

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Study Guide

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 1: IDENTIFYING GOALS

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple Essentials module titled 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 and how to live out our faith within our Church community.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 1: IDENTIFYING GOALS

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

We all have plans for our lives – but how do we know if they are good? This lesson will help you examine your motives and see if they align with God’s desires for you!

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

What plan do you have for your life? Where does that plan come from? Each of us has desires and dreams. Some of these are selfish or sinful, and some honour God and serve others. Living God’s way involves examining our hearts and motives for things we desire, and then making sure we put God and His will first in our life. Christianity isn’t about being good, or doing good things to save us. It is about being Godly, and as a result, loving God and others . This lesson will help you learn how to live the way God wants you to!

GETTING STARTED

1. What did you want most for your future when you were a child? Was it something frivolous or serious? Did your desires come true?

2. Can you think of an example of someone famous who was kept from getting what they wanted most because of a bad choice they made?



STUDY

❖ **LIFE CHOICES:** People can be very self-deceptive. Sin clouds our thinking and we often make poor decisions because of it. Each decision in our life can have long-lasting effects, not only for ourselves, but for our families and our communities.

- The life choices we make are dependent on our ambitions — the things we want in our life. Some of the things we may want are:
 - To earn lots of money
 - To get a car
 - To become famous / well known / to have status / popularity
 - To get into a particular profession
 - To find true love
 - To achieve something exceptional
 - To have happy and healthy children
- Choose five dreams or ambitions you have for your future, and write them down. Then consider why you have these ambitions. What is your motivation for each of them? What do you hope to achieve?

❖ **GOD'S PLAN:** There isn't anything wrong with having an ambition or a goal, but we should consider that God, who is all-knowing and all-powerful and loves us, has a better plan. We must seek God's plan.

- We can examine our motives to see if they are selfish or if they are good. Good motives will help us make good choices. These choices will be in line with God's Word, the Bible, and what God desires for us. God may not give us everything we want. Even if we have a godly motive, He may have a different plan.
- What does Psalm 119:36 tell us about the direction of our hearts?

- This verse instructs us to turn our hearts towards the truth of God, not selfish gain. We will look at some examples next.



- ❖ **IDENTIFYING MOTIVATION FOR OUR AMBITIONS:** Consider the ambitions listed in the following chart. Think about the Godly motives and the selfish motives for each one. Read the Bible verses. Some ideas have been provided for you.

Sinful/selfish Motive	Ambition	Godly/Good Motive
Make money in order to: -feel powerful -not have to work (laziness)	Wealth 1 Timothy 5:8 Proverbs 13:11 Ecclesiastes 5:10 Matthew 6:24	Make money in order to: -provide for your family -support your church
Collect possessions or property in order to: -be envied by your neighbours	Possessions or Property Matthew 19:21 Luke 12:15 Psalm 119:36 1 Timothy 6:17-18	Collect possessions or property in order to: -use them to help others
Aspire to leadership and power: -to exert power over others	Status/Achievement Titus 1:7-14 1 Timothy 4:12 Mark 10:42-45 Titus 2:1-15	Aspire to leadership and servanthood: -to guide those who are without leadership
Desire marriage and family -for social status and power	Marriage and Children Psalm 127:3-5 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Proverbs 22:6	Desire marriage and family -to serve God and others together as a family

- ❖ **WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVATION?** Our desires and ambitions are often neither good nor bad. The reasoning behind these ambitions, however, can either serve God or serve ourselves. Matthew 6:33 instructs us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.



- When we want to serve ourselves first, we do not serve God. This might take the form of making ourselves look better in the eyes of those around us, making others serve us, amassing wealth for our own comfort -- not the comfort of others, and looking to our own happiness first.
- When we concentrate on our own comfort and security, we do not trust God to take care of us. We may make poor, selfish decisions which can be destructive.
- Everything we have is a tool that can be used to serve our own interests, or to advance God's plan. When our motivation is to do things His way, our life becomes one of order. God will bless the life lived for Him.

IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Our goals and ambitions are not usually good or bad in themselves, but the motivation behind them can either be God-honouring or selfish.
- ❖ A life lived for God will desire the best for others first, and will desire to serve God more than selfish comforts.
- ❖ God wants us to turn our hearts to Him and trust in His plans rather than our own self-centered ones.
- ❖ The Christian life is one of love for others and for God; therefore, we should use what we have been given to honour God and to love and bless others.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Look at the list of dreams you made earlier. In light of this lesson, how can you ensure that you are leaving room for God's will in your life? How can you make sure you are pursuing your ambitions for the right reasons?

2. What happens when a person starts off with a good ambition and good motivations, but gets side-tracked and begins thinking selfishly? What temptations may get in the way? How can we prevent this?

3. Consider one of the ambitions already mentioned. How might poor choices get in the way of accomplishing that dream? What poor choices do you need to avoid in your life in order to accomplish your goals?