING LIFE CHOICES

PURPOSE

To examine the power of choices and discover that there can be negative consequences as a result of poor choices.

LEADER'S NOTE

The intended outcome of this lesson is that participants will discover they are valuable because they are God's creation and that God has a plan and a destiny for them. Without a belief in their own worth, people are more likely to make a self-destructive choice. Without valuing others around them, they may make choices that harm others. It is important to be sensitive to those who have made poor choices in the past. You may wish to emphasise God's offer of forgiveness and assure them they are a new creation if they have received Jesus. Do not allow participants to dwell on past choices, but rather focus on making godly and wise choices for their futures.

INTRODUCTION

(Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group)

- ❖ What is the best choice you ever made? On what counsel did you make that decision?
- ❖ What are some of the most important choices a person must make in their life?
- ❖ What do you do when you have a difficult choice to make? Do you ask friends? Family? God? Do you consult with experts or trust your intuition?
- ❖ Can you think of a time when you made a choice specifically because you knew it was what God wanted you to do?
- ❖ What factors contribute to a person making bad choices? (Examples may be lack of information, poor self-image, pressure from those around them, selfish motives, etc.)



STUDY

TEACH

- ❖ **Making Good Choices:** We make choices every day – some good, others poor. If a person has a good sense of self-worth and believes they deserve good things they are more likely to choose well and create seek the best for their future.
 - A strong identity enables self-control over emotionally confusing impulses. Those who avoid dangerous behaviours are able to invest in their future. They set high standards in order to excel and avoid anything that would get in the way of their goals.

- ❖ **Managing Temptation:** Let’s look at some examples of temptations we face, and the consequences of both poor choices and positive choices. *(You may instruct the group from the following chart by either providing them a copy of it, providing a visual on a chalk-board, computer or other media, or verbally give the group the poor choice and have them discuss the possible negative consequences and the positive choice a person could make instead.)* Anything from low-self-esteem to peer pressure to poor examples can be significant factors that lead both youth and adults into unhealthy or dangerous activities.

Poor Choices/Consequences	TEMPTATION	Positive Choices/Consequences
Premarital sex with one or more partners could lead to AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases, and low self-esteem.	Desire for Sex	Abstinence until marriage will protect against diseases, feelings of jealousy, and not being satisfied with your partner.
Revenge can lead to damaging relationships because of a momentary feeling of anger.	Anger in Relationships	Choosing to forgive and reconcile with a friend creates a potential for a strengthened friendship.
Use of illicit drugs can lead to loss of money and bodily damage.	Drugs	Making a plan for your money and your education/life and choosing to live a healthy, purposeful life.
Lying to your boss about how much you worked can lead to consequences of getting caught, feelings of guilt, and loss of trust.	Cheating	Choosing to be truthful and having a sense of accomplishment when you earn what you get.
Shoplifting can lead to getting caught and being charged with a crime, payment of fines or jail.	Coveting	Being satisfied with what you have and earning money to pay for your purchases will give a feeling of satisfaction.
Pornography gives a false idea about relationships, degrades women, and can be addictive.	Lust	Guarding your eyes helps to protect your future relationships, so you will be able to love your spouse as God intended



ASK PARTICIPANTS

What other poor choices do people around you make? How do these poor choices affect their ability to accomplish their dreams and ambitions?

TEACH

- ❖ **We are valuable because no other human who has ever lived is exactly like us.** We are the only person like us in the entire world. Even twins have unique finger prints! No one else has their exact thoughts and feelings. No one else has their genetic code. Our experiences, talents and abilities, personal preferences make us unique. Our laugh or our voice can be recognized from some distance – it is unique!

- Read through the following verses as a group and discuss how these verses make you feel:

- o Psalm 139: 13-16
- o Jeremiah 1:5
- o Ephesians 2:10
- o Genesis 1:27
- o Isaiah 64:8
- o Mathew 6:25-35

- Consider the way our body is put together. We have eyes that can see, we have a hand that is more useful than any tool ever made – our minds can do complex calculations and process thoughts that no computer can match. Such an intricate creation must be very valuable!

- ❖ **Read through the following questions and think about the answers honestly.**

- o Does what you do or how you act determine your value?
- o Does how well you perform in school, at home, or in your workplace determine your value?
- o Are some people more valuable than others because they perform better or make fewer mistakes?

- **Discuss the answers to the above questions in light of the verse John 3:16.** Keeping in mind Christ's sacrifice was offered to everyone, does this sacrifice make you feel special or give you value? *(It is important for participants to see that they are special because they are a creation of God. The choices we make don't make us more or less special. They can, however, get in the way of the perfect plan that God has for us.)*

- ❖ **Human beings are not perfect.** No one is perfect — we all make mistakes. That is a natural part of being human. At one time or another we have all:

- o Told a lie
- o Been unkind to a brother, sister, or friend
- o Disobeyed our parents
- o Done things of which we are not proud



- ❖ **We are all loved by God.** Each of us is valuable because of who we are on the inside, because of those special things within each of us that make us one-of-a-kind. And whether we are aware of it or not, we are each deeply loved by God. He is the one who loves us unconditionally and who created us unique and special.
- ❖ **Making choices for God.** In this lesson we have focussed on the impact of poor choices, but we have not yet looked at the importance of making choices with the view of becoming more like Christ. When you really love someone you value their advice and would often be willing to follow them wherever they go. How much more should we love God who sent his Son to die for our sins? God did this for us because He made us to be special and unique and part of His master plan. We need to consider this when making choices. Before you make choices in your life you should consider if they advance you in worldly ways or in the kingdom of God.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Have you made a choice to commit your life to following Jesus?
- ❖ Discuss what you think God's plan for you might be, then list some choices that you might make to direct your life according to His desire for you.
- ❖ Do you have difficulty believing that you are valuable to God? What makes this difficult to believe? What steps could you take to increase your belief? (Examples may include memorizing the Scripture in this lesson, reviewing promises of God, reducing worldly influences, etc.)

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Pray for each participant that they would make choices that advance them in the kingdom of God and are not choices for worldly gain. Pray they would each see their value in God's eyes, and trust in His perfect plan for them. Take specific prayer requests if you like for issues raised in discussion, or goals that participants set for themselves.