

NEXT

⟨ GROWING A FAITH THAT LASTS ⟩

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

NEXT is an amazing resource for your youth ministry events. By leading your students through *NEXT*, 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 *NEXT* Overviews showing the biblical passages covered throughout *NEXT*

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 *NEXT*.

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

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Did you know that *NEXT* 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**?

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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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⟨ GROWING A FAITH THAT LASTS ⟩

Session 1 Owning a Next-Level Faith

What we want students to learn: That God calls them to a faith that is always growing and to accept the challenge to take greater ownership of their faith.

Main Scripture: Hebrews 5:11-14

Supporting Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-3

Session Snapshot: God's plan has always been that our faith would grow. Over and over throughout Scripture, there is the expectation that we would come to know God (salvation) and then would continue to know Him and His ways more and more. And yet, too often, so many Christ-followers don't seem to take spiritual growth seriously. This is especially true for some of our students. This first session helps make the case for WHY it's important that students grow in their faith. You'll help students catch the vision for taking their faith to the next level through greater faith ownership. If their faith is going to grow, it's going to be because they take a greater role in doing what it takes to know God more.

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 *NEXT* 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 these books?

Originally, the letter to the Hebrews was entitled "The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews." However, since the Reformation, it has been widely recognized that Paul was probably not the writer. There's simply not enough textual or historical evidence to prove his authorship. Early historians suggested the author is perhaps Barnabas or Apollos, though there is no way to know for sure.

The Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to the church in Corinth.

When were they written?

Hebrews was almost certainly written before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 since the author does not mention or give any hint to this catastrophic happening.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus in the spring, shortly before Pentecost. We are unsure of what year, but it was likely between A.D. 53 and A.D. 55.

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Session 1

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What was the purpose for their writing?

Hebrews was written to address Jewish converts to Christianity and challenge them to hold fast to their newfound faith. Many of them were resorting back to old traditions, and some were even considering merging with certain Jewish sects. Because of increased persecution of Jewish converts to Christianity, many of them were tempted to resort back to old rites and rituals purely to avoid the pain. The challenge from this Hebrew Christian writer to Hebrew converts was to hold fast to their Christian faith and not to slip back to their Hebrew roots.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written to a divided church to call them to become united for the sake of the Gospel. He was calling the church to lay down the things that divided them in order to fully embrace the one thing that is strong enough to unite them: Christ crucified!

The Main Point

The heart of this passage, and the main point you'll be making with your students, is found in v. 12: "In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!" The author of Hebrews is frustrated because he wants to teach the Hebrews some relatively deeper truths of the faith, but he can't. Why? They aren't ready. And why aren't they ready? Because they have become lazy in their faith. They should have matured to the point of being able to learn more complex truths about their faith. But they haven't. You'll use this point to help your students see that they too are expected to grow in their faith. It's not enough to simply come to Christ in faith but then stop seeking to know Him. God expects us to take our faith to the next level.

The Takeaway

The takeaway is simple. You're going to challenge your students to accept the fact that they are called not to be complacent in their faith, but to grow in their knowledge of God. You're going to help them see that pursuing a next-level faith is what is expected of them. This will lay the foundation for 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 *NEXT* 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 *NEXT* lesson 1 webpage.

Additional Instructions

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

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Session 1

Owning a Next-Level Faith

Getting Started (continued)

- 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 introduction on page 5. Ask if students have any questions, then transition to the opening activity.

NEXT, direct students' attention to the activity on page 6. Have a student read the instructions. The idea is to brainstorm what the "next level" is for each instance. (For example, for a high school football player the next level would be junior college or a four-year school. The next level after college might be semi-pro or the NFL, etc.) Proceed with the activity, coming up with the "next level" for each of the scenarios.

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

- **What would we say about an athlete, say a baseball player, who played his entire life but never learned to catch a ball?**
 - Answer: We'd say that they weren't reaching their full potential, or that their growth was otherwise stunted somehow.
- **What would we say about a cheerleader who practiced every day but couldn't do a toe touch?**
 - Answer: Similar to above, we would say that they were not very proficient at their sport.
- **Why would we say that these individuals are not proficient at their respective sports?**
 - Answer: There is an expectation of growth. If you are going to be considered proficient at something, there is the idea that you take it to the next level.

FINALLY, explain that there is the same expectation with our faith. Say something like:

- **NEXT is all about what it looks like to move to the next level of your relationship with Christ. You're going to see that God desires for you to never stay in the same place when it comes to your knowledge, love for, and service of Him. He wants you to always be growing and always be serving more. This study is all about what this looks like.**

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 NEXT Student Book.
- **Additional Instructions:** None

FIRST, explain to students that you're going to examine three places in Scripture that speak to this idea of the expectation of spiritual growth. Direct students' attention to page 7. Read or have a student read Hebrews 5:11-14 aloud, either from their Student Book or from their Bible or Bible app.

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(GROWING A FAITH THAT LASTS)

Session 1

Owning a Next-Level Faith

THEN, lead students through the discussion on page 7. If they choose, they can write their answers down as you go. Ask:

- **Can you pick up any clues in the text about the mood of the author? How would you describe the author's mood as he addresses his audience?**
 - o Answers will vary. Help students see that there does indeed seem to be a little frustration in the author's voice.
- **Why is he so frustrated? What is his biggest issue with his audience?**
 - o Answer: V. 12 shows that he expects his audience to be much more mature in their faith. Instead, they are still spiritually immature.
- **What would you think of a friend of yours who, instead of eating with you at Taco Bell or wing night at your favorite restaurant, brought a baby bottle with him or her when you went out to eat?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **Why do you think some people are guilty of approaching their faith in the same way? In other words, why do you think so many students come to faith in Christ but don't take their faith seriously enough to actually grow in their knowledge and love of God?**
 - o Answers will vary. See how your students answer this. It could reveal a lot about where they are in their faith.

Help students see that the author makes the case that remaining a "spiritual infant" isn't the goal! We are to grow in our faith, just like a baby grows up into a toddler, then an adolescent, and then a teenager.

NEXT, direct students' attention to page 8. Read or have a student read 1 Corinthians 3:1-3. Then, walk through the questions as a group. Ask:

- **This is Paul writing to a different audience and yet his argument is the same as the author of Hebrews. How are they similar?**
 - o Answers may vary. But the point is that the same general issue is being addressed. By their character and faith, the Corinthians were showing they were spiritually immature, even though by this time they should have grown much deeper in their faith.
- **Paul addresses the Corinthians' spiritual immaturity. He says they should be people who live by the Spirit, but instead they are living as worldly people. What do you think it means to live by the Spirit?**
 - o Answers will vary. Help students see that living by the Spirit is simply being so close to God that the Holy Spirit is the "guider" of your life, not you.
- **Why do you think he would describe the spiritually immature Corinthians as worldly?**
 - o Answers: It appears that they had some character issues that would reflect a deeper issue. They seem to have been weak in their faith.

When you've finished, make the point that these are two separate places in Scripture that are making the same point. This should make the point very clear. Say something like:

- **It's not OK for us to stay where we are when it comes to our faith. We have to take our faith to the next level. And we do this by focusing on Christ.**

THEN, read or have a student read the last passage, Hebrews 12:1-3. When you've finished, lead students in a short discussion. Ask:

- **What in your life "entangles" you, keeping you from growing in your faith as you should?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **What insight does Paul share on how we can stay focused on growing our faith? (Hint: There are at least two.)**
 - o Answer: "Fixing our eyes on Jesus" and to "consider Jesus."

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Session 1

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FINALLY, wrap up by driving the point home that growing in our faith requires a focus on Jesus and a willingness to let other things fall by the wayside. Say something like:

- **If we're going to take our faith to the next level, it starts with a single-minded focus on Jesus. We need to let distractions fall by the wayside and focus on who Jesus is, what He did for us, and the life He called us to live. We're going to take a look at how this might look for you in your life.**

If there are no more questions, transition into Wrapping Up.

Wrapping Up

Student Book Pages

- This activity will utilize page 9 in the NEXT Student Book.

Additional Instructions

- None

FIRST, instruct your students to turn to page 9. Explain that any time you go on a trip, the first thing you do is check your supplies. What do you have? What do you need? Remind students that they have the chance to go on a journey of their own. Explain that they have the opportunity to use this event to launch themselves into a deeper, next-level faith. Say:

- **Before we get started, we need to take a look at where we are in our faith. We need to establish a starting point. What do we have? What do we need?**

NEXT, instruct students to find a place where they can spend a few minutes by themselves. Instruct them to look at the three circles on the page.

For the first circle, have them try to put into words how they would describe their past relationship with Christ. Was it better than now? Worse? Did they feel closer? Further away? Have them write their response.

Have them complete the other two circles in a similar manner.

FINALLY, when they have had some time to think about their responses, bring them back together. Ask if anyone would like to share what they put in the last circle. Encourage your students to think about how God wants them to grow deeper in their faith and to commit to following through with taking their faith to the next level.

Ask students if they have any questions or additional comments. Inform students of the devotions located on pages 35-42 in their Next 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.

This Book Belongs To: _____

Date: _____

Published by:
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RO TR T N I

At some point in your life you became a Christ-follower. You heard God's Truth and responded. You knew that you were a sinner and that your sin separated you from God. You learned that Jesus--perfect, holy Jesus--paid the once-and-for-all price for your sins, making peace between God and you. And in faith, you accepted His sacrifice on your behalf, submitting the leadership of your life to Christ, and entering into a relationship with God. At some point this happened to you. And it was amazing.

The problem is that for many of us, our stories don't go much further than this.

The problem is that this isn't how God intended our faith to look. God expects you to grow closer to Him. More than that, God expects you to be the one who cares the most about your spiritual growth. Over the next four sessions, you'll be shown how the Bible talks about a next level kind of faith. But this kind of faith isn't born overnight. It takes intentionality and a willingness to be moved and shaped by God.

Have You Prepared For The Journey?

Ask yourself: Is my heart prepared to hear God's voice? 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 give you a heart that is open to His leading.

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.

Make An Impact, Be Impacted

Keep your eyes and ears open for those valuable moments where God seems to speak to you. But don't miss the chance to impact your friends, and to be impacted 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.

Your journey to a next level faith is just beginning. Be prepared to be changed . . .



**LET
US RUN**
with perseverance

the race marked out for us, **FIXING OUR EYES**

on
Jesus

THE PIONEER & PERFECTER OF FAITH

Hebrews 12:1-2

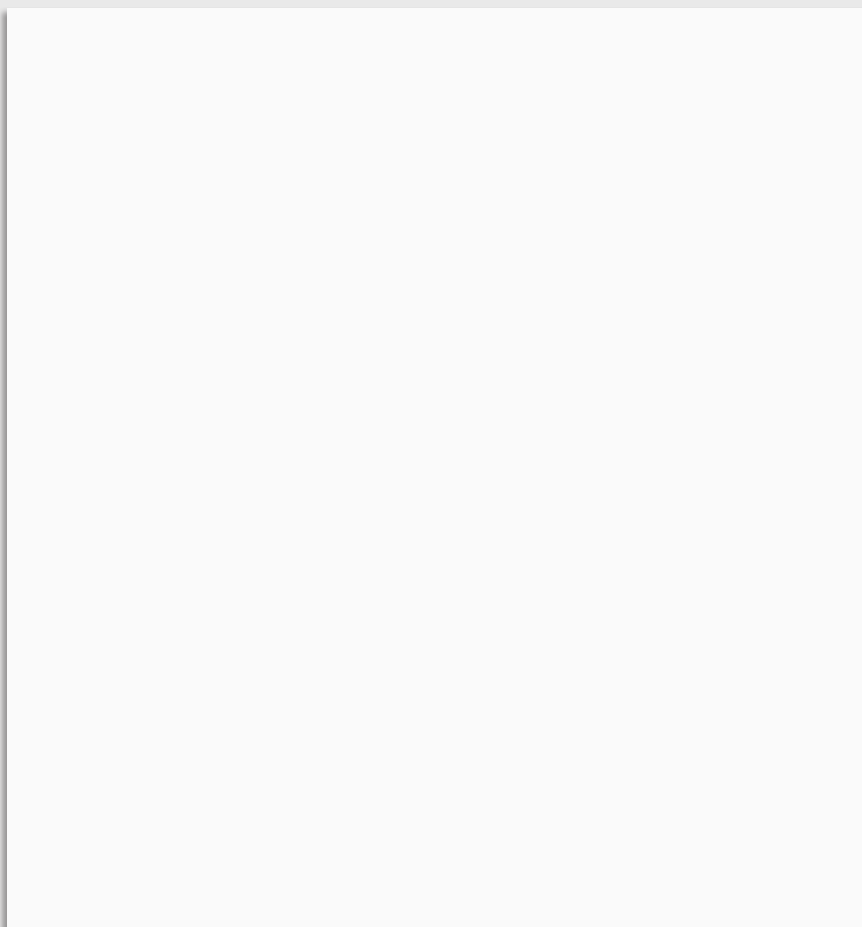
Large Group Notes

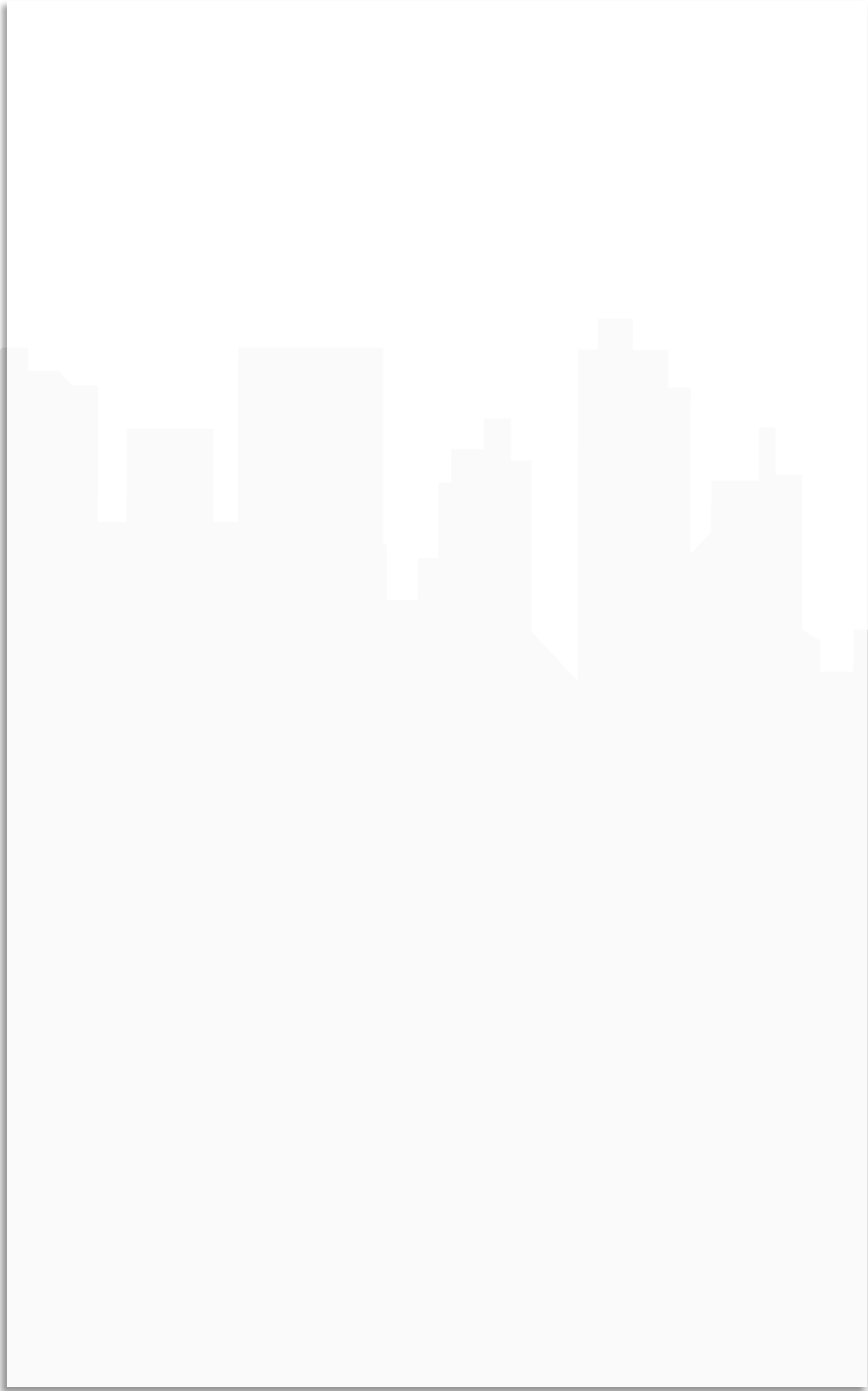
Session 1

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 Session 1 Intro

Think for a moment about the things you care most about.

For some of you this is athletics. For others it's your appearance. And for others, it may even be your grades.

Think about the way you approach the things you care about most. You probably don't have to be told to practice or to try hard in a game. You probably don't have to be reminded to do your hair or makeup. Most likely, no one is reminding you to study for the big test.

You take greater ownership in those areas of your life in which you care the most.

What if you were asked the same question about your faith? Who owns your spiritual growth? Who has the most ownership of the process by which you grow closer to Christ? Who is the person most responsible?

For many of you, if you were honest, the answer would be someone else. A parent or guardian. Or a youth worker. Maybe even a grandparent. For many of you, there is someone else in your life that pushes you, encourages you, and may very well (up to this point) care more about your relationship with Christ than you.



Session 1 Getting Started

What's the next level? Answer the following questions as a group discussion.

Over the next few sessions, you'll be talking a lot about taking your faith to the next level. Let's spend a few minutes thinking about what the next level looks like in the real world.

For each of the scenarios listed below, discuss with your group what it would mean to go to the next level. (See how many "next levels" you can come up with for each.)

Scenario 1: The Athlete

You're a high school athlete in your chosen sport. What is the next level for you? What would it mean to continue to play after college?

Scenario 2: The Actor

Let's say you like making movies with your friends. Or maybe your school has a drama club and you perform in plays. What is the next level for you? What would it mean to continue to excel as an actor?

Scenario 3: The Designer

You love to design. Whether it's doodling, goofing around in Photoshop, painting, or creating pictures on your phone, if it's art, you love it. What is the next level for you? How do you continue to pursue your art as you grow up?

Scenario 4: The Entrepreneur

You love to start things. Charities. Organizations. Food drives for the homeless. Businesses selling things you've made. What does the next level look like for you?

Session 1 Digging In

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

Part 1: Read Hebrews 5:11-14

¹¹We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. ¹²In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

¹³Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Can you pick up any clues in the text about the mood of the author? How would you describe the author's mood as he addresses his audience?

Why was he so frustrated? What was his biggest issue with his audience?

What would you think of a friend of yours who, instead of joining you at Taco Bell or wing night at your favorite restaurant, brought a baby bottle with him or her when you went out to eat?

Why do you think some people are guilty of approaching their faith in the same way? In other words, why do you think so many teenagers come to faith in Christ but don't take their faith seriously enough to actually grow in their knowledge and love of God?

Part 2: Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-3

¹Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?

This is Paul writing to a different audience. And yet his argument is the same as the author of Hebrews. How are they similar?

Paul addresses the Corinthians' spiritual immaturity. He says they should be people who live by the Spirit. But instead they are living as worldly people. What do you think it means to live by the Spirit?

Why do you think he would describe the spiritually immature Corinthians as worldly?

Part 3: Read Hebrews 12:1-3

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

What in your life "entangles" you, keeping you from growing in your faith as you should?

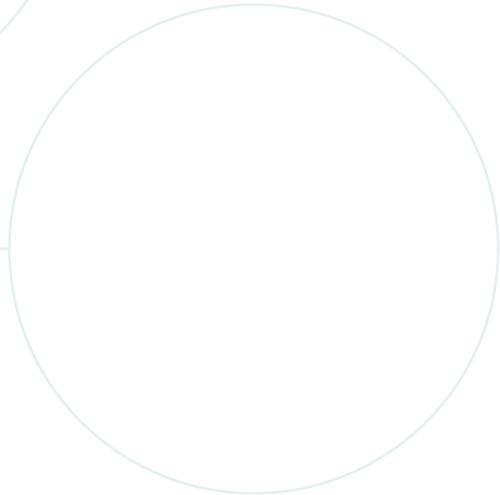
What insights does Paul share on how we can stay focused on growing our faith? (Hint: There are at least two.)

Session 1 Wrapping Up

This is your chance to start something new. Spend some time thinking about where your faith is and where you want it to be.



Where I **Was**
in my Relationship
with **Christ**



Where I **Am**
in my Relationship
with **Christ**



Where I **Could Be**
in my Relationship
with **Christ**

NEXT: Growing A Faith That Lasts

Think of the students in your ministry. At some point in their lives, many, if not most of them, will have become a Christ-follower. At some point, they knew they were sinners separated from God. They learned that Jesus paid the once-and-for-all price for their sins, making peace between God and them. And in faith, they accepted His sacrifice on their behalf. At some point this was experienced by many of your students. And it was amazing.

The problem is that, for many of them, their stories don't go much further than this. But this doesn't have to be the case.

NEXT: Growing A Faith That Lasts, will help teenagers begin to lay the foundation of a faith that will last long into their adult life. By teaching *NEXT*, you'll help students know why it's so important to own their faith. You'll help them think differently about their purpose and influence, as well as equipping them to practice the spiritual habits necessary to grow a meaningful faith.

If you want your students to take greater ownership of their faith, *NEXT* is for you.

Small Group Outlines

Small Group Session 1

- **Session Title:** Owning A Next-Level Faith
- **Session Purpose:** Students will understand that God calls them to a faith that is always growing, and to accept the challenge to take greater ownership of their faith.
- **Main Scripture:** Hebrews 5:11-14
- **Supporting Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, Hebrews 12:1-3
- **Session Snapshot:** God's plan has always been that our faith would grow. Over and over throughout Scripture, there is the expectation that we would come to know God (salvation), and then would continue to know Him and His ways more, and more. And yet, too often, so many Christ-followers don't seem to take spiritual growth seriously. This is especially true for some of our students. This first session helps make the case for WHY it's important that students grow in their faith. You'll help students catch the vision for taking their faith to the next level through greater faith ownership. If their faith is going to grow, it's going to be because they take a greater role in doing what it takes to know God more.

Small Group Session 2

- **Session Title:** Unlocking A Next-Level Faith
- **Session Purpose:** Students will understand that taking their faith to the next level isn't possible without understanding, and embracing, their true purpose.
- **Main Scripture:** Romans 5:8-11, Romans 10:14-15
- **Supporting Scripture:**
- **Session Snapshot:** Part of your students taking their faith to the next level is an understanding of their purpose. Simply put, they can't embrace a new direction without knowing where they are heading. This lesson does a great job of defining their purpose by first grounding it in the Gospel. Essentially, this lesson teaches students that they were saved from their sins – reconciled to God – and have been called to be messengers to the world of this same reconciliation. God's plan calls for them to be messengers, in word and action, of God's love for all people. This lesson will help you challenge students to do just that.

Small Group Session 3

- **Session Title:** Building A Next-Level Faith
- **Session Purpose:** Students will understand that growing a next level faith doesn't happen without a firm foundation of solid spiritual habits.
- **Main Scripture:** Psalm 119:9-16, Psalm 5:3, Hebrews 12:28, Ephesians 6:7
- **Supporting Scripture:** Psalm 19:7-8,
- **Session Snapshot:** Your students most likely understand that to take their faith to the next level, they should have healthy spiritual habits. These include, but certainly are not limited to, Bible reading, prayer, worship, and service. What you'll address in this lesson is their attitude toward these habits. Your goal is to help your students understand that spiritual habits are a joy, not a burden. You'll help students consider their attitude toward these practices, and challenge them to take a fresh look at what it means to draw closer to God.

Small Group Session 4

- **Session Title:** Living Out A Next-Level Faith
- **Session Purpose:** Students will understand that owning a next level faith leads to increased influence, which they can use to lead others closer to Christ.
- **Main Scripture:** 1 Timothy 4:11-16
- **Supporting Scripture:** Matthew 5:13-16
- **Session Snapshot:** It's probably likely that many of your teenagers aren't leaders. But all of your students have influence. Some of your students have a ton of influence. Some only have influence over a few people. But every one of your students can use their influence to lead others closer to Christ. This final lesson will challenge your students to understand that leading a next level faith is all about influencing the world around them. It's the outflow of a closer relationship with God. You'll be equipped to challenge your students to see their lives as opportunities to make a real difference for the sake of the Gospel.

Events made easier starts now. Visit youthministry360.com now to get started planning your next Disciple Now Weekend, Winter Retreat, Summer Camp, or Back-to-School Event.



Questions about this amazing new resource (or best tips for using Pinterest) contact Angela:

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