

LESSON 10: Making the Most of Our Lives

BIG IDEA

We all have an innate, God-given desire to make a difference. When we know Jesus personally, He empowers us to serve His Kingdom in a way that can forever change the lives of others. We are all called to use everything God has given us to serve others and share Jesus's love. When we live like this, we get to contribute to the Kingdom of God in a way that continues to impact the world long after we go to Heaven.

DISCUSSION

- What do you believe is the greatest inheritance that you can leave for your children or loved ones? What can you start doing today to create or sustain that legacy more intentionally?
- What would you want the people who know you best to say about you when your life is over? What in your life would have to change to make that a reality?
- Identify someone you know personally who seems to be living out God's purpose for his/her life well. What characteristics does that person embody that you would like to see in your own life?
- God has given each of us specific gifts and abilities. What are some of the areas where you feel like God has gifted you to make an eternal difference?

TEACHING

It normally begins with something significant. You get news that jolts your thinking. It is big enough to move your mind past the mundane and into trajectory. Someone has been born; someone has died. Something has been gained; something has been lost. Regardless of what or who, we have all been there, asking ourselves the big questions

- Why am I here?
- How will I be remembered?
- Am I happy with my answers?

Your legacy isn't about you being anything you want to be. Your legacy is tied to your God-given design. Your legacy doesn't start with your ambition; it starts with you learning to be you! We have so many things that challenge our comfort with being who God made us to be: trauma, insecurity, regret, and fear, just to name a few. But you were created and shaped by God. He promises to work everything together for our good toward His purposes for us. We need to stop wondering what our legacy is and grow in

self-awareness of who God made us to be. God gave you a story, a personality, spiritual gifts, experiences, strengths, and weaknesses, all of which He plans to use for His purposes in your legacy. The reason we give God all the glory at the end of time isn't only because he is generally worthy of it. The reason is it was His idea. He is the potter, and you are the clay.

Your legacy is where your life lives on. The goal isn't to live forever. The goal is to leave something that makes a difference. The truth is, there is very little you get to control. Life comes at us quickly and regularly reminds us of our limitations. The book of James teaches us our life is a mist. It goes fast, and it is gone fast. What you have is only today. Jesus teaches us not to be confident about tomorrow. He tells us to pray God gives us our daily bread - not our weekly bread, not enough to retire well, only what we need for today.

One of these days will be your last day. You don't get to pick it or predict it. But on that last day, you will enter God's presence. As significant as your life feels now, you will see in eternity that it was only a small part of your existence. Don't wish you had traded eternity for the earthly, the physical for the heavenly. Live for eternity today. We will all stand before God, we will all give an account. He will ask each of us two questions:

What did you do with my Son Jesus?

Jesus chose to become human, to pay for the sins of the world, and to redeem all creation, including you. Matthew teaches us:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" (Matt 7:21-23)

When you stand before God, being moral won't matter. Being religious won't matter. What you have won't matter. The only thing that will matter is what you did with God's grace. The right answer on that day will be:

- I placed my faith in Jesus. He is my Savior.
- I knew Him personally.
- I listened to His Word, and I obeyed

What did you do with what I gave you?

The second question is different. It isn't about your eternal destiny. It is about your earthly legacy.

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. (Matt 16:27)

Your salvation is entirely free in God's grace. Aren't you thankful? If any of us were required to earn our salvation, we would be doomed. We can't be good enough to earn our salvation. This second question isn't about if you were good enough; Jesus is our answer for our salvation. That doesn't mean there is nothing for you to do. Your life matters! Today matters. What you have done with what you have been given matters. The right answer on that day will be:

- I realized it wasn't about me, it was all about Jesus
- I gave my life away for His glory

Before Jesus, your life is about finding Jesus, so you didn't have to pay for your sins. Once you find Jesus, your whole life is about sharing Him with others. Let's make a difference in this world!

Living for Eternity

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecc 3:11)

Give What You Have

My time, my talent, my treasure. What I have, I give, because I know I have been blessed to be a blessing.

You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. (2 Cor 9:11)

As parents we teach our children the danger of the word "mine". We teach our children to be grateful and to share, but for some reason as adults we forget the simple lesson. As Christians, we look to our heavenly Father and say "yours". What I have you gave me. What I have you gave me even though I didn't deserve it. I am grateful and willing to share. Look at who you are, look at what you have and tell God: *this is all yours. Use it how you want.*

God calls his people to give so other people can have a relationship with Him. We have everything we need because God is our provider. Live for eternity and let your life generously bless others.

Serve Others

We don't always know where to start living out our faith. Our hesitation keeps us on the sidelines of what God is doing in the world around us.

It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt 20:26-28)

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt 22:37-40)

Your legacy doesn't start with **do**, it starts with **who**. Who are the people God has sovereignly put around you? Serve them. Love them. Make blessing others a priority in your life and you will be joining what God is up to in the world.

Share Jesus

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Cor 5:20)

As hard as it is to believe, God's plan to share His love is me! Because of who I am in Jesus, and because of what I have because of grace, I am to share my story with others. You don't need a seminary degree to tell your story. Tell people who you were before Jesus, how Jesus saved you, and what you are and have because of his grace.

And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. (Lk 14:23)

Telling people about Jesus requires us to move. We have to go, not wait for people to come. Go tell people about Jesus, invite them to the family banquet and bring them home. Don't come alone - bring someone with you. Compel them with your story, and assure them it can be their story too. Let's see the house of God full. Let's make sure it is hard to go to hell from our city.

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. (Mk 16:15)

We are not only stewards of our city, but of all creation. The reason the church exists is to bring the future kingdom of God into the present. All creation groans for the return of Jesus, but millions and millions of people have yet to hear His name. Someone has to go to them. Someone has to tell them they are known by Almighty God, loved by their Heavenly Father, and a relationship with Him is possible through Jesus.

There is more to reality than this life. Eternity is real. The Spiritual world is real. Live with Heaven on your mind. Leave a legacy.

DIG DEEPER

- God has blessed us abundantly so we can be a blessing to others. Talk about how our generosity can "make a difference" in our community, state, and world.
- We were urged to give, serve, and share Christ intentionally. Which one of these actions is easiest for you to do and why?

COMMON QUESTIONS

Now that group is over, what's next?

- Help your group identify their next steps and have everyone share that step.
- Encourage your group to complete the Growth Track if they haven't already.
- Tell your group what you are going to do next semester.
- Encourage the group to go all in with the One Year Challenge.
- Stay in contact with each other.
- Pray over everyone in the group.
- Connect them to another Discipleship Group (D2).

NEXT STEPS

Decide as a group how you can help each other build a legacy. Create opportunities to bless others together and invite people to join you. Your faithfulness will make a difference in the lives of others.

Now that this Small Group has come to a close, identify one next step you could take that would have the biggest impact on your relationship with God. Once you do, please share it with a friend or someone from the group for accountability.

RESOURCES

- *Don't Waste Your Life* by John Piper
- *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren
- *What Are You Going to Do With Your Life* by JD Greear
- *Just Do Something* by Kevin DeYoung
- *Twelve Ordinary Men* by John MacArthur
- *Get Out of Your Head* by Jennie Allen

MEMORY VERSE

Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. (Rom 14:10-12)

DAILY SCRIPTURE AND JOURNALING

Day One

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. (Matt 16:27)

Journal: Be honest, tell the truth, take an audit: to this point in your life, what have you done for God and his glory?

Day Two

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecc 3:11)

Journal: If God sees the big picture of eternity, what are some areas you need to trust him?

Day Three

You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. (2 Cor 9:11)

Journal: Write about the connection between gratitude and generosity. Write about what you are grateful for.

Day Four

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt 22:37-40)

Journal: Write down the names of three people God has brought into your life. Write some specific ways you can serve and love them.

Day Five

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Cor 5:20)

Journal: What do you think Paul meant when he urged them to be reconciled to God?

PRAYER FOCUS

In addition to praying for the specific requests from your group, pray that your group's eyes would be open to the needs around them. Ask God to show them how to bless others with their time, resources, and gifts.