

# Living the Gospel



Collegiate Quarterly

## Teacher's Guide

### Surveying the Source

Isa. 58:1–8; Eph. 2:8–10

### Plotting the Course

#### The students will:

- ▶ Recognize the need to evaluate our Christianity as it relates to ministering to those in need.
- ▶ Understand that the more holy we become, the more benevolent we must be.

▶ Discover the joy and opportunities to minister to the needy and suffering as a university student/young professional.

### Preparing to Lead

“Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ’s life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the

steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great cities, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation” (Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 105).

### Materials

Reproducible Activity, Bibles, flip charts or paper, markers or pens

### Getting Started

**A.** Say: “Have you ever heard of the phrase “you can’t understand unless you experience it for yourself. The experience can be good or bad, but let’s focus on the good for now.”

Discuss some favorite foods that the class cannot adequately describe, but simply recommend that one needs to taste in order to understand. Someone else’s taste buds will not take the place of yours. So it is with service to the needy. We can only taste the joy of service when we are doing it ourselves. Discuss why service is seen as a burden whereas God wants to see it as a personal joy.

**B.** If you have a large class, break into groups of two or three. Otherwise, if the students are comfortable sharing personal experiences, then begin the discussion as a group. Ask the students to share experiences where they have encountered a stranger in need but for some reason, they refused to help him/her. Perhaps it was for fear for their personal safety, of the unknown, or of social pressure. Begin to explore the kind of prejudices or stereotypes that prevent the group from helping someone who may be genuinely in need.

## Delving Into the Word

**A.** If your group is large, conduct this study in small groups while regrouping for summary and sharing of points.

a) Read and compare Isaiah 58:1–5 and Luke 10:30–34. Explore the similarities and differences and the characters in the story. Invite the class to discuss, in groups or as a whole, how people can be perceived as so religious/spiritual/close to God yet neglect to have compassion and help the needy and suffering.

b) After discussing, read Luke 15:1, 2. Discuss how this same group of people viewed Jesus, the son of God, dining and communing with sinners (i.e. the despised of community). Explore the relationship between holiness and benevolence (positive or negative correlations).

c) Lastly, read to see these passages as exhortations to the danger of forgetting benevolence in the search for holiness (Eph. 2:8–10; 1 John 3:14–17).

**B.** If your group is large, conduct this study in small groups while regrouping for summary and sharing of points.

a) Read Matt. 16:24, 25 and ask how these verses apply to class members on a practical basis in day-to-day life. Discuss what it may mean to leave one's comfort/convenient zone for Christ in day-to-day interactions (not just the grand events).

b) Have the class read the directions of the true fast in Isa. 58:6, 7 and take note of the proactive verbs depending on the version such as “share,” “bring,” “loose,” “cover.” In line with the spirit of carrying the cross and walking out of our comfort zone, discuss the need for proactivity to seek out and to minister to those around us in need as opposed to waiting for them come to us at a convenient time.

c) Finally, read Isa. 58:8–11. Discuss with the group if this may sound like a works-based verse. Read Eph. 2:8–10 to understand the relationship between faith, God's power, and good works.

## Discussing the Ideas

1. How does one become more holy yet less benevolent?

2. How do you balance benevolence and not being taken advantage of?

3. To what extent should Christians be involved in social justice?

4. Why would serving the needy and suffering bring one closer to God?

5. The world will be destroyed and Jesus will come soon anyway. Why bother

helping instead of just preaching the gospel?

6. I'm a college/university student (i.e. broke and have a busy school schedule). Where do I start ministering to the needy and suffering?

7. How do I minister to others when I don't have time to take care and minister to myself?

## Closing the Activity

Feel free to share an appeal similar to this: “John A. Shedd said, ‘A ship in harbor is safe—but that is not what ships are built for.’ Similarly, we may find ourselves trying to stay safe in our own Christian harbors with church, cliques, and traditions. We are only truly Chris-

tian when we take up our cross and lay down our conveniences for the benefit of others. We trustingly avail ourselves to God and become available to meet needs around us. Are you willing to lose you life so that you may find it?”

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Discuss the common perception that sometimes, the idea of ministering to the needy and suffering sounds intimidating and distant (e.g. traveling to leper colonies in China or doing a mission trip in a war-torn area). List your spheres of influence below (e.g. family, workmates, etc.).

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How can you take time to regularly and intentionally understand the needs of the people in your sphere of influence, step out of your comfort zone, and find ways to minister to them?

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