



FIGHT





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A research study that was conducted by a reputable organization close to a decade ago found that 4% of this generation would follow Christ. That number is alarming—but to be honest, the first time I heard it I don't know if I truly believed it. I mean, we definitely used it for a cool sermon series and I think we even had a t-shirt made up. However, I don't think anything really changed about our ministry, and nothing much ever came out of the knowledge that this number was a possibility, other than throwing it at people who weren't doing life and ministry the way I thought they should.

In preparing for this study that number came back into my head, and just out of curiosity I decided to do some math. Guess what I found out—based on my best estimates, and even giving a few churches a little padding on their probable enrollment, exactly 4% of the students in our community go to church. I say, “go to church,” because you have to realize that not every church-going kid knows Jesus, so we are actually not even hitting the 4% mark. Granted, based on a variety of factors (community size, demographics, the importance of the church in your community, geographic location, etc.) your numbers may come out a little higher or even a lot higher. But whether you are at 4% or 90% doesn't matter; the reality is there are still lost students, and adults for that matter, around us, and we do not even seem to care—at least not as much as I believe we should. The reality is that the knowledge that someone does not know Jesus and they are living without hope, without purpose, and will spend an eternity in Hell if they die, should keep us awake at night and consume us throughout the day. But somewhere along the way this fact that 4% of this generation—or whatever the number is—will follow Christ barely even gets our attention. We have lost our ability to care and, more importantly I believe, we have lost our desire to FIGHT. Why do I use the word FIGHT? Because Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.” Granted, Jesus was literally talking about dying for the sins of the world, but we have the same standard. If we truly love the world around us, we should be laying down everything to make sure they know Jesus and follow Him. We should be scratching, clawing, and fighting for the lost souls around us. That's what this study is about—re-awakening our hearts to fight for a lost and dying world around us so that they can come to know Jesus and make Him known. Here is a quick rundown of what we will be fighting for or against:

**LESSON 1: FIGHTING FOR FOCUS**

**LESSON 2: FIGHTING FOR YOUR IDENTITY**

**LESSON 3: FIGHTING FOR THE GOSPEL**

**LESSON 4: FIGHTING HELL**

**LESSON 5: FIGHTING FOR TRUTH**

My hope is that through this study the passion of you and your students will be re-awakened and you will FIGHT every single day to ensure that every student in your community comes to know Christ.



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### LESSON 1: FIGHTING FOR FOCUS

We are going to start off by doing a little research project and...OH NO...some math. I want you to figure out approximately how many churches are in your town. If you are in a major metropolis, you may want to cut that down to your neighborhood or suburb (often these numbers can be found on a real estate or chamber of commerce website). Multiply that number by 20 to figure out approximately how many students in your community go to church, as the average student ministry has 20 students (feel free to add some students if you know for a fact that some churches in your area are larger). Next, figure out how many students are in the school district(s) your church reaches. The student enrollment counts can usually be Googled and found on the district websites. Divide that number by 13, then multiply it by the number of grades in your student ministry. For example, if you have 6th-12th grade in your student ministry you would multiply that number by 7. Now hang on to those numbers for a moment.

A study was conducted a few years back by a very reputable research organization that projected what percentage of students in your generation would follow Christ. Anyone want to take a guess on what that percentage was?

If you guessed 4% you were correct. Think about that. Only 4% of your generation will be committed followers of Christ. That means that 96% of your generation will die and go to Hell if this trend holds true.

Now those numbers may not bother you (more on that later) or maybe you don't believe them; so with that in mind let's do some more math. Take the approximate number of students who go to church in your community and divide that by the approximate number of students in the grade levels your ministry targets. What number did you get?

When I did this it came out to right at 4%. Yours may be 10%. Yours may be 50%. But unless the number comes out to 100%, it means you are not doing enough.

How do those numbers make you feel?

How does the math you did for your community make you feel? Why?

Why do you think things have gotten to this point?

What do you think needs to change?

I will tell you what I think needs to change. As followers of Christ, we have gotten so caught up in this life and the many things it offers—along with the many things the world tells us to care about—that we have lost our ability and desire to fight.



That doesn't mean go out and punch people; it means being burdened by the fact that the world around us is lost and hurting and being emboldened to sacrifice whatever it takes to reach them.

This Bible study aims to correct that problem. In each lesson, we will dive into exactly what we are fighting for and/or against, but for now I want to lay the groundwork for why I use a strong word like fight.

**Read John 15:13.**

*"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."*

In this passage, Jesus is literally foretelling His death on the cross. But while we will not die on a cross, I think this standard of love in our lives rings true. If we are truly going to love the world around us, we are to lay everything down for the purpose of letting them know they are loved by Him and by us and making sure they come to know Him. No matter the cost, we should scratch, claw, sacrifice, in essence FIGHT, to see that every person we come in contact with knows they are loved and comes to know Christ. But clearly we are not doing that; less than 50% of Christians ever share their faith. More than 67% of students will leave the church between the ages of 18-22. And we just keep going along with life and church as usual.

Something has to change. We, as a church, have to re-awaken to our calling and FIGHT for the world around us. We will talk about the many things this means throughout this study, but we will start with this: we must fight for focus.

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** Answers may vary but as long as they are biblically accurate, allow them. We will clear up/simplify the specifics in a bit.

What are Christians called to do?

What do Christians actually do?

I'm assuming the two lists didn't match up. If this is the case, why do you think that is?

I'll tell you the number one reason that I think this is the case:

If we as the church are going to rise up and reach those around us for Christ, we must fight for focus.

Typically, as Christians, we show up on Sunday, Wednesday, or at camp, hear a great message and learn something, then get pulled in every other direction as soon as we leave that place. And where has that gotten us? Just refer back to the numbers at the beginning of this study to find out.

I want to help you clearly and concisely understand what we as Christians are to focus on, and then give you a practical step for how to accomplish this focus.





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## Read Matthew 22:34-40

*“Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

*Matthew 22:34-40*

After reading this, what two things do you think that we as Christians are called to focus on?

If you said loving God and loving people, then you are correct. In this passage, Jesus is being challenged by the teachers of the law to see if they can trick and discredit Him. But in turn, Jesus gives them the perfect answer and makes things very easy for us. Jesus is basically saying that everything ever taught and written in scripture boils down to this: loving God and loving people. That is all we have to do. That is supposed to be our focus. So what do those things look like?

### 1. LOVE GOD.

Do you love God?

You would probably say yes, and I would believe you. But now read the verse below and answer that question again.

## Read John 14:15

*“If you love me, keep my commands.”*

Please know that we will never be perfect. But if we are truly going to say we love God, that perfection of keeping His commands should be our goal and focus and, again, we should fight to do whatever it takes to make that happen.

Which commands do you struggle with keeping the most?

We all have struggles, but oftentimes they become second nature to us and we don't even think about them anymore. Through taking some time to identify and confess them, we can begin the process of fighting to overcome them. Making a mistake doesn't mean you don't love God anymore, but continuing in sin and disobeying God's commands without caring does show that we don't truly love God anymore. None of us would want that, especially since we have now clearly seen the effects on the world around us from Christians not focusing on things like truly loving God and instead just going through the motions of life.



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## 2. LOVE PEOPLE.

Think about a person whom you know who truly cares for you and loves you. This could be a parent, a sibling, a grandparent or someone else, depending on your life situation and stage.

How do you know they love you?

I know there are many answers to this, but I'm betting there are a few that come up again and again. People who love you ensure that your physical needs are met. People who love you say encouraging things to you and lift you up when you are down. People who love you spend quality time with you. People who love you teach you how to do the things that are necessary for you to be successful in life. People who love you also care about your spiritual wellbeing. Even though I know some of you have parents who don't go to church or even discourage you from going, the ideal situation is that they would support you in it, and I'm sure that at some level they do whether they would admit or not. These are just some of the things we want in order to know that someone truly loves us, and we are called to do this for others because the world around us needs to know that they are loved, and through this love they will be drawn to Christ.

How well are you doing at loving your neighbor? Where do you struggle? Do you think that through your life your neighbors know that God loves them?

If the answer to the last question is no, it's probably because you have forgotten to focus on this principle. You have failed to see that every connection and relationship has a purpose. You have failed to realize that God has you where you are and has even given you the class schedule you have for the purpose of making Him known. Instead, you just focus on what you want, surviving another day, and making sure you are "happy". And what happens? A lost world around us walks around feeling alone, unloved, and wondering whether God is real, why they need Jesus, and why the church even exists.

Let me show you another way we can lose focus on loving our neighbors.

### **Read Matthew 5:43-45.**

*"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'<sup>44</sup> But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."*

Often times we spend our time trying to focus on figuring out who is our neighbor and who is our enemy. When tragedy strikes, we try to figure out who is to blame. When we see someone struggling, we try to figure out how it was their fault. When there is a global or even local political issue, we try to figure out which side is most like us so that we know who our enemy is. But that is not supposed to be our focus. We are called to love God and



love people, and that means all people. Even if you want to say that someone is your enemy it doesn't matter, because Jesus has called you to love them too.

How does this play out in your church? In what areas have you chosen an enemy that you don't have to love?

Do you see how that has negatively affected your ability to focus on the calling God has placed in your life? This is an epidemic in the church. It's not a new struggle, it just seems more prevalent now. And because of it we have lost our effectiveness in the world. Stop trying to decide who to love and when, and just do it in the hopes that they will experience life change in Christ.

Now at this point you may begin to see the connection between the two commands. Jesus said, "The second is like it..." You can't really have one without the other. If you love God, you obey His commands. One of those commands is to love people. So when you love people you are actually loving God. See Matthew 25:31-46

None of this could be more truly seen than in the command that we are to focus on that sums up both of these:

### 3. MAKE DISCIPLES.

**Read Matthew 28:16-19.**

*"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"*

Making disciples is where we follow the example Jesus set with His disciples. He called them to follow Him, He did life with them to show them how to live, and then they turned around and did the same thing with others.

Doing this—sharing the Gospel with others and then showing them how to follow Christ—is how we truly show that we love God and love people. Because at the end of the day, no matter what needs we meet, if we don't help people fill the spiritual void in their life caused by sin that can only be filled by a personal relationship with Jesus, we are not truly loving them. And I think we can all agree, based on the numbers we saw at the beginning of this lesson, this is something that definitely needs to change.

So how can we do all of this? How can we begin to fight to keep our focus on loving God and loving people, and ultimately sharing the Gospel? I think there are two big steps we can take:





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## 4. WE LOVE OTHER CHRISTIANS.

In all this talk about reaching people for Christ, I don't want you to forget that we are called to love each other too. Even if we don't go to the same church or agree on everything, that doesn't matter. We are all focused on the same goal, reaching people for Christ, so instead of focusing on petty differences or shunning people when they mess up, we instead need to hold one another accountable to fulfill our calling. We need to encourage each and lift each other up. We need to call people out and apply some tough love when necessary. We need to pray together. We need to work and serve together. We need to plan strategically together about how to reach our families and schools for Christ. We need to meet each other's physical needs so that the work we have been called to can continue. In short, we need to love each other. This happens in small groups in your church, but you also need to have a group of Christians at your school you can connect with so that you have a system of love and support there as well, and can stand firm with when things get tough. The great thing is that the Christian life can be tough but we don't have to do it alone.

## 5. WE FIGHT.

You are going to hear me say this again and again, but this is truly how I feel; we need to perceive the Christian life. Every day is a battle in which we want to do all we can to reach others.

### **Read Matthew 5:29**

*"If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."*

Jesus clearly knew that sin is a big deal and that it can easily destroy, so in this passage He clearly states how important it should be for us to avoid sin.

You see, sin is anytime God commands us to do something and we don't do it, or when we are commanded to avoid something and we choose to do it anyway. This sin takes us from our purpose in life. The sin could be something like labeling someone our enemy and choosing not to love them all the way, viewing pornography, or having physical addictions. This sin causes us to lose focus on what Christ is calling us too. Even good things can become sin; for example, you might be in a club or on a team. God wants to use that time and your talent and passion to influence others for Christ. But if you make it all about you and just worry about being successful or fitting in, it becomes sin because you are not fulfilling the purpose God has given you.





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There are lots of distractions, sins in the world that can pull our focus away, and if they are pulling you away you need to get rid of them. If you struggle with pornography, get rid of the computer in your room or even your phone. Do you not have time to pray because you are binge-watching Netflix? Cancel your account. Can't stop having sex with your boyfriend or girlfriend? Break up with them. Don't care about reaching the world around you for Christ because all your passion and desire to accomplish things gets fulfilled in Black-ops, Madden, Call of Duty, etc.? Get rid of your video games. Social media taking up too much of your time or causing you to say hateful things about others or to them? Or maybe just seeing all those "happy" photos discourages you. Delete your Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and whatever else you have. You will survive without these things as long as you love God and love people, but if instead you choose the lesser things of this world instead of the greater things of God, our world will not survive. We'll be lucky if even 4% of your generation follows Christ.

There is a lost and dying world around you. Fight to be focused on God so you can reach it. Get rid of the sin. Get rid of the distractions. Pray that God restores the fight inside of you and then go out and fight the good fight to the finish. Speaking of that...

## 6. FIGHT TO THE FINISH.

### Read Philippians 2:8

*"And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death-- even death on a cross!"*

It seems like every day there is a new big issue in the news or a new cause to be passionate about and buy a t-shirt for. Don't let yourself be pulled in every direction. Yes, we will support some of these causes (disaster relief, human trafficking, poverty, etc.) but it should be for the purpose of letting people know they are loved and making Christ known. Yes, we will feed the hungry and provide clean water, but for the purpose of letting others know how they can never hunger and thirst again. No matter where life takes you, loving God and loving people has to remain your focus. If you commit to start something in your community—a tutoring ministry for example—see it to the finish. Don't quit when it gets hard or jump to the next exciting thing the next week. If you commit that you will reach a friend for Christ, don't stop praying for that friend, inviting that friend to church, and sharing the Gospel with them until they get saved. We cannot be ADD Christians. Do you know they say it takes up to seven years for a person of the Islamic faith to become a Christian? That takes commitment. That takes Focus. That takes fight. Do as Jesus did—stay committed to the specific thing God is calling you to do until the work is complete, no matter what it takes.



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## LESSON 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** This is a very discussion-based study. The discussion questions should lead the students to nail down some specific next steps so that this doesn't just become another feel-good event, but instead actually brings about change.

1. What needs to refocus in your personal life so you can FIGHT for a lost world around you?
2. What needs to refocus at home with your family so you can FIGHT for a lost world around you?
3. What needs to refocus at school so you can FIGHT for a lost world around you?
4. What needs to refocus in your life in the community so you can FIGHT for a lost world around you?
5. How do you think your student ministry needs to refocus so you can FIGHT and reach more than 4% of your generation?
6. What are the next steps you are going to take?





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### LESSON 2: FIGHTING FOR YOUR IDENTITY

What are some ways the world might identify you or categories they might put you in?

What about your parents?

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** Answers will vary depending on age of your group, geography, how sheltered they are, etc. It may be boy, girl, football player, nerd, democrat, Republican, race or nationality labels. The big goal here is to lay the groundwork for them to realize that the world puts all kinds of labels on us, as young people and adults, and we often try to fit those labels instead of trying to mold ourselves to Christ. You may have to help them realize some of these earthly categories.

The world is full of labels and full of divisions. That's okay. It's the world. They don't have Jesus so they are trying to scramble around and find a sense of belonging and purpose in any way they can. I'm not saying it's a good thing; I'm just pointing out that they don't know any better and we can't address them in the same way that we would address people who know Christ.

The issue comes in when we, as followers of Jesus, begin to try to fit into the labels the world puts on us and figure out how we fit into these earthly boxes; it doesn't work and it forces us to lose the focus we are fighting so hard to keep, and to look to other things for belonging and purpose. This will be a constant battle from all sides.

This means that we must FIGHT to keep our identity in Christ and who He has made us to be.

Let me give you an example.

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** This will be a personal example from my context as someone who lives just outside of Dallas, Texas with family from Southern Arkansas and East Texas. Please feel free to use your own example that is more culturally relevant to the situation you and your students find yourselves in.

Where I live, Mesquite, Texas (just east of Dallas), there a lot of boxes people try to fit into and labels that people put on you. And with those labels there are certain preconceptions about who should fit where.

For example, football is king. And during football season there are certain people that I just do not like. Why? Because they go to the wrong school and I work at the right one. We laugh because it is a trivial thing, right? But I'm sure it's true of you as well. And what happens? For a few moments, be it in football, band, one act play, or whatever, our identity as a member of that school becomes more important than our identity as a follower of Christ, and our focus becomes tearing them down instead of reaching them with the Gospel.



Are activities bad? Not necessarily. But when they become the things we identify ourselves with over Jesus they are. And while these are trivial examples, the pattern continues much bigger things.

Most people also affiliate with a political party. Where I live there is a perception that if you love Jesus you vote Republican. Last time I checked, that is not in the Bible. Nowhere in the Ten Commandments, the Gospels, or anywhere else does it equate following Jesus with being a part of, or supporting, a political party. If you live in other parts of the United States, the opposite is probably true—it's expected that if you love Jesus you vote Democrat. I'm sure this issue occurs in other parts of the world as well, just with different names. I'm not saying that you shouldn't vote when you get the chance or that you should not be informed, but when that becomes your identity and your focus you get distracted from the things of God and you also become guilty of whatever they are guilty of. When a politician makes a racist comment, the world thinks, "How can all Christians support that racist and think like him/her?" If a politician passes a law that appears to hurt the poor, the world thinks, "Why does the church hate poor people so much when they claim to love Jesus?" Is it fair? No. Do you actually support everything that party stands for? I hope not. Because you can't. Those are manmade entities, and at some point their stances and beliefs will not line up with scripture, and you will look like an idiot trying to align your beliefs with theirs. The reality is many of us do, and people get turned off to the Gospel because of it. More importantly, when we make these manmade things part of our identity we begin to put our faith and hope in them. In essence, we are saying, "I love you, God. But just in case you forget something, I want these earthly security blankets to help me feel better or get the necessary work done."

Sometimes it's not us trying to align ourselves to the world, but the world trying to do it for you. Some of you have been told you are not as good as someone else or that you are a troublemaker because of where you live or where you go to school. If you put your identity in that instead of in Christ, you might believe that lie. Some of you have been labeled lazy or a thug because of the way you dress. I know a lot of people think I'm immature or unprofessional because I hate to dress up. If I had my way, I would wear a hoodie (well, at least for about two weeks a year because that's about all the hoodie weather we get in Texas), jeans or basketball shorts, and some Chucks all the time. I can tell you, I work harder than most people I know because I have realized every day is a gift, but people have those perceptions in their minds. Some of you have been told you are gay by hurtful people in your life, or maybe people who claim to be friends, all because your interests, style, appearance or whatever they latched on to do not match up with some picture they have of what a boy or girl should be. If you haven't ensured that your identity is in Christ, you may have bought into this lie as well and gone down a road of hurt, pain, and self-doubt. Maybe as a Christian you don't think that happens. But think about the times you've said, "That is so gay," or, "That person is gay." You are setting someone's identity. You are saying that this is who they are and were designed to be, when in Bible studies and other conversations you say that is not how people are made and not in line with scripture. Yet you give people that identity and they begin to believe it.

While the labels and categories may change, the facts remain the same. We are always going to have to fight to keep our identity in Christ so that not only can we stay focused on the right things, but also so that we can experience the full, abundant life that Christ has for us. Because of this I want to walk you through a couple of things you might want to think about in order to ensure that you not only know what your identity is in Christ, but also so you can know why it is so important to do so.





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## 1. BEING A CHRIST FOLLOWER IS ALL THAT MATTERS.

**Read Galatians 3:28.**

*“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

In its simplest terms, this verse is saying that an earthly label that anyone could put on you doesn't matter. We are all one in Christ Jesus. Of course, some people don't know Christ, so this means there is a division in the world. It is our job to focus on helping others come to know Christ as well. When we boil life down to those simplest terms—“I am a follower of Jesus who reaches those who do not yet know Him”—life becomes beautiful and powerful. Furthermore....

**Read Philippians 3:8.**

*“What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.”*

I add this in because I want you to know that nothing else compares to following Jesus. I get that sometimes fear can creep into our minds about what will happen if we don't take part in certain things or what we'll miss out on if we don't fit into certain labels, but none of that matters; the only thing that matters is knowing Christ and making Him known. Any earthly identity you might cling to will only leave you empty. Cling to Jesus and let being a follower of Him be your identity.

## 2. CHRIST KNOWS WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY.

**Read John 10:10.**

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;  
I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”  
John 10:10*

Satan wants to destroy your life. One of the ways he does this is through trying to steal your identity. He wants to get you to buy into the lie about what will fulfill you and give you joy. He wants to use others to tear you down and convince you that you are something you are not—and he's good at his job. We must be careful to remember that anything that pulls us away or distracts us from our calling in Jesus will destroy our lives. But following Jesus gives us life as it was always intended. We might be tempted to wrap ourselves up in a political identity because we think power and laws will give us freedom and security, but true security and freedom only come from Jesus. You may be tempted to listen to others about who you were designed to be, but God sees your heart and knows the path He has designed you for. Embrace your identity in Christ and nothing else, because nothing else will satisfy.



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### 3. GOD DOES NOT MAKE MISTAKES.

**Read Psalm 139:14.**

*"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful, I know that full well."  
Psalm 139:14*

**Read Jeremiah 1:5.**

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born  
I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."  
Jeremiah 1:5*

You are uniquely you and designed for a specific purpose. God took great care in designing you and has you where you are for a specific reason. Why would you want to do anything else other than embrace your identity in Him? At one point in my life, my identity was high school football player. I pursued it with all I had and got fully wrapped up in it, shunning everything else. Part of this was because it felt like through doing that a lot of coaches and community members cared about me. Guess what happened the second our last game of my senior year was over? The coaches dropped us seniors to focus on their current players and the community took us down from the pedestal they had placed us on. I no longer knew who I was, and was left empty and alone. That's how it works when we find our identity in the things of this world. You are not a failure. You are not a mistake. You are not lazy, stupid, or a waste of time. You are not useless. You are not gay. You are not weird (well, not in the hurtful way the world uses the term; more on that later). You are a child of God who was uniquely designed with unique passions, interests, and talents by the Creator of the universe to be a part of His plan to change the world.

### 4. YOU WILL NOT FIT IN.

**Read John 17:15-16**

*"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them  
from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."*

This is a prayer that Jesus prayed in the garden before He was arrested and crucified. Jesus knew He was not truly of this world and that those who would follow Him would not be either; but He knew we still needed to be here, so He prayed that God would protect us in the work we had been called to. You will sometimes hear people talk about us being strangers in a foreign land, or *in* this world but not *of* it. Either way, the theme is the same. We don't exactly fit in here—we aren't supposed to. This is why things fail so miserably when we try to fit into earthly identities.

In this example I'm going to use politics, because I have seen it destroy a lot of Christian adults in the United States, and students are picking up on the same habits and talking points they hear from their parents.

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** Please feel free to use another illustration. We are just trying to convey that the world creates categories. We can't fully follow Christ and fully fit into these categories. I'm using this one because in my context, the southern United States, politics has crippled generations of the church going back decades. Your issues may be different.





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Many Christians vote Republican because they are against abortion. Others will vote Democrat because they see the effects of poverty and want to see people get help. Both of these are important causes; both of these issues are things that Christians should care about. But what happens when you get your identity from a political group? You pretty much have to be against any idea that the other side come up with, plus you get lumped in with all the bad things your side does. Our message of love, grace, and redemption gets lost in this worldly identity we are trying to take on. People begin to believe that if they are not part of your worldly group then they can't be part of the family of God either. What makes matters worse is that our identity is often what we put our faith in, so oftentimes when we identify with a political group we are putting our faith in the fact that they will do our job for us. We vote against abortion because we don't want to have to look into the eyes of a mother in crisis and love her through the hard times, or go with her the extra mile after the child is born. We don't want to have to uproot our lives and adopt their child if that's what's necessary. We vote to help those in poverty because we don't want to sacrifice to meet people's needs, make the great time investment to see people's lives turned around, or "go to that side of town." We hate the people on the other side or people who are hurting and struggling. We make up stories about how they are in that situation and how it's their fault, when we've never actually talked to a person who is broken, hurting or affected by the sin in the world, and in turn those people never come to Christ.

Let's look at this on a more personal level. Some of you are finding your identity in the activity that gets you the most friends or the highest level of comfort, when Jesus has actually placed a completely different passion in your heart. For example, some of you are in a sport when God has given you the gift of music and wants to use that for the kingdom, but you're too afraid to step out and embrace the identity God has for you. Others of you are involved in things for yourself and are afraid to stand up and share the Gospel with your friends because you don't want to ruin the good thing you have going. Still others of you need to quit things because you need more time in the summer to do missions work and serve your community. Whatever the case is, you are too afraid to be peculiar, strange, or weird. Well guess what...being a Christ follower is weird. Sharing the Gospel is awkward. Laying down everything to serve something greater than ourselves is strange. But nothing else this world can offer us even compares.

## 5. YOU ARE NOT YOUR PAST.

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.**

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"*

When you come to Christ, you become a whole new person. Your sins are forgiven and wiped away. You're given a new purpose and new passions. No matter what hurts you've experienced or sins you have committed, you're still a new person who is called and equipped to reach people for Christ and change the world; and you should never let anyone convince you of anything else.

## 6. YOUR LIFE IS NOT YOURS.

**Read Galatians 2:20.**

*"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*



When you come to Christ, you die to yourself. This means that all your goals, passions, and desires go away and everything you do is based on what Christ wants you to do. In other parts of scripture, you'll see Paul referring to this as being a slave to Christ. Now I know you may be thinking, "Hold up. I'm not signing up for slavery." But I'm here to tell you that when you allow your full identity to be found in Christ and live for what honors and pleases Him, being a slave to Christ, you actually find the ultimate freedom. Because something is going to control your life—either sin or Jesus, and as we've seen, sin will leave you empty, hurt, and unfulfilled, but Jesus will give you life as you intended. So why would you want to choose anything else in life other than being a slave to Christ?

I can't tell you exactly what your next step will be. Some of you will have to clean up your social media profiles. Some of you may have to quit some activities. Some of you will have to get some sin out of your life. Others may just have to tweak some priorities. Whatever the case is, clean your internal and external house so that your identity becomes Christ Follower and you become all that He has uniquely designed you to be.



# FIGHT

## LESSON 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you need to see your identity differently so you can FIGHT for a lost world around you?
2. What needs to change for those at home to see your true identity so you can FIGHT for a lost world around you?
3. What needs to change so those at school see your true identity so you can FIGHT for a lost world around you?
4. What needs to change so those in the community see your true identity so you can FIGHT for a lost world around you?
5. What do you think your community sees as the identity of your student ministry? Why?
6. How can you change that identity so you can FIGHT and reach more than 4% of your generation?
7. What are the next steps you are going to take?





# FIGHT

## FIGHT

### LESSON 3: FIGHTING FOR THE GOSPEL

In the mid-1980s, in the early stages of the AIDS epidemic in the United States, a medical researcher was working in a lab that was trying to better understand this terrible disease. In this work, he stumbled across something else that was completely unexpected but also world-changing—he discovered a cure for cancer. Why have you not heard about this? Well, even though he found this amazing discovery that could save so many, he became concerned that some of his friends in cancer research facilities would not like him anymore because they would basically be out of work. Plus, his biggest interest was AIDS research and he didn't want to leave that work. So he kept this incredible, life-changing gift to himself until the day he died, and the cure died with him. Think about all the people that could have been saved if he had just stopped thinking about himself and started thinking about others?

This story is completely untrue. I made it up, and I apologize if you find this insensitive, because I get it. Cancer is a terrible disease that has affected almost everyone we know. I too have gone through the pain of having to watch a family member in the final stages of this disease destroying their body and watching them waste away, having to call in hospice as they slipped into a coma and yet were still in so much pain.

I want you to put away your anger at me for just a moment and think about something. What did you think about this made up researcher as you heard this story? Selfish? Jerk? Those are probably the only words I can type here that you are thinking. Just imagine—someone has a cure to the disease that affects so many, yet they keep it to themselves for whatever the reason. If that truly happened, you would be ticked. You would hunt this person down. You would yell, “Why did you not save my (fill in the blank)?!!!”

Guess what...you do the same thing almost every day. You have the cure to the number one disease in the world that affects 100% of the people in the world, yet you keep it to yourself. You watch your friends and family members, as well as people you just pass by struggle, suffer, and even die, when you could share the one thing that could save and restore them and you don't even care. You have the one thing that could bring comfort and hope as your friends lives are destroyed because their parents have allowed this terrible disease to ruin their lives, and you say nothing.

What disease am I talking about? Sin. What's the cure? The Gospel. We, as followers of Christ, have the answer the world is looking for, and yet less than 50% of Christians will ever share their faith. This happens for two primary reasons; first, people don't think they know what the Gospel is or how to share it. Second, people are afraid.

We have to deal with this and FIGHT to share the Gospel at every opportunity. We also need to understand that the Gospel is more than just getting saved and sharing that truth with others, and we have to fight for this second piece as well. I want to address these issues with you, walk you through a plan for sharing the Gospel, and talk about what else you need to FIGHT for everyday if you are truly going to live out the Gospel with your life.



# FIGHT

## 1. YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL.

I don't care what your past is, what biblical knowledge you have, or anything else you might be worried about. If you've come to know Jesus, you have a story of redemption and life-change to tell, and oftentimes telling someone how Jesus has changed your life is the best and only way needed to help someone else experience life-change. So if nothing else, just share your story.

## 2. FEAR COMES FROM SATAN.

### Read 2 Timothy 1:7

*"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."*

Sharing the Gospel is a spiritual battle (more on that in a later lesson). Satan doesn't care if you go to church. He doesn't care if you stay out of trouble. But when you start trying to share the Gospel and he's at risk of losing souls, he will go to war to stop you. One of the biggest tools that he uses is fear; but if you feel afraid of sharing the Gospel, you need to know that is a lie straight from Satan, ask Jesus to empower you to speak the truth, and then do what you have been called to do. This lie comes in many forms.

What are some lies you know Satan has told you when you are about to share the Gospel?

Here are some I've been told:

They won't be my friend anymore.  
I'll offend them.  
Maybe they are already saved.  
I don't have enough knowledge to share the Gospel.  
I'm not a good enough person to share the Gospel.  
Someone else will do it.

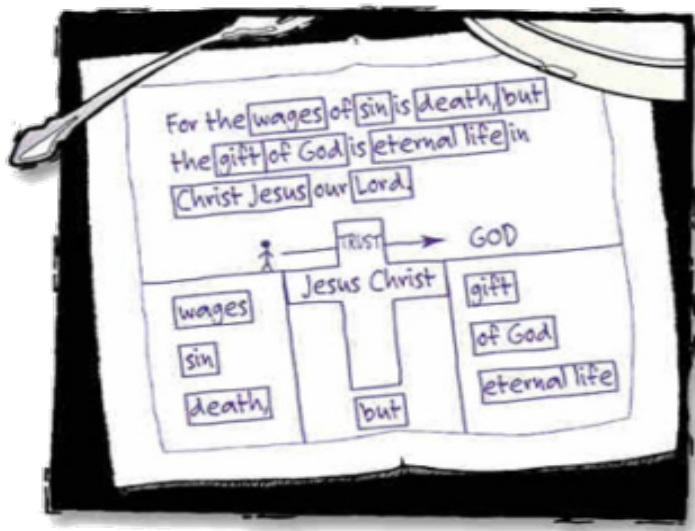
These are all lies. Reject them. Cling to God. Satan will flee and the Gospel will win.

## 3. THE GOSPEL IS AWKWARD BUT NOT COMPLICATED.

The Gospel boils down to this: we all have a sin problem. No matter what we do, we can't solve that problem, therefore we deserve death. But Jesus came and died in our place, and if we believe Him and trust Him to forgive us of our sins and be Lord of our life, we are saved, forgiven and given a new life. No matter what kind of relationship you have with a person, this will be awkward to share. People don't like to hear that they deserve death. They don't even like to hear that they have a problem or need anything. But if you stick to the simple truth of this sin problem, you can power through and force them to wrestle with the truth instead of allowing them to distract you or themselves with pointless debates about history, the church, etc.

Here's a link to a simple plan to help you. I've also included a graphic in case you want to practice without the script: <http://revivalnotsurvival.com/gospel.html>

# FIGHT



**NOTE TO LEADERS:** I encourage you to take some time and allow your students to practice sharing the Gospel with each other.

It's that simple. One verse and you can help someone understand the beautiful picture of the Gospel and their need for it.

## 4. FIGHT TO LIVE OUT THE GOSPEL EVERY DAY.

**Read Romans 6:1-2.**

*"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?"*

**Read John 10:10.**

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

The Gospel is not just about getting saved and getting to go to Heaven; it's about a whole new life. Yes, it's true that we can't lose our salvation and we have grace every day, but that doesn't mean we should abuse that and live however we want to. We have died to all of that. Our lives are not the same. Our lives are not ours anymore. And when we live in this way we get life as God always intended it. That's what the second half of the verse means. So you need to work every day to do life with other believers, and FIGHT to ensure that you are truly living out the Gospel and being a light to others so that they will want what you have—because you may be the only Jesus that they ever see.





# FIGHT

## LESSON 3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share a time you shared the Gospel with someone.
2. If you haven't shared the Gospel, why not?
3. Who in your home needs to hear the Gospel? In your school? In your community?
4. What changes can you make as a student ministry to be more focused on sharing the Gospel?
5. What next steps are you going to take?



# FIGHT

## FIGHT LESSON 4: FIGHTING HELL

Have you ever seen a fight?

I'm not saying you should go watch one, but I'm just wondering if anyone has.

If you have, have you ever seen someone fight blindfolded?

Probably not. Why?

Because it would be dumb to fight without seeing your opponent. Most professional fighters won't even take fights on short notice because they would not have enough time to learn about who their opponent is.

Our FIGHT is the same way. If we are going to FIGHT effectively, we must know who are our battle is against and why that matters.

### 1. THIS IS A SPIRITUAL BATTLE.

**Read Ephesians 6:12.**

*"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

This can be hard to get our minds around, but it is an essential truth you must grasp if we're going to win this fight. As we alluded to in the last lesson, we are battling Satan and his evil forces, not people. This means you can't fight the way the world does. You can't see things the way the world sees them. And this means you must be dedicated in all aspects of your life because our enemy is big—but thankfully our God is even bigger.

Why do you think it matters that we know this is a spiritual battle?

### 2. YOU ARE USUALLY DEALING WITH ISSUES THAT ARE BELOW THE SURFACE.

**Read 1 Samuel 16:7**

*"But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'"*



What does this verse tell you about God?

What do you think it might tell you about the way we are supposed to deal with/interact with the world?

We have discussed in previous lessons that the world has a sin problem. Some of these sins are visible and some are hidden. Some of them are hidden really well, and even the ones that are not have a root problem that you can't see. This root problem is what God looks at. He doesn't see the outward appearance that we do, that might make us think someone has it all together or that they're beyond redemption—He sees the heart and who someone could be, who He desires them to be.

We need to pray to see people the way God sees them. We need to ask God to show us the pain and sin in people's lives so that we can reach out to them and show them how God can bring healing and fill the void in their lives. We need to remember that we are no different than anyone else, other than that we have found Jesus. No matter what they have done, what it boils down to is that they have sinned and need a Savior, and we need to bring them that Savior. We can't see someone who meets all the checklists of teenage success and think they must be okay, or a "good" person. We need to ask God to help us see deeper and to reveal whether they know Him or not. This practice also helps to keep us going.

### 3. PEOPLE ARE GOING TO HURT YOU.

**Read Luke 10:16**

*"Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me."*

**Read John 15:18**

*"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."*

You would think that offering people the gift of forgiveness and life would cause them to hug you and lift you up in celebration, but it might not. Many people will hate you. Many will reject you. Many may disown you. Even some Christians will abandon you because they think you're crazy for "sharing the Gospel so much." But remember, you are dealing with deeper issues—sin problems—and are fighting a spiritual battle. As you allow God to work through you, the Holy Spirit is convicting them of their sin and their need for a Savior. Satan then tries to harden their hearts so they do not hear the truth and respond to it, and this might cause them to lash out. Other believers might lash out because they don't want to have to go out and live out their calling as you are. Either way, the hurtful words or rejections are not about you; they are about those people rejecting God's work in their lives. I say this as an encouragement, because sometimes the road will get hard and feel lonely. Sometimes you will get beaten up in this FIGHT. But





# FIGHT

remember, it is not about you. You have been given a mission and you must fulfill it. People are rejecting God and not you. So when those hurtful things happen, take it as a point of pride, a battle scar, and remind yourself that you must be doing something right. Then persevere and keep doing it.

## 4. YOU MUST PREPARE FOR BATTLE.

In order to take on that attitude you must get ready for battle.

### Read Ephesians 6:10-18

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** If you have time feel free to go in-depth on the armor of God.

Every single day, every single moment, you must prepare for battle. You must pray to God for wisdom, direction, and strength. You must read God's word so that you know the things to say and you know what God might be calling you to do. Doing these things will rejuvenate you for the battle ahead. Please know I am not talking about "check the box" reading and praying; I'm talking about "on your face, crying out, praying truth over people, getting ready for battle" reading and praying. It'll feel weird at first, but read the Psalms. Listen to how passionately and boldly the writers prayed. You need to do it the same way. When you do, when you equip yourself for battle, amazing things happen.

### Read Luke 12:11-12

*"When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."*

### Read Deuteronomy 31:6

*"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."*

When you study scripture, you discover some great promises that can embolden you and give you something to cling to during trials. You realize that God never promised that things would be easy, only that He would walk with you, so you can persevere. When we pray and study we are reminded that this is not about us. God gives us the strength. God gives us the words. God is the one who saves people; we are merely called to be humble and obedient.

It's time for you to prepare for battle. I want you to begin to make a battle plan. Think about the things and people you know Satan is going to use to discourage and derail you. Think about the work you know you need to do and what the deeper issues are that have caused the pain in the lives around you, or the issues in your community. Decide who can go to battle with you on a daily basis. Then, as a community of believers, begin to pray and prepare to FIGHT.



# FIGHT

## LESSON 4 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What battles in your personal life did you not see as spiritual battles but now do? At home? At school? In your student ministry?
2. How will seeing battles as spiritual change your outlook and actions?
3. What steps will you take to wage spiritual warfare in your life? Home? School? Community? Student ministry?



## FIGHT

### LESSON 5: FIGHT FOR TRUTH

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** You can have the students answer these questions or make them rhetorical and just have them think about whether they know the answers.

How is someone saved?

How many true religions are there in the world?

What is sin?

How does God feel about \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with the big issue your community faces)?

Was Jesus God?

Is there an afterlife?

Does it matter what we do with this life?

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** Now have them start talking if you haven't yet.

Do you know the answers to any of these? What do the people around you say about some of these questions? Do you have any idea what they said 10-20 years ago?

You need to be a theologian or Biblical scholar to answer these questions, although the more knowledge you can gain the better. What I am saying is that possibly the biggest FIGHT you will have is to know what the truth is and then defend it and live it out.

This is the case for a couple of reasons. For one, you live in a world that does not believe in absolute truth. People believe that there is room for all beliefs, that their life is not your business, and that if their "truth" works for them, then there isn't enough room for someone else's "truth" to work for them. You are going to have to FIGHT against this and know the difference between the actual truth and the lies. You are going to have to be ready to stand firm when people call you judgmental, hateful, close-minded, bigoted, or whatever else, because you are allowing Biblical truth to guide your words and actions.

The second piece of this is that truth in the church has been clouded as well. A lot of people have become so used to things that are a part of their culture that they assume they are biblical truth. I mentioned at the beginning of this study that some people have come to believe that a certain political party is the one that Christians must be affiliated with when we know the truth; that no manmade thing will fully align with





Biblical truth. At some point, the corruption of the world will be part of it. Another example comes from my teenage years. I grew up in East Texas. One morning, the pastor had all the “young people” come to the center of the auditorium. He proceeded to preach at–not to–us about how we needed to go home and break all of our rap and rock CDs (a CD is a circular disk with a shiny bottom that has music on it. It only contains one album though, unless you burned it from music on Napster...oh, Napster is...never mind!) I am not saying this was not a lesson we needed to hear, but can you see the glaring omission? He didn’t say anything about country music. Why? Probably because all of his congregation would have stopped showing up. You see, most people in East Texas like country music, and because they like the sound or maybe are comfortable with some of the themes and images, no one sees anything wrong with it. Again, I’m not saying rock is bad or country is good or vice versa; the point is that the church had taken their culture and what they like and molded their worldview of what it means to be a fully committed follower of Christ to their preferences instead of biblical truth.

What are some ways that your community has accepted things as biblical truth when they are in fact just cultural preference?

As you can see, this FIGHT for truth will be difficult, but it will be one of the biggest FIGHTS you must face and must win if you are going to turn the tide so that more than 4% of your generation follows Christ.

People spend years studying culture, psychology, and other religions so they can be sure they are ready to defend their faith and know what truth is, and I encourage you to always look for ways you can strengthen your faith as well; but we don’t have time for an all-encompassing study right now, so I just want to leave you with a few big ideas to get you started.

## 1. YOU NEED TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF YOUR FAITH.

### **Read 1 Corinthians 13:11**

*“When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child:  
but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”*

1

### **Read Ephesians 4:14**

*“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.”*

How often do you get into the Bible outside of Church?

How many of you would come to church if your parents didn’t make you?



# FIGHT

For many people your age in the church, your faith is actually your parents' faith. You believe what they tell you to believe without digging into scripture. You only pray at meal times or if you have a family prayer time. You never get into the Bible outside of formal church Bible study times. Then what happens when you get on your own? You start to question why you believed all that Christianity stuff, or if you ever really did at all. Why? Because you have no roots; you have just been borrowing your parents' faith instead of developing a deep-rooted faith that is your own. You have just been being fed instead of going out and actively living out your faith so that you can have experiences you can draw from when times get tough, so you remain faithful and remember that Jesus is who He said He was and nothing compares to following Him.

That is what these verses talk about; you must grow in your faith and mature so that you can stand strong, know what the truth is and not be deceived by the lies of the world. You must work toward full maturity in Christ so that no matter how hard things get you continue to fight.

## 2. SPEAK IN LOVE.

### Read Ephesians 4:14-15

*"Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."*

Remember that we started by talking about how everything boiled down to loving God and loving people? That has not changed. If you are going to follow the truth and speak it to others, you must do it all in love—not in anger, judgment or bitterness. This does not always mean that you will have a sweet tone; one day love might mean jumping on top of a cafeteria table and shouting the Gospel to your friends at the top of your lungs. What it means, though, is that you always come from an attitude of humility and brokenness. You are humble in the fact that you are nothing without Jesus, and the only difference between you and the people you are trying to reach is that you have Jesus. You are also broken because you realize that sin is destroying their lives and they need help. This keeps you from trying to decide if something was their fault or not, whether they deserve help, or whatever the case may be. You just want them to know that they can experience life-change in Jesus.

You may have to work to develop this attitude of humility and brokenness so you can speak and act in love. Trust me, it does not come naturally, but the only way we will win this FIGHT is if we also make sure we are fighting the battle the right way.



### 3. FOCUS ON JESUS.

#### **Read John 14:6**

*“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

Case closed. That is what it is all about. Jesus is the only truth and the only way to life and a relationship with our heavenly Father. We can’t do enough good stuff or avoid enough bad things. We need Jesus—and so does everyone else.

When other people remain your focus, you will act in love because you will not get caught up in whether someone’s lifestyle is sin or not. Even if they have just told a lie, they need Jesus. You will not have to worry about whether you know every inch of every world religion. You just know people need Jesus and He’s offering them redemption and life to its fullest. You will always act in love because you know Jesus gave His life, the greatest gift of love there is, so that you may have life, and you can go out and show others that love so they can have life as well.

Keep your eyes and hearts on Jesus. Be motivated to know Him and make Him known. Don’t get distracted by pointless arguments and the culture around you, Christian or not, deciding what the hot issue of the day is; just FIGHT for Jesus and FIGHT to make sure others come to know Him.

#### **Read 2 Timothy 4:7-8**

*“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”*

#### **Read Matthew 25:23**

*"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"*

As it stands, 4% of your generation will follow Christ. Did you forget yet? 96% of your generation will die and go to Hell. 96% of your generation will live without purpose and hope—unless we do something about it.

I think that’s the saddest part of all of this. Generations of Christians could have fixed this problem, but we pursued all these passions and goals the world has to offer. You could fix this but you have probably been pursuing comfort and worldly goals as well. None of those things we pursue come close to being able to look back on our lives and say we fought the good fight and we finished to hear our Master, our Heavenly Father, say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”





Lay everything down to FIGHT for the souls of a lost and dying world around you. Sacrifice everything so that nothing stands in between you and Jesus and nothing derails your pursuit of knowing Him and making Him known. FIGHT the good FIGHT. FIGHT the right way. And FIGHT until your last and dying breath. If you do that, I firmly believe you will change the world and live a life you never dreamed possible.



# FIGHT

## LESSON 5 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How have you taken ownership of your faith? How do you need to grow in taking ownership of your faith?
2. When have you tried to do the right thing but failed to do it in love?
3. What is taking your focus off of Jesus?
4. What do you feel is the way God wants to use your time, talents and passions to FIGHT for your generation?
5. What next steps are you going to take?