

R E V I V A L

~~N O T~~

S U R V I V A L



~~REVIVAL~~ NOT SURVIVAL

Poverty rates are climbing. Suicide rates are rising. Vital truths like morals and the difference between what's right and wrong seem to be non-existent. Of all these things, what may be worst of all is that many of our students simply do not seem to care.

Why is this? I know there are so many factors that could play into this, and I know many of those factors are unique to the community you live in. There is one factor, however, that is always existent; one that stands out to me every time I think of it: us.

What do I mean by that? Who is "us"?

When I talk about "us", I'm talking about student pastors, parents, volunteers, teachers, or anyone who claims to work with students for the purpose of impacting their lives for Christ, and those of us who expect those students to turn around and do the same for others. In short, I'm talking about me... and you. You may be confused- This mission we have seems like good stuff, so how does that make us part of the problem? My answer is that what we are doing is often not enough. We are focused on teaching our students a faith that is just about staying out of trouble. Don't get me wrong- keeping our kids out of trouble is definitely a good thing. I'm not saying we should want our students making bad decisions. However, it does bring about two major problems:

1. This kind of teaching is only half the solution. Pure and undefiled religion is about keeping oneself unstained by the world, but it is also about ministering to widows and orphans. We aren't called to bunker down and hide. Instead, we are called to actively reach out to a world who is hurting and in need.
2. This type of teaching often comes from the attitude that the world has gotten so bad that it's beyond hope. Which leaves us hopeless, thinking that the best thing we can do is just stay out of trouble and throw in the towel. This is flawed on so many levels. For one, this goes against the heart of the Gospel, which is that Christ died for us, and because of that, grace is available to us all, regardless of our past. Not to mention that it goes against major parts of scripture that refer to how Christ has overcome the world, that we

will do even greater things than He did, that He has a purpose and a plan for us, and that we have not been given a spirit of fear.

Unfortunately, far too often that isn't what our students hear. So what does this lead to? Our students end up just trying to survive the culture around them instead of trying to impact it. And after a while, all the hiding and just trying to stay out of trouble starts to get old. When that happens, they no longer see a purpose for their faith and they walk away from it.

This study is about fixing that problem. We want to change the conversation. We want students to live believing that not only can revival in our world be a reality, but it can be **their** reality. With each lesson, we hope that your students (as well as yourself) will be spurred on to bigger and greater things in the community around you, and that together we will see revival happen in this generation. I firmly believe not only that it can, but also that it will happen. So let's get to work!

Sincerely,
Buck Baskin

REVIVAL ~~NOT~~ SURVIVAL

LESSON 1 PURPOSE

Introduction:

Ask your students the following questions, and be sure to give time for answers. Don't be afraid to tailor these questions to what you already know about your group, to get them talking.

- Why do you go to school every day?
- Why are you involved in the organizations that you are in?
- Why do you come to church?

Response:

If your answers weren't somehow related to "knowing God and making Him known", then you are simply *surviving* life. Yes, you may be staying out of trouble. Yes, you might be kind to others. Yes, you may be winning a lot of trophies and making good grades. Not one of these things are bad, but at the end of the day it means you're just getting by in life. As believers, we are called to help others come to know Christ, to share the Gospel and then do life with those people and disciple them. So, if this isn't your goal in all that you do, at the end of the day, your hard work is meaningless. Doing these things are not an impossible task! Remember those good things I listed before? They can play a part in you getting the opportunity to share the Gospel. Make this your ultimate goal, and it will not only give you purpose, but also give those things real value.

SIMPLY PUT, YOUR LIFE NEEDS TO BE ABOUT REVIVAL, NOT SURVIVAL!

Ask:

What does that mean? What is a "revival"?

Response:

THE WORD "REVIVAL" HAS A FEW DEFINITIONS, BUT IN THIS CONTEXT IT MEANS "REAWAKENING OF RELIGIOUS FERVOR". ANOTHER DEFINITION IS "INCREASED SPIRITUAL INTEREST".

Ask:

- Do you think we need that in our world?

- Why?
- If it were to happen, what might that look like?

Response:

I can't tell you exactly what revival will look like where you live, but I can tell you it is needed. Not sure if you should believe me? Just look around you: People are hurting, people are asking questions, and fewer and fewer people are choosing to follow Christ. In fact, the trends show that less than 4% of your generation will follow Christ.

That can be an overwhelming number. But what if, instead of it being overwhelming, it was motivating? What if that number got you out of bed every morning with the purpose of being involved in bringing about change? You can, because God wants to use *you*. He wants to use your talents, abilities, and influence to change the world around you. To Him, your past and what you (or the world) think your level of talent or skill is do not matter. Think about that: the God who made the Heavens and the Earth wants to use you. Don't miss out on that opportunity! Don't let this life just pass you by.

My hope is that because of this study, you will be motivated to begin (or continue to work towards) turning that number around. For far too long, many generations of Christians (including mine), just went through the motions of life and simply did their best to avoid doing bad things. We never saw the huge opportunity that God had given us! We didn't understand that he wanted to use our time, talents, treasure and influence for Him. Knowing that, do you see how things have gotten so bad?

Let me take a moment to explain this a little further by giving an example of how the two sides of this coin might look for you:

Let's say you make straight A's, or at the very least, you study hard and always give your best in class. One day you notice a student struggling in class, so you offer to help them study. Since they already know you're a good student with fantastic discipline, they happily agree. This is your opportunity! Out of this relationship, you can talk about what motivates you to do your best in your studies, such as your relationship with Christ and wanting to give your all to Him, in everything you do. Going one step further, you can even talk about how we are imperfect people and God loves us anyway. You can share how Christ gave everything for *you* on the cross for you to get a fresh start, have purpose in your life and give everything for Him. As a result, that person comes to know Christ, and they share the Good News with someone else, and you share with someone else, and so on, and so on... Suddenly hundreds, maybe even thousands, of people's lives are changed for Christ, and their eternity is secure. All of those people now get hope, joy, and purpose, because you took a step of faith. Then, when it's your time to leave this earth, you are surrounded by the people who are in Heaven because you saw the bigger picture of life and what God had in store for you. Here is the best part: as you stand before God, you get to hear, "Well done my good and faithful servant". That's powerful. That's life change. Better yet, that's revival!

On the other hand, you could make straight A's or just work hard and do your best. You might get some cool awards. You may even get some kind encouragement from parents and teachers. Who knows, you could even get into college and get a great job and make billions of dollars. Surviving life this way is cool and all, but at the end of it, what do you have to show for it all? You do the good things everyone expects of you, so that the world sees you as a successful person. You may even do a few of the not-so-good things that no one cares about because "you only live once" and "it makes you feel good, so it's no one else's business", or better yet because "everyone else is doing it". This is surviving, and guess what survival leaves you? Nothing. You still die and what do you left behind? You're a billionaire, but you can't take the money with you. If you know Christ, you're in Heaven, but who else is there because of your influence and impact? What about those people who are not in Heaven? They are in Hell...for eternity. So, what was the point of it all? What legacy have you left?

There are lots people who claim to follow Christ, yet for far too long, have been simply *surviving* life. They're getting by with just enough to not feel guilty, and, sure, they can take care of themselves, but God is calling us to so much more than that! God wants us to be an ambassador of life change. God wants us to be a part of bringing revival to this world.

If you haven't realized this yet, this is what this study will be about: Helping you move from just *surviving* life to, instead, bringing *revival* to your generation. So let's dig in.

Main:

We've answered a few questions so far, which have one word in common. I don't know about you, but this is a word that pops into my head daily, so let's talk about it. Let's talk about the word "Why?".

"Why?" is a powerful question, and unfortunately, one we are often too busy or too afraid to ask. When we do ask "why", however, we can discover a lot of things. For example, we can discover how we might improve at something, or we can discover the reason things bother or stress us out. Most importantly to me, though, we can find the purpose in something.

We've already mentioned that the purpose of everything in your life is to use the opportunity to share the Gospel. Asking "why" can help you keep that in focus. For example, why do you go to school every day? One answer is that you have to. Well, that's probably true. So while you're there, take the time to see the bigger picture, which is that *you* can be setting an example and looking for opportunities to share the Gospel with others. This not only gives purpose to everyday activities, but brings you more hope and joy in being at school from day to day. Plus, when trials come (trust me- they *will* come), you can persevere through them because you have your eye on God and the bigger prize He has in store.

Let's see how asking "why?" can help from another angle. I know I asked this earlier, but let's readdress it:

WHY ARE YOU INVOLVED IN THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT YOU ARE INVOLVED IN?

Think about your answer. Based on what we've already discussed, do you think your focus needs to shift? Do you think your actions need redirection? How are you praying about these opportunities you're presented with? Do you see a real purpose in those things you do, or is it merely a distraction from what God is calling you to do? If it is, do you feel like you need to cut it out of your life? I'm not saying that cutting it out of your life is the only solution. If you leave it in your life, it may not be all bad, but you may be running a great risk. By leaving this in your life, will you miss out on the greater purpose God has for this stage of your life?

You see, when you don't take the time to ask "why", you fail to see the purpose in your daily life and relationships, which leads to you just going through the motions of life. When you are going through the motions, you are not giving your best, which is something God calls us to do at all times. If you spend too long not doing your best, and simply going through the motions, it leads to boredom. Which leads to either walking away from things that could have been great opportunities to honor and serve God, or sticking around but failing to see the bigger purpose in what you are doing.

By now I'm hoping you've figured out that the main idea of this lesson is your purpose. In focusing on that idea, I want to ask you one more question:

WHY DID GOD SEND JESUS TO DIE?

(If your students seem clueless about all of this, I encourage you to redirect the lesson for a moment and lay the Gospel out for them, because not knowing Jesus was sent by God or why He was sent may mean many of them have not heard it. If they haven't heard the Good News, they definitely haven't received it, and if they haven't received it, this lesson may seem pointless to them.)

Since the Gospel is so beautiful and deep, we could talk about this question for days, but I won't do that to you right now. You're welcome. There are just a few key things I want you to understand for now, and I promise that all of this will help you to take that first step in living for revival instead of survival.

Let me first say that Jesus died for you so that you could be saved from your sin, have a relationship with Him, and have eternal life. The story, however, doesn't end there.

1. GOD SAVED YOU BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU.

Read John 3:16.

Whether you have grown up in church or not, you have probably heard this verse. But hopefully, even though you have heard it many times, it has never lost the excitement that should come in reading it.

“For God so loved the world....”

Let that wash over you. God didn't have to send Jesus. God didn't send Jesus because He felt guilty. God didn't send Jesus because He was bored. God didn't send Jesus because he felt lonely or like he was missing anything. God didn't send Jesus because we deserve it. In fact, we absolutely did not deserve it, but God sent Jesus anyway. Here's that question again: Why? Because He loves us.

Take a second to think about that fact- that God saved you. He didn't have to, but God sent His Son Jesus to die for you. God gave up everything for *you*. It should be impossible for us, because of this, to have any other response than to want to give up everything for Him in return. Dreams. Goals. Dating. Relationships. We should sacrifice everything God asks us to, whatever that may be, in order to follow Him and to live for His purposes.

2. GOD SAVED YOU FOR A PURPOSE.

Duh, the purpose is He loves me. You're not wrong; that is totally true, but it is so much more than that.

GOD HAS A PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE!

He didn't just save you for *you*. He saved you so you could reach others and those others would come to know Him, as well. Remember, *“God so loved the world...”* Not just you and your corner of the world, but everyone.

“....so that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life.”

Look back at those first few questions we asked. Let me answer them for you. You go to school every day so that others can come to know Christ. You have skills, interests, and abilities that lead you to be involved in things that give you the opportunity to share Christ with others. You go to church so that you can draw closer to God, as well as a community of believers, so that you can spur each other on to go out and reach others for Christ.

Know this: you live where you live, have the schedule you have, and are designed the way you were designed for the purpose of reaching specific people for Christ that no one else can reach. Let that sit with you for a while. God is working in the world and He wants to use you as part of that plan. God loves each of us so much that He saved us, but He also wanted to give us a purpose, and He is continuing to actively use us so others can receive the same purpose and salvation we got.

You should never say you are bored again, or that this life and the things you have to do in it have no meaning. If that's how you feel, then you must be seeing things the wrong way or doing the wrong things. Maybe you should stop and ask yourself "why" you feel that way. :)

3. GOD SAVED YOU FOR REVIVAL, NOT SURVIVAL.

I don't know what you think about the Christian life, but for a long time I thought the main goal was to stay out of trouble. I thought that if I didn't do "bad things", then I was doing all I needed to do. Basically, I was simply trying to survive each day. I have since learned, however, that God and the life He has called us to is much bigger than that. God is giving us an incredible opportunity: to be a part of literally changing the world for Him! Hopefully you're beginning to realize this as well.

Think about the people you know from the Bible or throughout history. You have an opportunity to be like them, to make a mark on history in your generation. You could be part of a revival.

I want to give you some Biblical proof of what I'm saying, with the hope that it will stir your head to dream and your heart to long for what might be possible. The aftermath of the story of Jesus in the Gospels is what I boldly call the first massive revival. It's my hope that you, too, will see God's greater purpose for your life and the possibilities those purposes hold.

A. WE ARE TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF THE WORLD.

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,^[a] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28-18-20 NIV)

Making disciples means sharing the Gospel with others. When they experience life change, it's our job to do life with them, and to teach them what it means to be a Christ follower. It is only then that they will have the tools to turn around and do the same for others. You see, revival isn't a hit-and-run proposition. It is about a commitment to invest in people for the long haul, so that life change can continue. I want you to notice something from this passage: it says to "*make disciples of all nations*". What does that mean? Simply put, it means that all people can receive the Gospel. We are called to see that this happens, though any means. Sometimes that means you pray for them, sometimes that means you give, and sometimes that means you "go and do". Now, "going and doing" can be an intoxicating thought, because the possibilities are endless. Let me put the brakes on, however, before we get too carried away, because "all nations" also includes where you live. Going on trips around the world and rallying for some faraway cause is good, but don't forget to look in your own community! I want you to dream big about what could happen around the world, and how you could be a part of it, but I would urge you to start helping others experience life change right where you are

B. WE HAVE THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues[a] as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:3-4 NIV)

We can't and don't have to do this life thing on our own. When we come to know Christ, we get the power of God inside of us. This is what propels us to go out and see our world changed. Through that power, we cannot even begin to imagine what God will do in us and through us. If you take a look at the verses surrounding this passage, you'll notice that the disciples go from hiding and afraid to boldly preaching the Gospel, first in the streets, and then all over the known world.

C. GOD CAN DO BIG THINGS.

41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The Fellowship of the Believers

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. (Acts 2:41-45)

I'm sure this fact didn't come as a great surprise to the disciples. After all, Jesus did promise the Holy Spirit would come, and because of that, those who came after Him would do even greater things than He did. And, boy, did some crazy things happen! Just let this sink in for a second: thousands of people came to know Christ in one day, and poverty was wiped out in their community of believers. This was all done with the power of the same Holy Spirit we received when we came to know Christ. Do you see life change happening like this around you? Do you see God moving this way around you? If not, then the problem isn't God or the people around you. I think the problem is that we are just not willing to lay everything down for the sake of the Gospel, and fully believe the truth: that God can and will do big and mighty things.

D. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SPECIAL IN THE WORLD'S EYES.

13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13)

If you thought the disciples were chosen to do the things they did because they were special, you're wrong. They were mostly fishermen, though there was one that was a tax collector, as well as a few other trades mixed in. They were all working specific trades when Jesus called them. Believe me when I say that none of these trades would be considered especially glamorous. They didn't have special degrees. They didn't have extraordinary skills. It was because of these things that somewhere along the way, someone decided they weren't good enough. But Jesus does not see what the world sees; He saw greatness in what the world saw as "not good enough". One of the most amazing things about them is that they had *just* met Jesus and were obedient to be used by Him. You know another amazing thing? They were all teenagers when this took place. This means that none of us in this room have an excuse to wait. You don't have to wait to be older, and you don't have to have some kind of approval or validation from the world. If you have come to know Christ and have a relationship with Him, then there is nothing that can stop you, except for yourself. So what are you waiting for?

God has given you a purpose in this life, and nothing this world has to offer could even compare to it. Not only that, but He has given you the examples, directions, and power you need to live out that purpose in your life. All that's left is this:

1. Make sure you know Christ. If you don't have a personal relationship with Christ, then you need to take care of that right now. All you have to do is believe that He died and rose from the dead, that He can and will forgive you of your sins, and invite him into your heart.
2. Believe in what scripture says and be obedient to act. It won't always be easy, but between the power of the Holy Spirit and the loving community you have around you, nothing can stop you from pursuing God's purpose for your life.

So what will you do? Will you continue living for survival or will you live for revival in your generation?

R E V I V A L
~~N O T~~
S U R V I V A L

LESSON 1
SMALL GROUP

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. When “revival, not survival” comes to your mind, what do you think about?
2. When you look at the world around you, do you think we are in need of revival? Why or why not?
3. When you think about living for revival, what are some of your biggest fears?
4. Why do you think revival is not happening in the world around you?
5. What are some specific ways your small group could bring revival to your area?