



GETTING STARTED (Excerpt from Text)

> As your group time begins, use this section for very brief review prior to showing the video to help get the conversation going.

Conversation Starters/Questions

If you were building a building why are pillars so important? If your building required 4 pillars but you only used 3 to save time how long would it stand in the middle of a storm?

What are some foundational pillars in your life?

Why does the church need pillars or mission values today?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS: Pillars hold up the entire building, especially the roof. Without all four pillars, the building would not be able to function. Foundational pillars: God's Word, relationships, love, integrity, service.

The church needs mission values today to accomplish the biblical goals of each church. They provide unity in what they do and their witness to the world.

VIDEO NOTES [>Play Video](#)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Read *Ephesians 5:15-17*

1) If this Scripture tells us to live wise and be intentional, what are some things in your life that can get in your way of being wise? How do we understand and know God's will for our lives?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS: Things that hinder wisdom: pride, neglect of God, His Word, and His people, alcohol abuse (*Eph 5:18*), slavery to other sins (*Rom 8:5-8*), foolish companions (*Prov 13:20*).

How to know God's will: fear God (*Prov 9:10*), pray (*James 1:5*), study God's Word (*Prov 4:5-7*), follow the leadership of your pastors (*Heb 13:7*), consult godly counselors (*Prov 24:6*), renew the mind (*Rom 12: 1,2*), be willing to obey (*John 7:17*), have a perfect peace about your decision (*Is 26:3*)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)

2) How can a believer imitate or reflect Jesus in their lives in a way that would influence a non-believer to want to become a follower of Jesus?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

Imitate God through love and purity (*Eph 5:1-3*); Biblical relationship with spouse and children (*Eph 5:25-6:4*), speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves (*Prov 31:8,9*), care for poor (*Prov 31:20*), visit those in prison (*Heb 13:3*), care for widows and orphans (*James 1:27*), forgive others (*Eph 4:32*), take no revenge (*1 Pet 3:9*), practice hospitality (*Rom 12:13*).

A key Scripture is 1 Cor 10:31-11:1. Paul did everything he could to reach others. He exhorted them to imitate him since he was imitating Jesus. (See commentary at the top of page 6)

>Read *Matthew 20:29-32*

3) Just as the multitude followed Jesus and still do today, how would you define the meaning of following Jesus, and is it different in the 21st century than the 1st century?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS: For further study: How would these verses describe following Jesus? *Matt 4:19*; *Gal 2:20*; *Phil 2: 3-8*; and *Matt 10:37-39*. This is a total commitment to deny oneself and obey Christ. From a biblical standpoint, "following Christ" has not changed. Some make it more shallow than the Bible teaches.

4) Have you made space in your life to help the hurting? Share with your Life Group opportunities you have had to stop and help someone while reflecting Jesus in your actions.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS: — Follow up questions: 1. How have others helped you when you were hurting? (*1 Cor 1:3-5*) 2. How can we overcome the feeling of being disqualified to care for others when we are ashamed of the sin in our own lives? (Remember the Gospel: *Rom 8:1*; *Phil 3:12-14*; *1 Tim 1:15*) 3. How does the story of the Good Samaritan (*Luke 10: 29-36*) help us understand how to care for others? How did he have space in his mind, life, and heart for the hurting?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)

Read Acts 17:30-32

5) How did Paul leverage his time in Athens to influence others? How was his compassion for people without Jesus?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS: *Acts 17* tells us how Paul leveraged his time in Athens, waiting for people to join him to influence others by telling them about Jesus. Instead of touring the city or hanging out at the hotel (you know what I mean), Paul was so distressed and moved with compassion over their worship of idols that he preached Jesus. What happened at the end? According to vv.32-34, "some sneered" but some accepted the message and become "believers"

Read Matthew 20:24-28

6) Let's bring it home, how would you live out serving each other in your own home? What about at work? What about at church? What about your neighborhood?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS: For further study: Compare and contrast the request of the mother of the two sons of Zebedee (20:20-23) with the request of the two blind man (20:29-34). Who did they think Jesus was? How did their requests differ? What were their motives? How did Jesus respond to their prayer?

Read Matthew 6:6

7) What does it mean to be intentional about spending time with God? How much time a day do you spend in a personal devotional time with God?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS: A disciple of Jesus abides in the Word - *John 8:31*; prays - *Mark 1:35*; meditates on the Word - *Jos. 1:8*; follow Christ's example *Mark 1:35*.

Quote: **We must go private with Jesus before we go public with Jesus.**

SUMMARY (My Take-Away for This Week)

- ⇒ I must allow Jesus to influence me daily
- ⇒ Imitating Jesus is the best way to influence people
- ⇒ Intentionally, I will make space in my mind, life, and heart for others.

- ## MY NEXT STEPS

- ## HOW MY GROUP CAN PRAY FOR ME THIS WEEK

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

COMMENTARY

Pillar of Influence #1: Be Intentional**Question 1:**

Wisdom. Real wisdom is the fear of God. It seems that the real essence of wisdom is spiritual, for life is more than just living by a set of rules and being rewarded in some physical manner. Undoubtedly in this sense wisdom comes from God (Prov. 2:6). Thus, though it will involve observation and instruction, it really begins with God and one's faith in Him as Lord and Savior (Prov. 1:7; Job 28:28). (Hunt, "Wisdom and Wise Men," ed. Chad Brand et.al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003])

Proverbs teaches that wisdom is accessible to all who want it. The wisdom of God in the Old Testament and in the New Testament leads to an understanding of life and a true knowledge of God (1 Cor. 1:17–30). The world cannot and does not know God through its misguided and secular wisdom (2 Cor. 1:12; *sophia* in Greek). Christians are to seek the wisdom from God to truly know Him and live wisely in this life (Jas. 3:13–18). (Eugene E. Carpenter and Philip W. Comfort, *Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew Words Defined and Explained*, [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000])

The Will of God. God does whatever He pleases (Ps. 135:6) and desires that all people do His will. God's will is always good, acceptable, and perfect (Rom. 12:2). Doing God's will sustained Jesus for life (John 4:34). Sometimes, however, the will of God leads to suffering (Rom. 8:28; James 1:2–4; 1 Pet. 3:17), as it did for Jesus (Isa. 53:10; Matt. 26:39, 42).

Christians are to strive to know the will of God for their lives (Ps. 143:10; Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9; cp. Rom. 1:10). Christians are to discern God's will through prayer (Col. 1:9) and also pray that God's will for the world be done (Matt. 6:10). (Chad Brand et al., eds., "Will of God," *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003])

It is foolish-in fact, wicked-to try to discern the will of God apart from the Word of God. If He has said it in His Word, that is His will for you. Thank God for people who give us wise counsel when we're facing difficult decisions and trying to discern His will. God is certainly the final Counselor in all things, and we have to obey Him rather than man. But never become so arrogant that you don't think you can learn from other people.

This is going to sound simplistic when I say it, but take all the principles for discerning the will of God, and you can sum them all up in one word: Jesus. This is not just pious talk. The will of God for you is *Jesus*. (Adrian Rogers, What Every Christian Ought to Know Day by Day, [Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2008])

Eph 5:15-17. We must be very careful to live our life rooted in wisdom, using our time wisely. Not to do so would be foolish. The will of the Lord is that we live carefully, cautiously, always matching our lifestyle with the teachings of Scripture. (Max Anders, *Galatians-Colossians*, vol. 8 Holman New Testament Commentary [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999])

In 5:1–21 Paul lists the kinds of things that should characterize the believer. They are intended to be part of a contrasting life-style to the pagan world. Paul does not call for isolation from the world, however. This would contradict the missionary imperative each believer has. But he does call for differentness in manner of life. (W. C. Fields, "Ephesians," in *The Teacher's Bible Commentary*, ed. H. Franklin Paschall and Herschel H. Hobbs [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1972])

COMMENTARY

Question 2.

1 Cor 10: 31-11:1. Paul's commitment to seeking the salvation of the lost led him to subjugate his personal preferences and freedoms to the good of others. As a result of the consistency with which Paul fulfilled this service, he felt capable of encouraging the Corinthians to **follow his example** as he followed **the example of Christ**. Christ gave up his freedom and honor, humbling himself to the point of death on a cross, in order to save others (Phil. 2:5–8). (Richard L. Pratt Jr, *I & II Corinthians*, vol. 7, Holman New Testament Commentary [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000])

Question 3.

Matt 20: 29-32. Beggars were considered outcasts in Jewish society. Mark and Luke referred only to one beggar, probably the speaker of the two. He was identified in Mark 10:46 with the nickname "Bartimaeus," or "Son of Excrement." Even though Old Testament law provided for the needy in Israel, few holy men would have anything to do with beggars. They feared they might be made unclean if they associated with beggars. These two "low-lives" were among those whom the Son of Man had come to serve (20:28).

Matt 20: 34. The phrase **had compassion** is from *splanchnizomai*, also found in 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27. The king's heart compelled him to action on behalf of others. (Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman New Testament Commentary, [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000])

Question 6.

Matt 20: 24-28. Jesus chose this opportunity to teach further on the true values of the kingdom of heaven, especially since all twelve disciples had exposed their prideful hearts. He showed them that their attitudes were like the Gentiles. In the unbelieving world, it is assumed that power and authority define greatness. Jesus was not criticizing authoritative or hierarchical structure but the "strutting."

Jesus could provide no better model than himself. Although the Messiah-King came with every right to be served, his purpose was to serve them. He gave up his rights and took on a responsibility he was not obligated to take. This responsibility would extend ultimately to our eternal souls, purchased by the sacrifice of **his life as a ransom [a substitute] for many**. (Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman New Testament Commentary [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000])

Question 7.

Matt 6: 6. Correct actions with improper motives still do not please God. The theme of internalizing God's standards continues, as Jesus stresses the importance of righteous behavior when no one but God is watching as over against public piety designed to elicit human praise rather than to glorify God. Public prayer is very appropriate when practiced with right motives. But public orations should represent the overflow of a vibrant personal prayer life. What is more, prayer ought not to be used to gain plaudits, summarize a sermon, or communicate information to an audience but should reflect genuine conversation with God. (Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992])

God despises appearance that is not reality. Jesus was certainly not forbidding public prayer (see 14:19; 15:36; Acts 1:24; 3:1; 4:24–30). But it may be said that the person who prays only in public and never in private is praying for the wrong reasons. (Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman New Testament Commentary [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000])

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