

RELENTLESS

pursuing Christ at all costs

Thank you for downloading the FREE SAMPLE of *RELENTLESS*, one of the 4-session studies, from **ym360's Event Resources** line of Bible study curriculum.

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

Before jumping into this sample, make sure you check out all the amazing features that **ym360 Event Resources** puts at your fingertips. There really is nothing else like it anywhere . . .

What You'll Find In This Sample

- A Sample of a Small Group Lesson Plan
- A Sample of the Student Book
- A short version of *RELENTLESS* Overviews showing the biblical passages covered throughout *RELENTLESS*

Of course each of these components, and dozens more, are available to your teachers through their Online Lesson Manager. But this PDF will simply give you an idea of the main content of *RELENTLESS*.

- If you have questions email us at customer care@youthministry360.com
- Or, give us a call at 1.888.969.6360

Did you know that *RELENTLESS* Small Group Content is just one of the many components you have access to with the purchase of a study from **ym360's Event Resources**?

ym360 Event Resources gives you the resources you need to create transformational youth ministry events. Look at these incredible features included with your purchase:

- Large Group Speaker Outlines
- Large Group Videos
- Large Group Motion Background/Loop
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- Promotional Tools: Web Banner/Poster Files
- Promotional Tools: Promotional Video
- Parent Resources

Throw in built-in Tools and Training for you and ALL your leaders, a streamlined Teacher Management tool, and of course your Small Group Lesson Plans and you begin to see how **ym360 Event Resources** really can help make your youth ministry event exceptional.

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SESSION 1: PRAISING GOD

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: That praising God is the only right response to the salvation He offers us, especially in times of trials or persecution.

MAIN SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 1:3-9

SESSION SNAPSHOT: 1 Peter 1:3-9 is a collection of verses chocked full of theological truth! It's a powerhouse of a passage, one from which you can draw a ton of different teachings. But one thing is unmistakable: Peter's tone. This passage is an exuberant message of praise in response to what God has done for us through Christ. Through studying this passage, your students will see that praising God, even in the midst of tough times, is the only right response once we truly comprehend the salvation He has purchased for us.

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 *RELENTLESS* lesson 1 Teacher Prep Video, login to your account, navigate to your Small Group lesson 1, and click on the "Background" tab in your Lesson Manager. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video at the top of the Lesson Manager window.

THE DETAILS

Who wrote this book?

1 Peter was written by Peter, one of Jesus' most trusted disciples and one of the key leaders of the growing movement of Christ-followers. Peter was one of Jesus' "inner three," along with James and John. This was the group within the disciples who saw Jesus pour specific attention into their lives. Peter was present, or at the center, of several key moments in the narratives of the Gospels and of Acts.

When was it written?

The ESV Study Bible notes that Peter's first letter should probably be dated during the reign of Nero (a.d. 54-68), in part because Peter references Babylon in 1 Peter 5:13, which is almost certainly a reference to Rome. Those who hold to this particular date believe Peter wrote the letter from Rome, sometime in 62-63 AD.

What was its purpose?

1 Peter was written to a people under persecution, likely under the reign of Nero. Peter calls the Church to persevere under trials because eternal life awaits them. He encourages them that God's promises to His people will endure and should be the basis of their hope.

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THE MAIN POINT

The main point you want to drive home from this passage is the celebration and joy Peter demonstrated at the thought of the salvation God makes available to us. Peter's jubilation can be felt from the first words of verse 3. Peter even tells us that hard times can't dull our spirits. On the contrary, trials because of our faith actually make our faith stronger. This lesson is foundational, in a way, and sets up the next three sessions well.

THE TAKEAWAY

The takeaway in this lesson is two-fold. First, you want your students to begin thinking about how they respond to the salvation God offers them through faith in Christ. So often, it's not something they, or we, are daily thankful for. But Peter's example pushes us beyond this. Second, they need to begin to think about the idea of persecution, and the way persecution influences the nature of their faith. The lesson will equip you to do this effectively. But, again, it's a subject you'll only expand upon more over the next three sessions.

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

-This lesson will utilize pages 5-9 in the RELENTLESS Student Book.

-This activity will use pages 5 and 6.

+To access the leader's version of the Student Book, see the download section of your RELENTLESS lesson 1 webpage.

• Additional Instructions

-As this is the first Small Group session of your event, you will want to make sure you communicate any specific instructions, announcements, or details to your students.

+If you're staying in a host-home, make sure your students know the "house rules."

-Make sure students have Student Books, a Bible, and something to write with.

+You may want to make sure you have a couple of extra Bibles in case a student forgets his or hers.

FIRST, read or have a student read the Session 1 Small Group intro on page 5. Ask if students have any questions, then transition to the opening activity.

Explain that you're going to introduce the concept of responses, specifically, the idea of a correct, or RIGHT, response. Explain that you are going to read five different scenarios. For each scenario, students are going

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SESSION 1: PRAISING GOD

to write down what they believe is the right response. Explain that you will award a winner for each response based on criteria you determine. (For instance, feel free to have fun with this! Maybe you award a winner based on creativity, correctness, entertainment, or overall absurdity. It's up to you!) Once you've explained the rules, read the following scenarios and allow students a chance to record their responses.

Scenario 1

You arrive at the movies where you will be meeting your crush. This is your first date. You're pumped. But just as you're walking up to the theatre, you spill your drink all over the front of your pants. What is your response?

Scenario 2

You are in social studies. You are daydreaming. Your teacher calls your name and awakens you out of your daydream. She asks, "What do you think is the main factor behind escalating tensions in the Asian Peninsula"? Everyone turns to look at you. What is your response?

Scenario 3

You and two friends arrive at the pre-party for your school's dance only to find that all three of you are wearing the exact same outfit. Even your hair looks the same. The three of you stare at each other in shock. What is your response?

Scenario 4

You are talking to your mom about how badly your stomach has been bothering you. Must have been the Mexican food you ate for lunch. Just as you're describing in detail how the re-friend beans have "affected" your digestive tract, you realize your cell phone has accidentally dialed the boy/girl you have a crush on. He/she has heard your conversation. What is your response?

Scenario 5

Your boss gives you your paycheck for the week and you realize he's given you double what you've earned. You were thinking about quitting anyway. And he has been a pretty awful boss to work for. What is your response?

After reading each scenario, take turns allowing students to share their responses.

THEN, when you have finished, lead students in a short discussion. Ask:

- **Did any of these have a single right response?**
-Answers will vary. Most didn't, with the exception of the one about the paycheck.
- **Can you think of a response you've had in the recent past that you wished you could take back?**
-Answers will vary.

FINALLY, explain that this session is all about the right response to God. Say something like:

- **When it comes to living out a relentless faith, one that comes before anything else in your life, how we respond to God is pretty important. In this session, we'll look specifically at what our response is to the salvation God offers us. And how our response doesn't change even in tough times.**

Ask if anyone has any thoughts or questions, then transition to Digging In.

DIGGING IN

- **Student Book Pages**

-This activity will utilize pages 7 and 8 in the RELENTLESS Student Book.

- **Additional Instructions**

-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 focusing on Peter in your small group time together. You'll be looking at some of Peter's writings and a few examples from his life. Peter lived a relentless faith. He's a perfect example of someone who put his faith first, no matter the cost.

If you'd like, remind students who Peter was using some of the bullet points below:

- **Peter and his brother Andrew were fishermen, and were the first disciples called by Jesus.**
- **Peter, James, and John made up the "inner three," Jesus' closest disciples among the 12.**
- **Peter was always listed first among the disciples. He was their unofficial leader.**
- **Peter preached the first post-resurrection sermon we see in the Bible at Pentecost.**
- **He was arrested and imprisoned for his faith over the years, but his faith never wavered.**
- **Peter wrote 1 and 2 Peter.**
- **Church history has Peter dying a martyr in Rome, under Nero.**

THEN, direct students' attention to page 7. Have them look up 1 Peter in their Bibles or Bible apps. While they're searching for it, provide some context for the book using the Details section of the Bible Background. When they've found 1 Peter, read or have a student read 1 Peter 1:3-9.

NEXT, lead students through the discussion on page 7 under the "Part 1: Praise For What?" header. If they choose, they can write their answers down as you go. Ask:

- **Look at verse 3. Describe Peter's tone. What hint(s) gives his tone away?**

-Answer: Peter is pumped! He is super-happy. There is an exclamation point to denote that Peter is really excited.

- **Why is Peter excited?**

-Answer: Because God has "caused" us to be "born again into a living hope"

- **What does Peter mean when he says "Born again into a living hope"?**

-Answer: He is talking about salvation! Peter is referring to the new life in Christ Believers have where we have been saved from the punishment of our sins.

- **Peter talks about the way in which this new life is obtained. What does Peter say?**

-Answer: God was merciful on us and provided a way that we might be freed from our sin debt. This way was Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Through faith in Jesus, His life counts as the payment for our sin. Through faith in Christ, we can be forgiven of our sin once and for all, having peace with God and a new mission and purpose on this earth.

- **In verse 4, Peter describes our salvation as an inheritance that God is keeping for us. What words does Peter use to describe this inheritance? How does this make you feel about your relationship with God?**

-Answer: The salvation God offers us won't stop, it can't be ruined, and it will not ever diminish. That should make us pretty excited about our salvation.

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- **Look at the first few words of vs. 6. Peter says in “this” we rejoice. What is the “this”?**

-Answer: Our salvation.

When you’ve finished, summarize what you’ve learned by driving home the point that we should be pumped about our salvation. Make the point that praise is the RIGHT RESPONSE to considering the salvation Jesus offers us.

THEN, get a little real with students. Have them look at the text box at the end of Part 1. In the space provided, have them think about what emotions they think about when they consider the salvation God offers them. Allow them a few minutes to write their thoughts down. Encourage them to be honest. When they’ve finished, explain that many of us either don’t think enough of the salvation Jesus offers, or our response isn’t right. Don’t harp on this too much; you’ll come back to this in the application section of the lesson. Say something like:

- **It’s easy to praise God when things are going well. But what happens when things aren’t going well? Especially when we find ourselves made fun of or otherwise persecuted because of our faith? What is our response then?**

NEXT, direct students’ attention to the section on page 8 under “Part 2: Praise In Spite Of Trials.” Direct their attention back to verses 6-7. Say something like:

- **In the first part of verse 6, Peter says that we rejoice because of our salvation. But then he shifts gears pretty dramatically. What subject does Peter shift to?**

-Answer: The subject of trials. Explain that Peter was talking about the persecution Christians were facing because of their faith in Christ.

Explain that Peter sees trials and persecution as a way of refining our faith. He compares our faith to gold. Explain that in Peter’s day, they would burn gold to purify it. The fire would burn away any impure elements, or material. What was left was pure gold. Our faith is the same way.

THEN, direct students’ attention to the boxes under part 2. Instruct students to think of something fragile and valuable. Have them write or draw this in box one. Next have them think of something that would be really bad to happen to that valuable, like being dropped or smashed, etc. Have them draw or write that in the second box. In the third box, have them draw an “X.” This signifies that the valuable wouldn’t make it out intact if it were dropped, or kicked, or so on.

NEXT, have them look at the second row of boxes. In the first box, have them write the word faith. Explain that this represents our faith in Christ as we try and live out our lives. In the second box, have them write or draw an example of a kind of persecution a 21st century teenager might face for his or her faith. When they’ve had a chance to write this down, allow them a moment to share what they wrote. Then, once everyone has had a chance to share, in the third box, have them draw a smiley face or a check mark. Explain that Peter says trials make our faith grow stronger. Say something like:

- **While we don’t love being persecuted for our faith (who does?), what Peter helps us see is that when we suffer for Jesus’ sake, we should rejoice because it makes our faith stronger.**

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THEN, direct their attention back to verses 8-9. Look at the questions under the “Part 3: Praise Today, Praise Tomorrow” header. Ask:

- **Verse 8 describes the concept of faith pretty well. What does it say?**
 - Answer: Faith is loving and believing in God even though we can't see Him.
- **Peter links faith and joy together once again. What is it about our faith that leads people to be joyful (especially in the face of persecution or tough times)?**
 - Answers will vary. Remind students of the assurance, comfort, and power we get from the Holy Spirit.
- **In verse 9, Peter says that our faith obtains for us an outcome of salvation. This is all about the future. What future hope awaits Christ-followers?**
 - Answers will vary. But help students see that if they have been saved through faith in Christ, a future of much hope awaits them. We will one day be with God, for eternity, far away from the pains of persecution.
- **How does this impact your life today?**
 - Answers will vary.

FINALLY, see if anyone has any questions. Explain that you're going to turn the page for a chance to apply what you've just learned. If there are no more questions, transition into Wrapping Up.

WRAPPING UP

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This activity will utilize page 9 in the *RELENTLESS Student Book*.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - None

FIRST, instruct your students to turn to page 9. Remind them that praise is the right response to the gift of salvation. Explain that you want to give them a chance as you wrap up your session to voice praise to God for His presence in their lives. Say something like:

- **For some of you, this will be completely new. You've never taken a moment to tell God how much you're thankful for His presence in your life. This may very well be a little awkward. But it's an important part of your growth as a Christ-follower. For others, this will be part of a regular habit of thanking God for being a part of your life. Take this time to share your heart with God.**

THEN, instruct them to see the blank space as an opportunity to share, however they see fit, praise and thanks to God. Instruct them to go find a place by themselves. Challenge them to use the blank page to focus on their own personal “right response.” Encourage them to write a letter, or draw a picture, or a poem of praise to God. If it's not going well, if their response isn't what it needs to be, encourage them to talk to God about it. Allow them a few minutes to do this.

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FINALLY, when you've finished, gather them back and encourage their efforts. Explain that this first lesson is an important one in laying the foundation for your discussion over the next few sessions. Make sure there are no additional thoughts or questions. Then close in prayer.

Ask students if they have any questions or additional comments. Inform students of the devotions located on pages 35-42 in their Relentless 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 and works in concert with this lesson.**



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interactive student book

YM360

ED NEWTON

SMALL group *intro*

SESSION 1

What makes you happy? This is a pretty fun question to consider. After all, it's fun to think about things that make us smile. Our friends. Our family. Food. Music. Exercise. Clothes. Nature. The list could go on and on.

Here's another question: When was the last time you got really happy when you thought about God and what He's done for you?

Interesting question, isn't it? Deep down, those of you who have come to a saving relationship with Jesus would most likely say that you are indeed thankful for what God did for you. And when you take time to think about it, you probably get pretty happy about it. But why isn't this an emotion we experience daily? Why aren't we more joyful about what Jesus has done for us? And what about when things get tough? When we experience trials because of our faith? What then?

You're about to read an awesome collection of verses. 1 Peter 1:3-9 is an amazing passage. It's packed full of theological truth. But don't be intimidated! Peter makes his point clear. This passage is a joyful, powerful message of praise in response to what God has done for us through Christ. Through studying this passage, you'll see that praising God, even in the midst of tough times, is the only right response once we truly comprehend the salvation He has purchased for us.

HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

Work with your leader to come up with the right response for each scenario.

getting *started*

SCENARIO 1

SCENARIO 5

SCENARIO 4

SCENARIO 2

SCENARIO 3

SESSION 1

DIGGING IN

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

praise in three parts

PART 1: PRAISE FOR WHAT? (VS. 3-6)

- Look at verse 3. Describe Peter's tone. What hint(s) gives his tone away?
- Why is Peter excited?
- What does Peter mean when he says "Born again into a living hope"?
- Peter talks about the way in which this new life is obtained. What does Peter say?
- In verse 4, Peter describes our salvation as an inheritance that God is keeping for us. What words does Peter use to describe this inheritance? How does this make you feel about your relationship with God?
- Look at the first few words of vs. 6. Peter says in "this" we rejoice. What is the "this"?

WHEN YOU THINK OF THE SALVATION GOD OFFERS YOU, WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE?

PART 2: PRAISE IN SPIE OF TRIALS (VS. 6-7)

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	+		=	

PART 3: PRAISE TODAY, PRAISE TOMORROW (VS. 8-9)

- Verse 8 describes the concept of faith pretty well. What does it say?
- Peter links faith and joy together once again. What is it about our faith that leads people to be joyful (especially in the face of persecution or tough times)?
- In verse 9, Peter says that our faith obtains for us an outcome of salvation. This is all about the future. What future hope awaits Christ-followers?
- How does this impact your life today?

SESSION 1

UP

wrapping

Follow your leader's instructions to have a time of praise, thanking God for the salvation He has made possible for us.

"For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen & heard" - Acts 4:20

Relentless is centered around one idea: If you were put into a situation where you had to choose Christ, but by doing so you would lose everything, including maybe even your life, would you still do it? Are you willing to pursue Jesus in a way where nothing else comes first?

It won't be easy. But here's a secret: few things truly worth having are. Your relationship with Christ is no different.

Relentless: Pursuing Christ at All Cost, will help you understand the four main concepts that define a relentless faith: praise, personal evangelism, prayer, and persecution. You'll see how viewing your faith through these concepts will change your life, and change the world.

The *Relentless* Student Book Features:

- 45 creatively designed pages
- Notes for your Large Group Sessions
- Interactive Small Group Bible studies
- Devotions for during and after your event

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RELENTLESS: Pursuing Christ At All Costs

Too often, we communicate a version of Christianity without trials, persecution, or problems. Teenagers are told that following Christ is the most important decision in their lives. And in faith, they trust Christ. Instead of being told “all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12), many assume that everything in their world will be fixed. Except that doesn’t happen. And so many of our students question the love of Jesus and His plan for their lives. Why? Because what loving God would allow His children to face trials and persecution?

Does this cycle sound familiar? If so, it’s because it plays out in the lives of teenagers every day. The challenge, therefore, is to redefine the cost of following Christ in a world that is opposed to Him and His followers.

God’s love for His people can’t be viewed through what happens to us, but instead of what happened to Him. The measurement of God’s love for us starts on the cross, not in the trying circumstances we find ourselves in.

Relentless uses four key phrases to help your students boldly face the world: Praise, Personal-Evangelism, Prayer, and Persecution.

Teach *Relentless* to help your students grasp what it means to have a faith firmly rooted in the reality that Christ is better than what this world has to offer.

Small Group Outlines

The small group times in *Relentless* work in perfect concert with the Large Group outlines. The Small Group sessions look at four snap-shots from the life or writings of Peter. Each Small Group session builds on the corresponding theme of the Large Group Outline.

Session 1: Praising God

- **What We Want Students to Learn:** That no matter what today holds, students would know that Jesus holds tomorrow. Because of this, He is uniquely worthy of praise.
- **Main Scripture:** 1 Peter 1:3-9
- **Session Snapshot:** 1 Peter 1:3-9 is a collection of verses chocked full of theological truth! It’s a powerhouse of a passage, one from which you can draw a ton of different teachings. But one thing is unmistakable: Peter’s tone. This passage is an exuberant message of praise in response to what God has done for us through Christ. Through studying this passage, your students will see that praising God, even in the midst of tough times, is the only right response once we truly comprehend the salvation He has purchased for us.

Session 2: Personal Evangelism

- **What We Want Students to Learn:** That they would passionately embrace the call to share with others the message of Jesus’ redemptive, saving work.
- **Main Scripture:** Acts 2:22-41
- **Session Snapshot:** Peter’s message at Pentecost has been called the first Christian sermon. Whether or not this is entirely accurate, the truth remains: Peter’s evangelical presentation at Pentecost put the world on notice. This movement, these Christ-followers, weren’t going away. Peter’s sharing of the

Gospel message resulted in thousands coming to faith in Christ. Your students can learn from Peter's example. This lesson will challenge them to embrace Peter's passion for sharing the Gospel, leading others to Christ as a result.

Session 3: Bold In Prayer

- **What We Want Students to Learn:** That prayer is more than a "wish list" for wants, but instead is a "want list" of God's will for our lives.
- **Main Scripture:** Acts 4:23-31
- **Session Snapshot:** In the face of persecution, Peter, John, and their community of Christian friends prayed bold prayers. They didn't shrink away from the people who were persecuting them. They didn't talk about how unfair it was, or proclaim their innocence. They rejoiced in prayer, asking God to give them continued boldness in the face of those who were opposed to God and His ways. They prayed that God's plan would be accomplished in their city, and that they would be a part of it. And God honored their prayers! This lesson will help remind your students that prayer is the key to staying motivated to be on mission with God, especially in the midst of persecution.

Session 4: Braving Persecution

- **What We Want Students to Learn:** That students would see persecution not as something to complain about, but would instead see it as a compliment that they are living a godly life.
- **Main Scripture:** 1 Peter 4:12-19
- **Session Snapshot:** There is a tendency to recoil from persecution. When we face any kind of ridicule because of our faith, we can want to shrink and withdraw. This is human nature. But it doesn't make it the right response. In this passage, Peter writes that our response should be the exact opposite. We should rejoice when we're persecuted. Why? Because when we experience persecution for our faith, we identify with Jesus. We experience what He experienced. Peter calls this a blessing, and urges us to glorify God as a result. This lesson will help challenge your students to embrace a bold, and joyous attitude in the face of persecution.

Large Group Outlines

Large Group, Session 1: PRAISE: More Than A Song

- Main Scripture: Acts 16:16-34

Large Group, Session 2: PERSONAL EVANGELISM: Give A Defense

- Main Scripture: 1 Peter 3:15

Large Group, Session 3: PRAYER: More Than A Wish List

- Main Scripture: Matthew 6:5-15

Large Group, Session 4: PERSECUTION: Their Criticism, Your Compliment

- Main Scripture: Acts 4:12-20