



WHEN I GROW UP...

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE WHILE LIVING IN THE PRESENT
BY EMILY NORMAN, DCE

In this four-part Bible study, we will look at five questions you might be asking yourself as you prepare for life after high school. Whether it's leaving home, going to college, starting a new job, or experiencing some other change, these are all major transitions to endure in a short time. How can you be more prepared for the future? What does God have to say about His purposes for your life? There are five major questions to ask yourself. Along with those questions, we will look at a few Biblical characters who faced the same issues you face today regarding identity, vocation, timing, and relationships.

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thESource + October 2008



PART ONE: WHO AM I?

Who are you? Have you ever thought about *whose* are you? Being a child of God is the way we can identify ourselves in a chaotic and confusing world.

Discussion Starters

1. Brainstorm and discuss three words you use to identify yourself. Why did you select these words?
2. Do you think these three words will change in the next few years? Why or why not?
3. Why is your identity important to you?
4. How does it make you feel to be identified as God's child?

Read Psalm 139:1-6

- Have you ever thought about God knowing you so well that He pays attention to when you wake up and go to sleep? How do you feel about that?
- Has anyone ever said to you, "I can read your mind?" How does knowing that God can "read your mind" make you feel?

Read Psalm 139:7-12

- Have you ever tried to hide or run away from yourself or your problems? What are some things you've done to try to get away?
- How can God help you in the midst of trouble?

Read Psalm 139:13-18

- Based on verse 13, what has God created uniquely about you?
- Are you confident in whom God has created you to be? Why or why not?
- Verse 16 says, "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." How does this verse apply to your thoughts about your future?

Read Psalm 139:19-24

- Why do you think God desires to know you more even though He created you?
- Do you desire to know God more? How can we get to know God?
- What does God promise in verse 24? How is that a comfort to you?

Activities

- As a group, rewrite Psalm 139 to reflect your thoughts about life. Split into small groups and have each group rewrite a few verses, or do it as a large group. Be creative! Compose a rap or song and put it to music, create a poem, or write it as a skit and perform it! Make it applicable to you. How can you apply this version to your life? How does it help you with the upcoming changes in your life?
- *(Optional)* Listen to the song "Who am I?" by Casting Crowns. *(Pick up the Casting Crowns self-titled CD or download the song on iTunes.)* Discuss the importance of knowing your identity in Christ.

Verse-to-go *(Take this verse with you for the week to remind you of God's promise to you.)*

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Ephesians 1:4

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for creating me uniquely and loving me for who I am. Help me to be confident in who you created me to be and to remember that Jesus Christ has given me every thing I need in life, including hope for the future. Amen.

PART TWO: WHAT AM I GOING TO DO NOW?

When Solomon became king, he had some big shoes to fill. David was one of the greatest kings in Israel. How could Solomon compare? Could he live up to the expectations of this role? In Second Chronicles, Solomon seeks God's advice from the first moment of his reign and is blessed in his future.

God speaks to everyone differently. He spoke to Solomon directly, He spoke to Moses in the burning bush, and He sent an angel to Mary. Today, the best way to communicate with God is through His Word and by talking to Him in prayer. Listen to what He has to say to you in the Bible and ask for His wisdom when you are wondering what His calling is for you.

Read 1 Chronicles 29:21-25

- Was the acknowledgement of Solomon as king a celebration? How did they celebrate?
- How was Solomon seen by God according to verse 25?
- How do you think Solomon might have felt about the expectations people had for him as king?

Read 2 Chronicles 1:1-6

- What kind of person is Solomon as king, based on these verses? How has Solomon proved himself as king?

Read 2 Chronicles 1:7-10

- If God appeared to you like He did to Solomon, and He told you to ask Him for anything, what would you ask Him for?
- What does Solomon ask for? Have you ever thought to ask God for this?

Read 2 Chronicles 1:11-13

- How does God respond to what Solomon asks for? How is Solomon blessed by God?
- How would your life be different if you had wisdom like Solomon? Do you think you have the courage to ask God for wisdom about your future?
- What example does Solomon set for you? What can you take from this story to help you?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

- Solomon received the gift of wisdom from God, but according to 1 Corinthians, should we all expect to receive this gift specifically? What are some of the other gifts we may receive?
- According to verse 7, who receives gifts from the Spirit?
- What can you determine from the fact that everyone receives different gifts? Should you, therefore, compare yourself to others?

Read Romans 12:6-8

- How can you use the gifts you have received from the Spirit?

Discussion Starters

1. Who said it: "It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live"?
 - a. Solomon
 - b. Dumbledore
 - c. Gandhi
 - d. Mark Twain

(The correct answer is b, Dumbledore, from the Harry Potter series.)

How do you interpret this quotation? How can you balance dreaming and living?
2. What are you worried about when deciding what you want to do after high school or even college? How do you deal with your fears about the future?
3. From whom do you seek guidance when contemplating major decisions?

Activities

- What do you think of the following quotation from Dr. Craig Oldenburg?
"We can get so caught up in the future that we miss God's calling to our present vocation."
- As a group, define the word "vocation." Look it up in a dictionary, talk it out, etc.
- You may not know what you want to be when you grow up, but what task is God calling you to right now?
- Where have you seen people helping others? Where have you seen people serving God? As a group, brainstorm how you can serve God today (in your homes, church, community, etc.)
- *(Optional)* As a group, take some time to take a Spiritual Gifts inventory and discuss how these God-given gifts can be used to serve God and others now and in the future.

Verse-to-go *(Take this verse with you for the week to remind you of God's promise to you.)*

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

1 Timothy 4:12

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for giving me the Holy Spirit to gift me with the abilities I need to succeed. Give me wisdom to make decisions that are best for me and my future. Thank you for the opportunity to serve others, just as Christ served us by His death on the cross and resurrection. Amen.

PART THREE: WHEN IS "IT" GOING TO HAPPEN?

Similar to Solomon, Joshua was following in the footsteps of a great leader. His time was coming to lead God's people into the Promised Land, but when would it happen? Would everything go as planned, or would everything go wrong? Joshua had to trust in God's timing. He had to trust that God knew the best outcome for Joshua and the people's current predicament.

Read Deuteronomy 31:1-6

- If you were Joshua, how would you have felt when Moses announced to the people that he was no longer going to lead them?

Read Deuteronomy 31:7-8

- The time had come for Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land; what encouragement does Moses give to him?
- Can you apply these words of encouragement to a situation or problem you are facing right now? If so, how do these words help you?

Read Joshua 1:1-5

- God shares with Joshua that the promises He has made are about to be fulfilled. If you were Joshua, how would you feel as you anticipate reaching the Promised Land after several years?
- Are you anticipating graduation from high school? What other events are you looking forward to completing in your high school career?
- In verse 5, what phrase is repeated from the Deuteronomy passage? Why do you think this phrase is being emphasized?

Read Joshua 1:6-9

- How many times does the phrase "Be strong and courageous" come up in this section? Why do you think the Lord repeated this phrase to Joshua?
- In verse 8, God refers to Joshua meditating on the Book of the Law. What has God given us today, that we should "meditate on it day and night?"

Read Joshua 1:10-15

- How does Joshua react to everything God has told him? Would you have reacted the same way? Why or why not?

Read Joshua 1:16-18

- A fourth time, the phrase "Be strong and courageous" shows up in this passage, but who says it this time? What does this show about the people's reaction to Joshua's leadership?
- Do you think Joshua continued to pray for God's help even after his beginning as the people's leader? Do you continue to pray to God even after that "it" event has occurred?

Discussion Starters

1. Think of a situation when you felt very anxious about when something was going to happen. Did everything work out the way you planned? How were you affected by the outcome?
2. How often do your prayers consist of asking God to make something happen? Often? Occasionally? Rarely? Why do you think we are often concerned with the end result?
3. What "it" event is coming up in your life? How do you plan to deal with it?

Activities

- As a group, write a prayer that you can pray as you prepare for the future. Include words that bring comfort and peace. Keep in mind how God encouraged Joshua when it was his time to lead. How can God be with you as you anticipate completing high school, making decisions for the future, and understanding His plan for your life?
- At home, with your parents, make a pro/con list for an upcoming decision. Pray together over this decision and ask for patience in allowing God's timing to bring about the best outcome for you.

Verse-to-go *(Take this verse with you for the week to remind you of God's promise to you.)*

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

Closing Prayer

Use the prayer you wrote as a group, and continue to pray it as you look forward to graduation and contemplate big decisions.

PART FOUR: WHERE AM I GOING? WHO IS GOING TO HELP ME?

Paul traveled all over the world, because he was called by God. But he didn't have a plan or a step by step process, but lived each day, one at a time, going where God was calling him. A man who started out as a murderer of Jesus' followers was now a follower himself. Without the support of the communities he traveled to, Paul would have had more difficulty in his journeys and the sharing of the Gospel. He built them up, but was also built up by the community of believers.

No matter where you go, each of you can remember God's purpose for you, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ! Along the way, God provides the people and relationships we need to continue in this life and strengthen the body of Christ!

Read Acts 9:19b-25

- Immediately after Saul was baptized, who did he spend his time with? What did he begin to do?
- Despite death threats, who took care of and protected Saul?

Read Acts 9:26-31

- After traveling to a new place, Jerusalem, where did Saul go and what did he do?
- Going/moving to a new place can be scary, especially when you don't know anyone. How does Saul set an example for you?

Read Acts 18:18-23

- As Paul continues in his journeys, what do you notice about where he goes and who is with him?
- How do you think Paul knew where to go in all of his missionary journeys? Do you ever feel God guiding you in your own journey? Explain.
- In verse 21, Paul promises, "I will come back if it is God's will." What does this quotation show about Paul's relationship with God?

Read Acts 20:22-24

- Why does Paul continue in his journeys, according to verse 22?
- Right now, are you feeling unsure of where you will go after high school? As Paul is an example, from whom can you receive comfort?
- No matter where you go or who you meet, what is the task that God has given to each of us? How can you do this right now? In the future?

Read Acts 20:36-38

- What do these verses show you about the relationships Paul had with the people he encountered?
- Think of the people in your "personal community." Who is there to support you, and who will continue to be there in the future?

Discussion Starters

1. What careers are you considering as you transition out of high school and into college or the real world?
2. Have you ever considered being a pastor, DCE, teacher, missionary, deaconess, or other church worker? If so, which of these intrigues you? Which would you like to learn more about?
3. Are you worried about being on your own after high school? Who do you look to for help in your transition? Who do you look to for support in your future endeavors?

Read Romans 1:8-12

- How does Paul show selflessness as he writes this letter to the people in Rome? Even as your world changes, how should you continue to act towards others?
- What is most important about being a part of the community of believers, according to verse 12? Who encourages you in your faith? Who do you want to encourage in his/her personal faith?

Activity

- Hold a forum and ask a pastor, DCE, teacher, and/or some other staff from your church (including a missionary if you know one) to come and talk to your group about their jobs. Before the forum, have the group brainstorm questions to ask, such as:
 - How did you decide on this job/position?
 - What joys do you find in your job?
 - What challenges do you have?
- Discuss the relationships in your life that have remained constant and present. Who will you stay in touch with even after high school? What relationships will be important to you as life changes? Why?

Verse-to-go *(Take this verse with you for the week to remind you of God's promise to you.)*

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
Isaiah 52:7

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the opportunity to learn more about you and learn how I can continue to serve you in my life. Thank you for raising up a community of support around me, which includes my parents, friends, and many others who care for me no matter what. Help me to know that no matter where I go, you will be with me and help me to share your love and good news of Jesus Christ. Amen.