

Thank you for downloading the FREE SAMPLE of Make It Matter, one of the 4-session studies from YM360's Event Re-sources line of Bible study curriculum.

Make It Matter is an amazing resource for your youth ministry events. By leading your students through Make It Matter, you'll not only challenge them to know God on a deeper level, but you'll also equip them to do it long after your event is over.

Before jumping into this sample, make sure you check out all the fantastic features that YM360 Event Resources puts at your fingertips. There is nothing like it anywhere...

What You'll Find In This Sample:

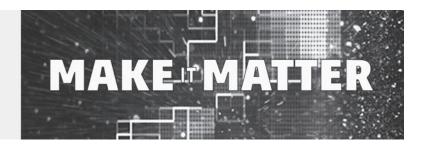
- A Sample of a Small Group Lesson Plan
- A Sample of the Student Book
- The Make It Matter Small Group Overviews

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What we want students to learn: That a life of real impact flows out of God's Word working in and through our lives.

## Scripture:

- Narrative Snapshot: Peter and John before the Council (Acts 4:1–13)
- Supporting Passages: Psalms 1:1–2 and 2 Timothy 3:16–17

**Session Snapshot:** In this session, you'll look at a narrative from Acts where Peter and John make a bold stand for their faith. The religious leaders' reaction to them reminds us of a key truth: when we spend time in relationship with God, we are never the same. We don't have the same luxury as Peter and John. We can't hang out personally with Jesus. But we can be transformed by seeking God through His Word. In order to live a life that matters, God's Word has to work in us and through us. This lesson challenges your students to embrace this truth.

## **BIBLE BACKGROUND**

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

## **TEACHER PREP VIDEO**

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

To access your Make It Matter Lesson 1 Teacher Prep Video, click on the link below:

https://youtu.be/JGLwbIMQGHE

## THE DETAILS Psalms

- Author: God inspired various authors to write a majority of the Psalms, including seventy-three by David, twelve by Asaph, eleven by the Korahites and two by Solomon. Heman, Ethan, and Moses each wrote one, while the authorship of fifty other psalms remains unknown.
- **Time frame:** The Psalms were written during different eras of Israel's history, spanning from 1100 BC (i.e., Psalm 29, 68) to 400 BC (i.e., Psalm 119).
- **Purpose:** The Psalms are inspired by God to poetically reflect humanity's journey with Him. Each psalm serves a different purpose, such as a personal or communal lament, hymn, song, reflection or declaration. Many of these were set to music and intended to be shared publicly, even when sharing a revealing confession (i.e., Psalm 51).

## 2 Timothy

- Author: Though in the last 200 years or so there have been efforts by some scholars to shed doubt on Paul's authorship of both 1 and 2 Timothy, their arguments aren't very compelling.
- Time frame: Most scholars believe Paul wrote these letters to Timothy, his apprentice in ministry, between Paul's first and second imprisonment in Rome, although some scholars believe that Paul penned 2 Timothy while in his final imprisonment before he was executed. By most accounts, this would place the writing of 1 and 2 Timothy sometime around 64–65 AD, though 2 Timothy could be as late as 67 AD.
- Purpose: Paul tells Timothy in the first epistle to continue to combat false teachings. In addition, Paul gives Timothy



specific instructions on how to protect against such teaching, including how to install faithful leadership in the church at Ephesus. 2 Timothy, we see Paul passing along his final words to Timothy. 2 Timothy can be thought of as a personal note from an old man awaiting his death to a young, son-like figure. It's personal, tender at times, encouraging, and practical.

## THE MAIN POINT

The narrative you'll read from Acts makes a profound point. The Sadducees noted that Peter and John were uncommonly bold in their teaching and attitude, especially for men of their background and vocation. The Sadducees credited the boldness of these otherwise humble men as having "been with Jesus." How powerful it is that the difference in Peter and John is the change Jesus made in their lives. Our students are called to be just as bold in their faith and lives. And for them, just as it was with Peter and John, the source of their boldness must be that they have spent time with Jesus.

## THE TAKEAWAY

We can't "be with Jesus" in the same way that the disciples were. But that's why we have God's Word. By being grounded in God's Word, we put ourselves in the position to let the Word of God do the work. The nature of the Word is active. And when it is IN us, it works through us. You'll focus on Psalms 1:1–2 as a picture of what a life grounded in the Word looks like, and 2 Timothy 3:16–17 as a calling to confidently embrace the Word as part of what it means to live a life that matters.

## **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**.

## **GETTING STARTED**

- Student Book Pages
  - o This lesson will utilize pages 8-12 in the Make It Matter Student Book.
  - o This activity will use page 8-9.
- Additional Instructions
  - o None

FIRST, welcome students to their first session. If everyone in the group doesn't already know each other, take a moment to have people introduce themselves. Explain to them that you're going to be hanging out a lot over your time in this study, so you want to do a little more to get to know each other. Have students go around and give their name, their least favorite dessert. When you're done, explain that you're going to use the student book to facilitate these times of Bible study.

THEN, direct their attention to page 9. Explain that you're going to kick off their time by having a little competition. Break students into groups. How you do this will depend on the size of your group. Instruct your groups to choose one person who will be designated as the person who will write their answers. Then, explain the nature of the game.

Explain that you're going to give students a prompt. They will have twenty seconds to come up with as many answers to the prompt as they can. They are to work as a group to brainstorm responses while their "writer" records their an-



swers on the student book page. Repeat this for each of the four prompts. The prompts are listed below:

- First, come up with a list of things that undergo a change.
- Next, come up with a list of things that could be considered "forces of influence."
- Then, come up with a list of situations where people are surprised.
- Finally, come up with a list of things that annoy people.

NEXT, when you are done, go through each prompt and have groups take turns reading out what they believe to be the most creative or unique responses. Allow for some spirited debate on whether the rest of your students believe their answer to be valid and/or creative. If you want, award one of your groups the "winner" based on their responses.

FINALLY, have a student volunteer to read the introduction on page 8. Whey they have finished, say something like:

• We're about to look at a really awesome story from the Bible about two people who lived their life in such a way that it mattered. Greatly. People saw these two guys and were amazed, surprised, influenced, and annoyed! We'll read their story, but more importantly, we'll learn WHY they were in the position to make the impact they made, and how YOU can make the same impact.

If there are no more comments or questions, transition to the **Digging In** section of your lesson.

## DIGGING IN

- Student Book Pages
  - o This activity will utilize pages 10-11 in the Make It Matter Student Book.
- Additional Instructions
  - o You'll want to make sure students have something to write with, and a Bible or Bible app.

FIRST, explain to students that you're going to be doing something a little unique over the course of the next few sessions. Explain that you're going to be looking at a narrative from Scripture, a story, and asking what this story teaches us about living a life that matters.

For this first narrative, have students find Acts 4 in their Bibles or Bible apps. While they are finding it, provide some context for where you're picking up the story. Say something like:

• Where we pick up the story, Jesus has already been crucified, raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven. The Holy Spirit has come at Pentecost, and thousands of people have become Christ-followers. The 11 disciples are in and around Jerusalem leading the new, young Church. They are doing GREAT things. People's needs are being met, both physically and spiritually. The Gospel message is moving powerfully. But as we're about to see, not everyone thinks this is a good thing. We're about to see Peter and John have a pretty crazy interaction with some of the religious leaders. Let's see what happens.

THEN, before you read the narrative, explain to students that they need to listen carefully for any specific details that jump out at them. They'll have a moment to write these down once the story has been read. Read or have a student read Acts 4:1-13. When the narrative has been read, give students about a minute or so to write down any detail or point that really stood out in the space provided on page 10. Once you've allowed them to do so, jump into a brief



discussion of the story. Ask something like:

- OK, what details or important points jumped out at you?
  - o Allow students to share. Engage in discussion as you go, asking students, "Why do you think that is important?" or "Why did that stand out?" or offering your thoughts or observations as you go. (Continue with the rest of the questions below, omitting any that you've already covered based on your students' responses.)
- What was the religious leaders' response to Peter and John? Why?
  - o Answer: They were "greatly annoyed" that Peter and John were "teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead."
- Why did this fact annoy them? Why did they care what Peter and John were preaching?
  - o Answer: Remember, these are the people who had put Jesus to death on the cross. They accused Jesus of lying about who He was and what His mission was. These folks had every reason not to want Peter and John telling the truth about Jesus' identity and His resurrection.
- Describe in your own words the interaction between Peter and John and the religious leaders in verses. What do you think the religious leaders expected from Peter and John?
  - o Answers will vary. While we don't know for sure, it's reasonable to think that maybe they thought Peter and John would be intimidated. After all, it was quite the display of authority.
- How did Peter and John respond?
  - o Answer: BOLDLY! Filled with the Spirit, Peter dropped a truth-bomb on this collection of religious leaders. His response was true, powerful, and bold.
- Verse 13 is the real heart of why we're studying this narrative. What does it say?
  - o Answer: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus."
- Peter was a fisherman before he encountered Jesus. John was almost surely a teenager. And yet, they were proving to live powerful lives of influence, lives that mattered! What was the reason for this? What was the explanation for their boldness?
  - o Answer: They had been with Jesus!

NEXT, take a moment to let this truth sink in. Remind students that the disciples were the most ordinary of people, men who would have not been promising enough as teenagers to continue in religious schools and would have gone and found a trade. Matthew was actually working for the Roman government, the hostile, occupying country, when Jesus called him to be a disciple! Remind students that the disciples were nothing special. Say something like:

• BUT, because of the impact Jesus made on them, and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, their lives were radically changed. They became forces of influence for the Gospel. God transformed the world around them, and history itself, through their lives. We can't be with Jesus the same way the disciples could. But we have something they didn't even have: God's Word. We have all of Scripture, the entire Bible. And when we let God's Word work in our lives, powerful things happen. Let's see where we see this.

Instruct students to look at page 11 to the two passages of Scripture found there. First, have a student read Psalm 1:1–2. When he or she is finished, lead students in the following discussion. Ask:

• The psalmist is talking about living our life in such a way as to either live a blessed life or not. He first lists three things that lead to a life that DOESN'T experience God's blessing. What are those three ways?



- o Answer: "Walking in the counsel of the wicked" or "standing in the way of sinners" (both of these simply mean to live according to the advice of those who don't follow God), and "sit[ting] in the seat of scoffers" (a scoffer was someone who literally does not believe in God, someone who "laughs" at the thought of God and His ways).
- He follows this up in verse 2 with a definition of HOW to live a life blessed by God. What is the key to living a life that experiences the goodness of God?
  - o Answer: We must "delight" in God's Word. We must think about it always.

Explain that we all have a choice. We can allow our lives to be influenced by the things of the world, or the things of God. Say:

When we allow God's Word to impact our lives, it works in our hearts to make us more like God.
And it works through us to impact the world around us. We see the power of just how the Word
works in one more passage. Let's take a quick look.

THEN, have students look at 2 Timothy 3:16–17 printed on page 11. Explain that this is Paul giving advice to Timothy, the young pastor whom Paul had taken under his wing. Read the verses and ask the following questions:

- First, what does Paul say about the Bible in verse 16?
  - o Answer: That all of the Bible is "breathed out" by God. In other words, it's "God inspired."
- What does this mean for how we view the Bible?
  - o Answer: It's authoritative. It's God's Word, not humans. We can 100% trust that it is true, and right, and fully capable to steer our lives by.
- But check out what else it says. What does verse 17 mean?
  - o Answer: That the Bible is the means by which we are prepared to do the work God has for us to do.

FINALLY, put this all together for your students. Say something like:

• What have we seen in this session? We've seen an example of two regular men who lived outsized lives, lives that mattered. And when people looked at their lives, they realized the power behind their lives was time spent with God. We have the same power available to us today. In order to live lives of impact, lives that REALLY matter, we have to maintain a closeness to God. We have to spend time in His presence. How do we do this? By spending time in His Word. The Bible is God's main way of making Himself and His ways known to us. We can't live a life of impact apart from a connection to God's Word.

Ask if anyone has any thoughts or questions, then transition to the **Wrapping Up** portion of your lesson.

## WRAPPING UP

- Student Book Pages
  - o This activity will utilize page 12 in the Make It Matter Student Book.
- Additional Instructions
  - o Make sure students have something to write with.

FIRST, instruct students to turn to page 12 in their books. Explain that for this activity, they are going to spend a moment evaluating where they are when it comes to spending time connected with God through reading the Bible.



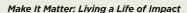
Explain that on this page, there are several questions with scales that enable them to evaluate their habits and attitudes. Give your students a few minutes to answer these questions, then gather for a discussion afterwards.

NEXT, when students have had time to finish the activity, ask the following questions:

- When was the last time you really evaluated your Bible reading habits?
   Answers will vary.
- One thing we risk is that we see our Bible reading as just a box to be checked. Based on what you learned today, what is the REASON for creating consistent habits of meeting God in the Bible?
   Answers will vary.
- What if you were to get serious about improving your time in the Word? What effect do you think it would have on your life?
  - o Answers will vary.
- What is keeping you from committing to grow in this area? What are you waiting on? o Answers will vary.

FINALLY, ask students if they have any questions or additional comments. Inform students of the Encounters devotions located on pages 38-45 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 38.)

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



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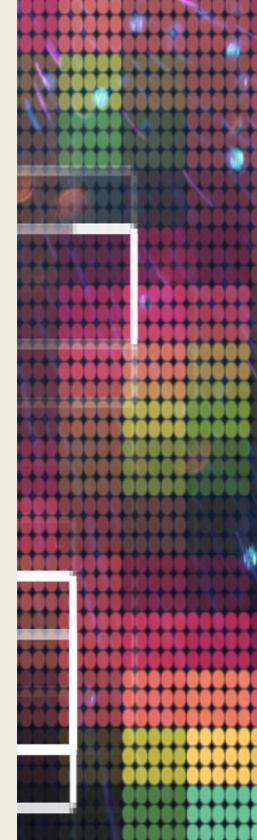
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Everyone wants to change the world. But how do you define real impact?

Do you define impact by the total number of followers or likes? Do you define impact by being invited to the right places with the right people? Or maybe you define impact by achievements, where your contribution to the world is measured in trophies or scores? If so, here's a hard truth: awards and likes can make an impact, but not truly matter.

Real impact happens when God works through us. And when we grasp this truth, the way we see our lives and the world around us changes. *Make It Matter* shows how much difference a life empowered by the Word can make; how Jesus is the power source for a life that matters; how God designed us to impact the world together; and how trusting in God's plan is the key to real impact.

Are you ready to live a life of real impact?

## HAVE YOU PREPARED FOR THE JOURNEY?

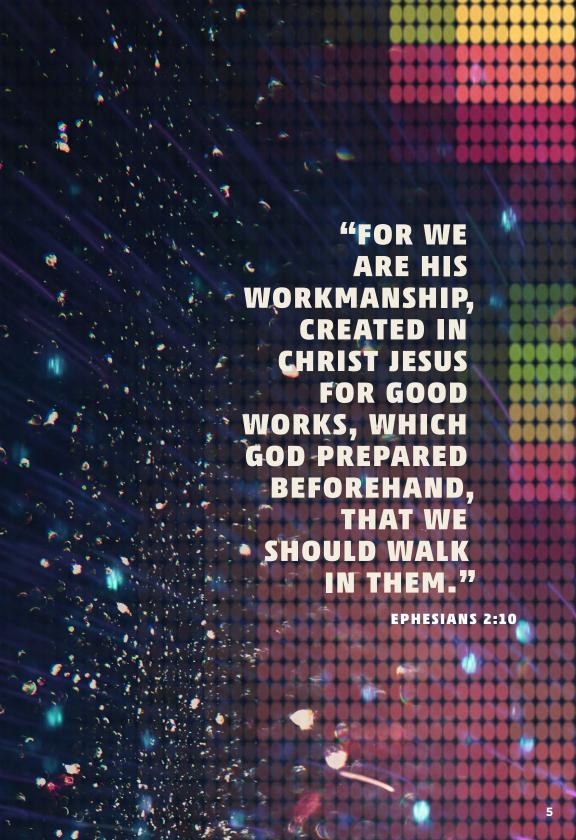
Ask yourself: Is my heart prepared to be challenged? Am I willing to be changed? If you can't answer "yes" to these questions, this journey might not be nearly as spectacular as it could be. If you need to, take a moment and silently talk to God in prayer. Ask God to radically move in your life.

## YOU'RE HOLDING YOUR MAP

This book you're holding is the roadmap 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.



## SESSION 1 GROUP NOTES



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



## **SESSION 1**

# SMALL GROUP INTRO

Who influences you? Who in your life has impacted who you are?

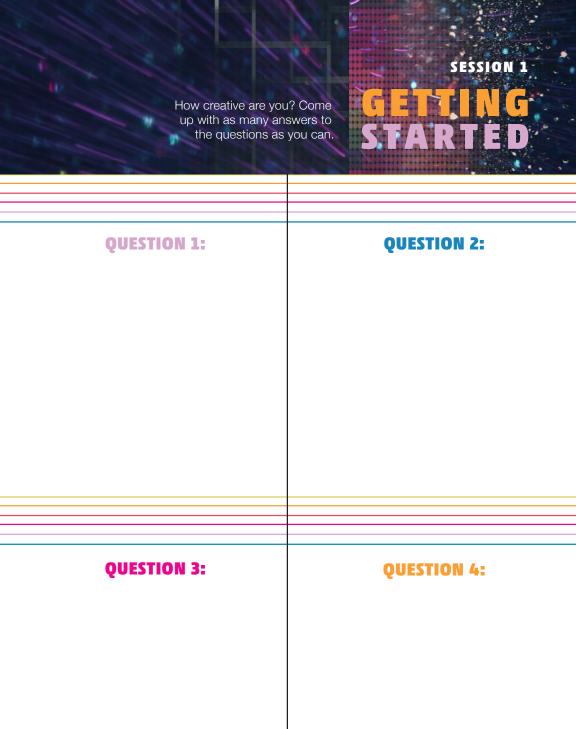
Our parents, grandparents, or guardians often influence us. Their personalities or habits shape our personalities or habits.

Our friends influence us. Without even knowing it sometimes, we talk alike, dress alike, enjoy the same music; the list goes on and on.

In some cases, maybe there's someone who you don't even know who has influenced you. Maybe something an author or preacher or some other significant person said or did has impacted your life.

The truth is that you are shaped by many outside forces. Some positively, some negatively.

What influences you? And how is your life changed as a result? You're about to find out.



## SESSION 1

Read Acts 4:1-13 and write down what you think is interesting or important about the story.

Read the following verses and discuss them with your group.

"[1] BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO	) WALKS NOT IN THE COUNSEL
OF THE WICKED, NOR STAND	S IN THE WAY OF SINNERS,
NOR SITS IN THE SEAT OF SCO	FFERS: [2] BUT HIS DELIGHT
IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD,	·
MEDITATES DAY AND NIGHT	

1. The psalmist is talking about living our lives in such a way as to either live a blessed life or not. He first lists three things that lead to a life that DOESN'T experience God's blessing. What are those three ways?

2. He follows this up in verse 2 with a definition of HOW to live a life blessed by God. What is the key to living a life that experiences the goodness of God?

"[16] ALL SCRIPTURE IS BREATHED OUT BY GOD AND PROFITABLE FOR TEACHING, FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, AND FOR TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, [17] THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE COMPLETE, EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK."

- 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

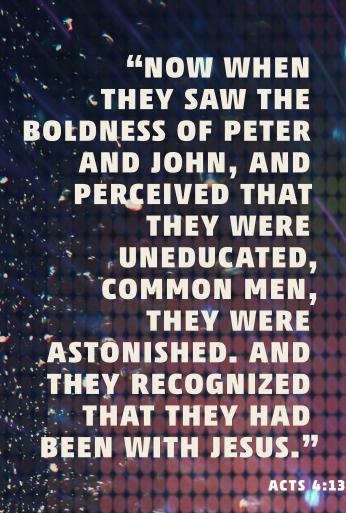
- 1. First, what does Paul say about the Bible in verse 16?
- 2. What does this mean for how we view the Bible?
- 3. But check out what else it says. What does verse 17 mean?

## **SESSION 1**

## WRAPPING UP

How are you doing when it comes to spending time in God's Word? Use the questions below to help you evaluate this aspect of your faith.

1. How often each week do y	ou read your Bible?	
NEVER	MOST DAYS	EACH DAY
2. How much influence does the Bible have on your life?		
NOT MUCH	SOME	LOTS
3. Does meeting God in the Bible help you feel more connected to Him?		
NOT REALLY	SOMEWHAT	VERY
4. What is your attitude toward reading the Bible?		
HARD TO GET EXCITED	SOMETIMES ENJOY IT	REALLY LOVE IT
5. Do you find yourself putting what you read in the Bible to use in your life?		
NOT REALLY	SOMETIMES	YES, OFTEN
6. What is the biggest obsta to reading the Bible?	acle standing in the way of you	u being more committed
7. Describe the kind of relationship you want to have with the Bible and how you want your life to be impacted by it?		



## Make It Matter: Living a Life of Impact

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." - Ephesians 2:10

Everyone wants to change the world. But how do you define real impact?

Do you define impact by the total number of followers or likes? Do you define impact by being invited to the right places with the right people? Or maybe you define impact by achievements, where your contribution to the world is measured in trophies or scores. If so, here's a hard truth: trophies and likes can make an impact, but not truly matter.

Real impact happens when God works through us. And when we grasp this truth, the way we see our lives and the world around us changes. *Make It Matter* shows how much difference a life empowered by the Word can make; how Jesus is the power source for a life that matters; how God designed us to impact the world together; and how trusting in God's plan is the key to real impact.

## **Small Group Outlines**

## **Session 1:** The Word of God

- What We Want Students to Learn: That a life of real impact flows out of the Word working in and through our lives.
- Scripture:
  - Narrative Snapshot: Peter and John before the Council (Acts 4:1–13)
  - Supporting Passages: Psalm 1:1–2 and 2 Timothy 3:16–17
- Session Snapshot: In this session, you'll look at a narrative from Acts where Peter and John make a bold stand for their faith. The religious leaders' reaction to them reminds us of a key truth: when we spend time in relationship with God, we are never the same. We don't have the same luxury as Peter and John. We can't hang out personally with Jesus. But we can be transformed by seeking God through His Word. In order to live a life that matters, God's Word has to work in us and through us. This lesson challenges your students to embrace this truth.

## **Session 2:** The Work of God

- What We Want Students to Learn: That a life of real impact is only possible because of the work Jesus did.
- Scripture:
  - Narrative Snapshot: Paul recounting his transformation story (1 Corinthians 15:3–11)
  - Supporting Passages: Romans 10:9–13 and Ephesians 2:8–10
- Session Snapshot: Paul made an impact before Jesus. A big one. But it was the wrong kind of impact. It wasn't REAL impact. But when he was saved by faith in Christ, his impact was set on the right course. His life mattered, all because of the work Jesus did in and through Paul's life. We will look at Paul's writings as a guy who was radically transformed by the work of salvation in his life. Then we'll focus on Romans 10:9-13 as we discover the means of salvation, and Ephesians 2:8-10 as proof that Jesus' work empowers REAL impact.

- What We Want Students to Learn: That a life of real impact is empowered by a Gospel-centered friendship.
- Scripture:
  - Narrative Snapshot: Paul mentioning his "friends in ministry" (Romans 16)
  - Supporting Passages: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and John 15:12-14
- Session Snapshot: Romans 16 may at first seem like an unlikely passage to do a Bible study on. But it's actually a super cool case study in what it looks like to live a life of meaning alongside others. Paul reminds us of a truth that is easy to miss: God created us to be in community with each other. Friendships are an invaluable blessing given by God to help us on our way. This session will help your students see this and challenge them to commit to seeing friendships as part of their life of impact.

## Session 4: The Will of God

- What We Want Students to Learn: That a life of real impact is found through living out God's will for us.
- Scripture:
  - o Narrative Snapshot: Abraham and God's call in Gen. 12
  - Supporting Passages: Romans 12:1–2 and Proverbs 3:5-6
- Session Snapshot: When we understand that God is working around and in us, we gain insight into what God's will for our lives is. We will look at Abraham and God's unique calling to go. Abraham isn't given a where, but he simply goes. Abraham's trust allowed him to be a part of something so amazing. Our trust empowers God's plan for our life. There is a world we are called to move towards beyond this experience, and we will use our lives to make it matter!

## **Large Group Outlines**

## Session 1

- **Scripture Passages:** Joshua 1:1-9
- **Session Snapshot:** Joshua was charged to lead following in the footsteps of one of the greatest leaders to walk the earth. It can often be intimidating to accept the call given to all of us, which is to live a life that matters. In session one, we'll open up God's word to understand the source of our bravery and strength comes from God's word.

## Session 2

- Scripture Passages: Luke 16:19-31
- **Session Snapshot:** There are a few ways the world defines success. When we picture the Kingdom of God we can often picture people rejecting worldly possessions and things. We're going to look at a story of a man who chased the world's impact, while forgetting about God. This is not meant to scare students, but rather show the importance of what truly matters in life. Where do we place our goals and ambitions?

## Session 3

- Scripture Passages: Philippians 2:1-11
- **Session Snapshot:** What does a Christian relationship look like? This doesn't just pertain to romantic relationships, but how does Christ affect out connection with others? This session will discuss the impact of the Gospel pulling us away from selfish tendencies which destroy Christian community.

## Session 4

- Scripture Passages: Acts 7:48-Acts 8:8
- **Session Snapshot:** Jesus gave a command to go therefore and make disciples of all nations, but this task is easier said than done. This final session will give students the challenge and call to go forth and do the work of reaching others with the Gospel. We'll discuss the empowerment that comes from God when He chooses to use us for this kingdom work. God doesn't have to use us, but He chooses to which is a powerful banner to carry forward.