

# UNDIVIDED

## LOVING GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

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What You'll Find In This Sample:

- A Sample of a Small Group Lesson Plan
- A Sample of the Student Book
- The Undivided Small Group Overviews

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## LOVING GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

### LESSON 1: CHOOSING SIDES

**What we want students to learn:** To help students understand that there can only be one object of their heart's affection: God, or the world.

**Scripture Focus:** 1 John 2:15-17, Romans 12:2, 3 John 11

**Session Snapshot:** One of the great points of tension in our lives as Christ-followers is that we are saved from the world but left to live in it. There's a good reason for this, of course: we are God's plan to make His name known in this world. But there is tension because we live as Christians in a world set in contrast to the ways of God. Knowing this, God makes it clear through His Word where our allegiance should lie. We cannot be divided. We must choose God over the world. We must love God over and above anything the world has to offer. This session will introduce this concept to your students and begin to drill down on what this looks like lived out in their lives.

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### TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each Small Group Leader's Guide comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Undivided" Lesson 1 Teacher Prep Video, click on the link below:

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### BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is a focused, brief overview of some of the background info for the central passage you will be teaching.

### THE DETAILS

Who wrote 1 and 3 John? Who wrote Romans?

1, 2nd, and 3rd John were written by John the Apostle. John was the youngest of Jesus' 12 disciples, and along with Peter and James, made up the "inner three," the group of three disciples Jesus seemed to put extra emphasis on. John was referred to as the "beloved disciple" and also wrote the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation. John is believed to be the only one of the disciples (excluding Judas) who did not die a martyr's death.

The Apostle Paul wrote the Book of Romans. Of course, we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of extreme importance in the early Church and beyond. He would go on three (and possibly four) missionary journeys where he shared the gospel throughout the Roman world, and he would pen much of the New Testament in the form of his letters to various churches and individuals. Romans is one of those letters, addressed to the Christ-followers in Rome.

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## When were they written?

Most scholars date the writing of 1 and 3 John near the end of the first century, probably no later than the early 90s AD. Most believe John was writing from or near the city Ephesus.

Most people believe Paul wrote Romans from the city of Corinth while on his third missionary journey, sometime in the late 50s AD.

## What was the purpose for their writing?

There is a lot of conjecture regarding who John was writing to and what the purpose of his writing 1 John was. Regarding much of this, we can't precisely be certain. What we do know is that John's writing was direct, upbeat, and full of encouragement. John seemed to be building up those who had chosen to remain in fellowship with the Church, and who had committed to pursuing Christ.

3 John is a very straightforward, practical letter written to an individual named Gaius, of whom little is known.

The purpose for Romans is quite simple: it represents Paul's most complete and precise theology of any of his letters.

## **THE MAIN POINT**

### 1 John 2:15

John set up the comparison here that will, in essence, drive the lesson. John distinguished between a love of God and a love of the world. Of course, John encouraged his readers to turn from loving this world or anything that's worldly. The object of our heart can't be on the fleeting, depraved things of the world we live in. But then John went a step further. He stated that if we do indeed have a love for the world, then we cannot simultaneously have a love for God. The two are mutually exclusive. Again, this verse drives the overall thrust of the lesson.

### 3 John 11

This was John speaking again to this distinction, but he was doing it using slightly different language. He was ascribing the characteristic or value of "goodness" to God and the contrasting characteristic of "evil" to the world. Put in these terms, the choice is the same: follow God or follow the world. But you can't follow both. John chose to use the concept of imitation to talk about how we should act and live. Imitating God leads to a life of goodness. Imitating the world leads to a life of evil.

### Romans 12:2

The idea of conformity and transformation are supplemental concepts to the idea of choosing to pursue God over and above pursuing the world. Because we're transformed upon receiving salvation and the Holy Spirit, our minds are transformed as well. Paul was urging believers to claim this transformation. In a word, he was urging his readers to act like what they already were. How is this done? By resisting the urge to conform to the world's pattern or model, and instead conform our thoughts and will to the model of God.

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## THE TAKEAWAY

We all must choose what we will turn our heart's affection toward. Will we choose the world or God? Will we imitate God or evil? What will our lives conform to? The world around us or God and His ways? This first session will help introduce this concept to your students and challenge them to pursue God with undivided affection.

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## LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: an introductory activity called Getting Started; the Bible study section called Digging In; and an application-focused segment called Wrapping Up.

## THE LEAD IN

- **Student Book Pages:** This lesson will utilize pages 5-9 in the "Undivided" Student Book.
- **Set-Up:** This activity will use page 5-6.

FIRST, read or have a student read the Lesson 1 introduction on page 5.

THEN, explain that since this lesson is all about choosing, they're going to play a little game where what they choose dictates the outcome of a really important night. Set the stage for your students. Explain that it's the night of their school's big dance. Maybe it's homecoming, or maybe it's prom. Whatever the case, the game they're about to play is going to determine whether or not they have a really fun time at this dance or a not so fun time.

NEXT, instruct students to look at the game on page 6 if they haven't already done so. Explain that as a class they'll start with the first square, the one marked "Time for the big school dance." Explain that for each square you'll flip a coin to determine whether the answer is yes or no. If the coin lands on heads, it's a yes. If the coin lands on tails, it's a no. (NOTE: To make things a little more fun, the first square and the square marked "Do you ask him/her again," feature a "maybe" option. This doesn't affect gameplay, it just feels a lot better than "no." Even in a pretend game, rejection can be totally harsh.)

Begin on the first game square and progress through the game, flipping the coin for each square and going to the next square based on the outcome. Play the game until you've finished. If you have time, play again and see if you get a different outcome.

FINALLY, explain to students that this was a fun way to get thinking about the idea of choices. Explain that they're about to see that in life they have tons of choices; but when it comes to imitating God, their choices are pretty limited. Let's take a closer look.

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## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Student Book Pages:** This activity will utilize pages 7-8 in the “Undivided” Student Book.

FIRST, take a moment to set the stage for the central passage of Scripture you’re going to be studying. Use the Bible Background to make sure students know the details behind what you’ll be studying.

THEN, start Bible Study by transitioning into a discussion on this idea of choice. If you have time, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **Can anyone share a time recently when they had a big choice to make?**
- **Was it a tough choice? Or an easy choice? Explain your answer.**
- **In a spot where you have to make a decision, would you rather have a lot of choices or just two or three? Why?**

Explain to students that whether or not we admit it or even realize it when it comes to following God, there are only two choices: We can choose to imitate God or the world. It really is that simple.

NEXT, take a moment and get on the same page before moving on. Lead your students to define what you mean when you’re talking about this idea of “the world.” Using the space on page 7 of the Student Book, work as a group to define what you mean by the world. Say something like:

- **For our discussion, we’re talking about the world as that which is opposed to God. Worldly things are secular, while godly things are sacred. The biblical understanding of this interpretation of the world is very prevalent in the New Testament. John in his Gospel was particularly fond of utilizing this concept to talk about that which is opposed to the ways of God and His Kingdom.**

THEN, once your group has fleshed this out, direct your students’ attention to the series of questions on page 7. Read or have a student read 1 John 2:15-17 to see exactly how this idea of the world versus God checks out. When the passage has been read, work through the questions as a group. Ask the following questions (which also appear on page 7):

- **We’ve defined “the world.” So what did John mean when he said, “Don’t love the world”?**
  - Answer: Connect your students’ definition to John’s admonition that we cannot love the world.
- **Come up with some practical examples of how people (and, yes, maybe even how you) show love for the world. (Look at verse 16 if you need help getting started.)**
  - Answer: This could be when anyone has so engaged with the world and with culture that the things of this life come before their devotion to God. This could be media such as movies and music, it could be relationships, or it could be selfish or greedy desires such as materialism or an obsession with popularity.
- **If we’re honest, it seems as if it’s possible to love the world and still love God. But in several places, the Bible says it can’t be done. Why is it impossible to love the world and still love God?**
  - Answer: First of all, because the Bible says it can’t be done. Next, God’s holiness does not allow us to love Him and then love the world. Finally, the ways of God and the ways of the world are opposite. God’s Kingdom values seldom match up with the values of the world. We can’t obey God

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and love the world. It's not possible.

- **Let this sink in: If you choose to follow the world, what kind of long-term outcome are you looking at? (Hint: Verse 17 makes this pretty clear.)**
  - Answer: Spiritual and literal death.
- **What does John say the future looks like for someone who has an undivided love of God? In your own words, what does John mean?**
  - Answer: Answers may vary. But the idea is that eternal fellowship with God awaits those who are God's children.

NEXT, when you've finished your discussion, read or have a student read 3 John 11. Work as a group to discuss the following questions (which appear on page 8):

- **Wow! John was pretty much giving us the same message Paul was. (Which is cool considering they probably didn't hang out and weren't comparing notes.) Answer this: In your own words, explain how this verse kind of sums up what we've just been talking about.**
  - Answer: John used different words than Paul did in Ephesians 5:1-2. But the concept is the same. Also, the idea is very similar to John's words from 1 John 2:15-17 that you just looked at: we can either imitate evil or good. If we want to imitate evil, we put ourselves firmly in the same camp as the world. If we're going to imitate good, we're imitating God. Which is cool.
- **What language did John use to deal with the whole idea of choosing to follow God or the world?**
  - Answer: As we just mentioned, evil equals the world and good equals God.
- **Do you always do good? Do you ever do stuff that's wrong? So, what was John saying? Was he saying that if we do wrong, we don't know God?**
  - Answer: The good in us is only possible because God in us compels our righteousness. Those who live a life of evil can't be of God since God is incapable of leading anyone to or forcing anyone to do wrong.

THEN, read or have a student read Romans 12:2. Work as a group to discuss the following questions (which also appear on page 8):

- **This verse does a fantastic job of summing up what we've been talking about. First, define the word "conform." What does it mean?**
  - Answer: To act, behave, or exist according to a set standard or model.
- **OK, let's do another: What is a pattern? And can you think of a few practical examples of how patterns are used?**
  - Answer: A guide, model, or example to be imitated, copied, or adapted.
- **Now, let's put these together: What does it mean to conform to a pattern?**
  - Answer: Conforming to a pattern means becoming like something, or shaping yourself to a standard of sorts. In this case, Paul was talking about conforming to the pattern of the world.
- **Now comes the "aha" moment! How does this idea of "conforming to the world's pattern" fit with what we've just been talking about? Put it into John's terms from 1 John 2:15-17:**
  - CONFORMING TO THE WORLD'S PATTERN = loving the world!

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- Let's wrap this up. When Paul talked about "transforming ourselves," is it safe to say he was talking about choosing to imitate God versus the world? Why is this such a transformation? Which one do

## we naturally choose?

- Answer: Left to our sin nature, we'll always choose the world over God. But when we become a child of God, the Spirit who lives in us leads us to imitate God.

FINALLY, make sure your students have grasped the comparison between the ways of the world and the ways of God. Make sure they understand the contrast. Explain that you're going to close the lesson by looking at exactly how a love for the world can creep into our lives.

## THE LAST WORD

- **Student Book Pages:** This activity will utilize page 9 in the "Uprising" Student Book.

FIRST, explain that in the next session, you're going to focus on what it looks like when we practically pursue God with an undivided heart. But explain that you're going to take a few minutes and look at the exact opposite in this activity. Say something like:

- **Let's think about some examples of what it looks like when teenagers, such as yourselves or your friends, choose to show a love for the world over a love for God. Practically speaking, what are some examples of how show love for the world?**

THEN, instruct your students to look at page 9 in their Student Books. Encourage them to see the sphere there on the page as divided into four separate categories. Encourage students to write the following categories on their page:

- **Media**
- **Relationships**
- **Values**
- **Personal**

Use these categories as guides for some real-life examples of how we can slip into the mode of loving the world. Start with "Media" and go through each category asking the following questions:

- **What are some examples of how we might choose the world when it comes to how we engage with MEDIA?**
  - Answer: Listening to a steady diet of music that flies in the face of God's values; allowing ourselves to be influenced by movies that glorify violence, sex, and/or crude language; engaging in pornography or other sexually explicit movies, videos, or websites; getting wrapped up in TV shows that seek to elevate worldly standards and values, and so on.
- **What are some examples of how we can show a love of the world's values as it pertains to our RELATIONSHIPS?**
  - Answer: Using people for our own gain; engaging in inappropriate sexual behavior with a boyfriend

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or girlfriend; abusing power in a relationship; showing patterns of disrespect for parents or guardians; bringing someone down with gossip; breaking the trust of a friend; failing to honor teachers and coaches no matter how hard that might be, and so on.

- **Let's define VALUES as the things that matter to you. List some examples of how we can choose the world as it pertains to the things that are important to us.**
  - Answer: Loving stuff too much; loving money too much; seeking to meet our own needs at the expense of others; failing to look after the sick, poor, or outcast; assigning value based on physical appearance rather than character, and so on.
- **What about your PERSONAL life? Your thoughts, your goals, your attitude, and so on. What are some examples of how we can allow our personal lives to be patterned after the world and not God?**
  - Answer: Engaging in a pattern of any number of unholy thoughts such as lust, greed, anger, selfishness, and so on; failing to surrender life's direction to God's guidance instead of our own; holding grudges, and so on.

Allow the discussion to go on as long as students are still engaged. Help students understand that this is just an exercise in helping them think about the practical expression of choosing to follow God versus choosing to follow the world. Remind students that there is no other choice! It must be one or the other: God's ways, or the world's ways.

FINALLY, it might be necessary to remind students that the motivation for following God versus the world is not to try to earn God's favor. It's not motivated by legalism. Remind students that Christ earned their righteousness through His work on the cross. The motivation for our choosing to pursue God should be motivated by love for God, thankfulness that we're His children, and a strong awareness of who God is.

Ask students if they have any questions or additional comments. Inform students of the devotions located on pages 35-42 in their Student Books. Provide them with a schedule or some structure as to when you would like for them to work through them. (The first devotion is on page 35.)

If there are no more questions, close in prayer for your group.

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**Undivided: Loving God with All Your Heart**

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There are few things more powerful than witnessing someone throw all of themselves after a cause or a commitment. When we as people get behind something with all our energy and focus, it's remarkable what we can do. The opposite is true as well. So often we see the broken results of someone giving only a portion of their focus and energy to something - a cause, a task, a relationship. Half-hearted commitment is really no commitment at all.

This is especially true when it comes to our faith. The Bible is clear: God expects and deserves our undivided affection and commitment. Anything less falls short of who we are called to be as Christ-followers. Undivided will call you to a faith that is purely focused on following after God. You have to decide if you're ready to accept the call.

## *HAVE YOU PREPARED FOR THE JOURNEY?*

Ask yourself: Is my heart prepared to be challenged? Am I willing to be changed? If you can't answer "yes" to these questions, this journey might not be nearly as spectacular as it could be. If you need to, take a moment and silently talk to God in prayer. Ask God to radically move in your life.

## *YOU'RE HOLDING YOUR MAP*

This book you're holding is the road map for your journey. It will help guide your experiences. Write your name and the date in the front. Hold on to it. You may want to look back and remember this time in your life.

## *LEARN. AND TEACH.*

Keep your eyes and ears open for those valuable moments where God wants to teach you something. But don't miss the chance to teach your friends, and to be taught by them. Your friends are with you in this experience. Be open to what God is doing in and through them, and how He might be using them to speak to you. And vice versa.

# 1 JOHN 2:15

"DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD OR THE THINGS IN THE WORLD. IF ANYONE LOVES THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM."

# LARGE GROUP NOTES

SESSION 1

These two pages are designed for you to take notes on during Large Group Sessions. The stuff you're learning will really build on itself over the next few sessions. So even if you're not much of a note taker, you might want to at least jot down what you think is important.

## *TRY WRITING DOWN:*

- Any specific teaching points
- Verse references for Scripture passages
- Quotes that make you think
- Anything you have a question about

# SMALL GROUP INTRO

SESSION 1

# GETTING STARTED

SESSION 1

Have you ever had to choose between two things and your first plan was to try not to choose at all?

How'd that work out?

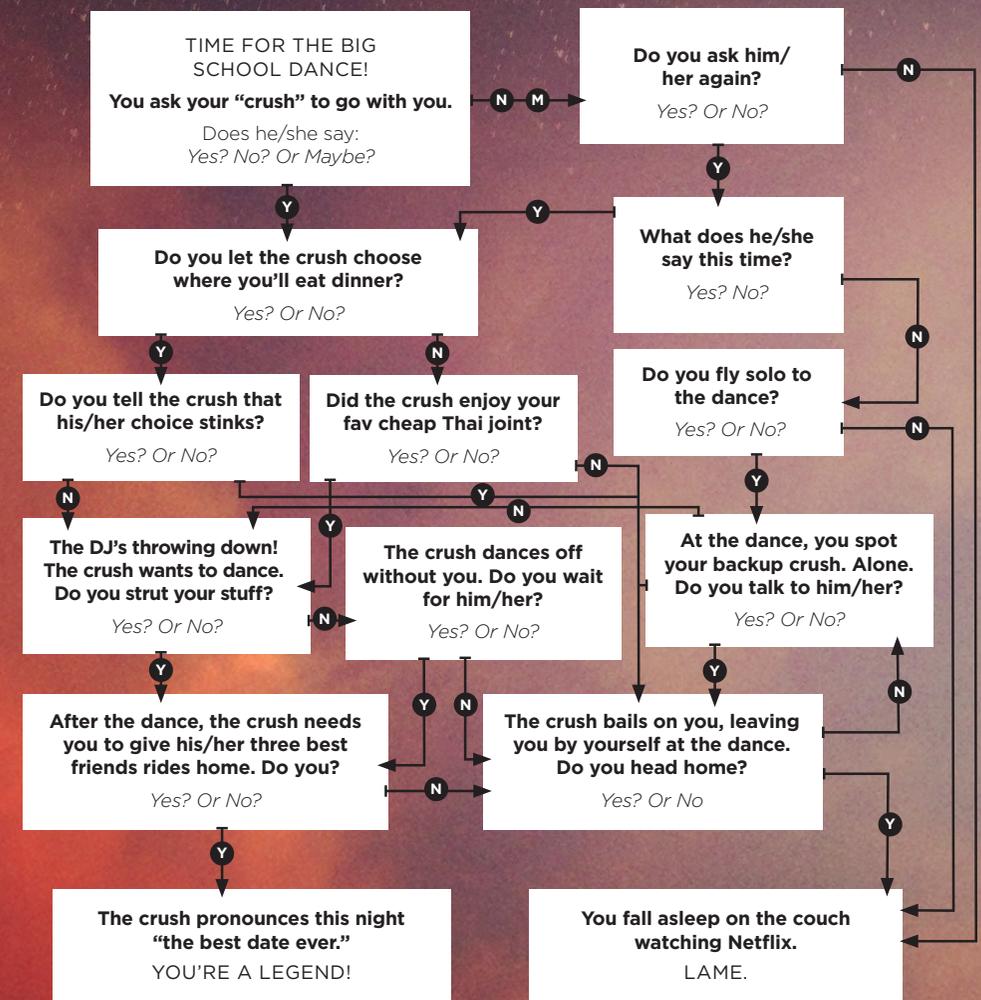
Maybe you tried to work a job AND play a sport. Maybe you tried to like Person A AND Person B. Maybe you tried to commit to one set of plans with friends WHILE ALSO trying to keep plans with another set of friends on the side. Whatever the case, you may have discovered what most people come to realize: often when you divide your attention between two things, both things lose.

Now that's not ALWAYS the case when it comes to our lives. In rare cases, you can make it work, for better or worse. But here's a pro-tip for you: When it comes to your relationship with God, there is never a case where it's OK to divide your affection.

God commands ALL of our devotion. He expects it. And He is uniquely deserving of it.

In this first small group session, you're going to see the Bible's call to pursue God with undivided devotion. Let's get started.

**It's choice-making time! Time to make some tough choices about your school's big dance!** Follow your leader's instructions to see if you have the night of your life . . . or not!



# DIGGING IN

SESSION 1

Work with your group to read the passages and answer the questions below.

## ONE OF THE TRUTHS OF OUR FAITH IS THAT YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN LOVING GOD AND LOVING THE WORLD.

Let's make sure we're on the same page: What do we mean when we talk about God and "the world?"

## TAKE A SECOND AND READ 1 JOHN 2:15-17. THEN WALK THROUGH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WITH YOUR GROUP:

1. We've defined "the world." So, what did John mean when he said don't love the world? (Does it mean you want to ask the world out on a date?)
2. Come up with some practical examples of how people (and, yes, maybe even you) show love for the world. (Look at verse 16 if you need help getting started.)
3. If we're honest, it seems like it's possible to divide our love, to love both the world and still love God. But in several places, the Bible says it can't be done. Why is it impossible to love the world and still love God?
4. Let this sink in: If you choose to follow the world, what kind of long-term outcome are you looking at? (Hint: Verse 17 makes this pretty clear.)
5. What does John say the future looks like for someone with an undivided love for God? In your own words, what does John mean?

## READ 3 JOHN 11. THEN WALK THROUGH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WITH YOUR GROUP:

1. Wow! John was pretty much giving us the same message Paul was. In your own words, explain how this verse kind of sums up what we've just been talking about.
2. What language did John use to deal with the whole idea of choosing to follow God or the world?
3. Do you always do good? Do you ever do stuff that's wrong (or evil)? So, what was John saying? Was he saying that if we do wrong, we don't know God?

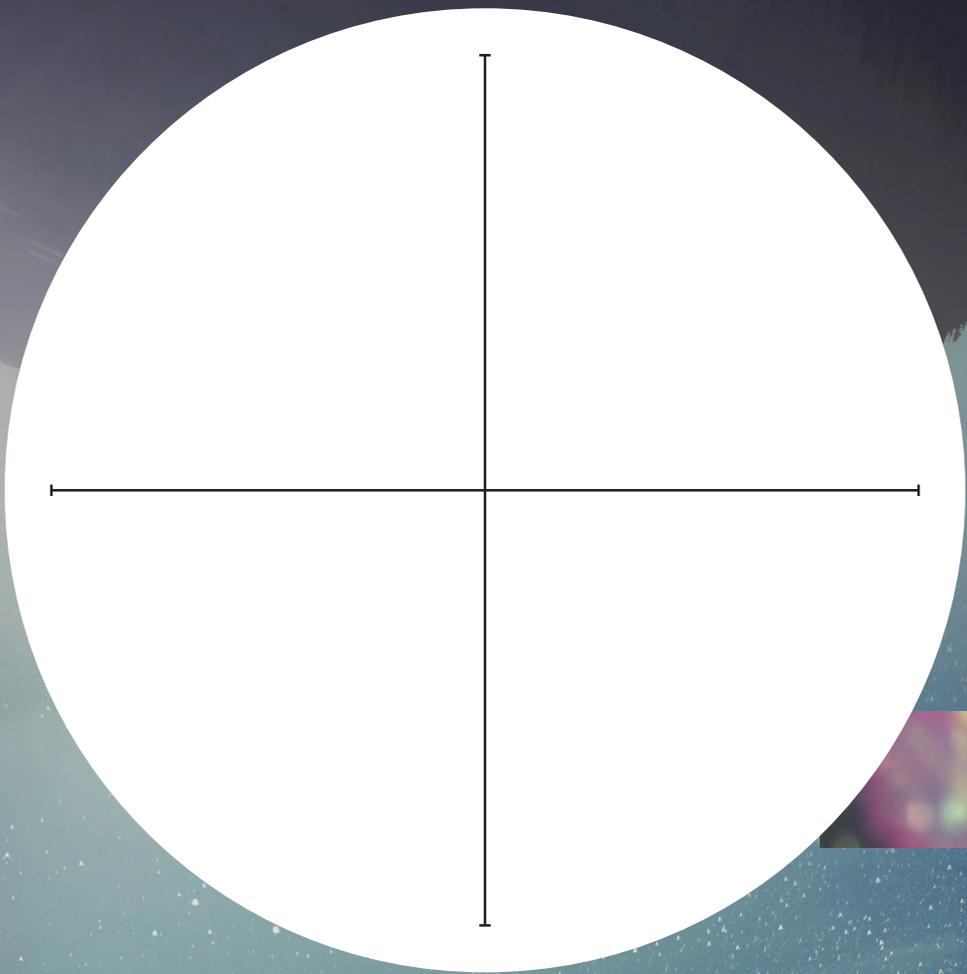
## LET'S LOOK AT ONE MORE VERSE. READ ROMANS 12:2 AND ANSWER THESE LAST QUESTIONS:

1. This verse does an amazing job of summing up what we've been talking about. First, define the word conform. What does it mean?
2. OK, let's do another: What is a pattern? And can you think of a few practical examples of how patterns are used?
3. Now, let's put these together: What does it mean to conform to a pattern?
4. How does this idea of conforming to the world's pattern fit with what we've just been talking about? Put it into John's terms from 1 John 2:15-17:
5. When Paul talked about "transforming ourselves," he was talking about pursuing God with an undivided heart. Why is this such a transformation? Left to ourselves, in what manner will we pursue God?

# WRAPPING UP

SESSION 1

What does it look like when we love the world? Work with your group to brainstorm some practical ways we see our love for the world creep into our lives.



# ROMANS 12:2

“DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND, THAT BY TESTING YOU MAY DISCERN WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD, WHAT IS GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT.”

## ***Undivided: Loving God above All Else***

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“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” - 1 John 2:15

There are few things more powerful than witnessing someone throw all of themselves after a cause or a commitment. When we as people get behind something with all our energy and focus, it’s remarkable what we can do.

The opposite is true as well. So often we see the broken results of someone giving only a portion of their focus and energy to something – a cause, a task, a relationship. Half-hearted commitment is really no commitment at all.

This is especially true when it comes to our faith. The Bible is clear: God expects and deserves our undivided affection and commitment. Anything less falls short of who we are called to be as Christ-followers. You’ve seen the power of an undivided devotion to God. Don’t you want to see this kind of faith in your students?

*Undivided: Loving God above All Else* will boldly challenge your students to pursue Christ with single-minded devotion, discovering that the only love worth giving God is an undivided one.

### **Small Group Outlines**

#### **Session 1: Choosing Sides**

**What We Want Students to Learn:** To help students understand that there can only be one object of their heart’s affection: God, or the world.

**Main Scripture:** 1 John 2:15-17, Romans 12:2, 3 John 11

**Session Snapshot:** One of the great points of tension in our lives as Christ-followers is that we are saved from the world but left to live in it. There’s a good reason for this, of course: we are God’s plan to make His name known in this world. But there is tension because we live as Christians in a world set in contrast to the ways of God. Knowing this, God makes it clear through His Word where our allegiance should lie. We cannot be divided. We must choose God over the world. We must love God over and above anything the world has to offer. This session will introduce this concept to your students and begin to drill down on what this looks like lived out in their lives.

#### **Session 2: How to Pursue God**

**Session Purpose:** To help students discover the key to HOW they live as people who love God and not the world.

**Main Scripture:** Ephesians 5:1-2

**Supplemental Scripture:** Luke 6:36, Romans 15:7, Ephesians 4:32, 1 Peter 1:15, 1 John 3:7, Philippians 2:5-7, Ephesians 4:22-24

**Session Snapshot:** In the first session, you laid the foundation for your study of Undivided by sharing Scriptures call to love God and not the world. What we want to do in this lesson is to help your students understand HOW to do this. It's one thing to help them see the expectation God has on their lives. It's another to show them how to make this happen. This lesson will introduce your students to the concept of "imitation." How do we live out the command to follow God and not the world? We live like Him. We imitate Him and His ways.

### Session 3: To Live Undivided

**Session Purpose:** To help students consider the big-picture view of someone who is undivided in their love of God.

**Main Scripture:** Colossians 3:1-3, Matthew 12:33-35, Galatians 6:7-10

**Session Snapshot:** You have shown students the call to live on undivided faith. You have taught them HOW to do this. In this session, you'll show students what it looks like when someone practically lives an undivided faith out in the world. Students will think about how they live out their faith in terms of a few different categories: their thoughts, their actions, their words, and their hearts. The goal is to help students bridge the gap between concepts they hopefully understand and agree with and the application of these concepts in their lives.

### Session 4: Not Alone

**Session Purpose:** To help encourage and motivate students by reminding them that the Holy Spirit is the source of their strength and power when it comes to living an undivided life.

**Main Scripture:** Galatians 5:16-25

**Supplemental Scripture:** Romans 8:14

**Session Snapshot:** As you wrap up Undivided, Lesson 4 leaves students with a powerful message: they aren't alone, nor do they have to live the undivided life under their own power. The Holy Spirit gives them the power to love and pursue God over all else. By drawing on this strength, and by seeking to follow the Spirit, their lives will be powerful examples of God's character. This lesson will both provide students with some real application points and guide them to a little introspective searching about how well they listen to the Spirit's guidance.