



VOL. 2
Jesus

MILESTONES

Connecting God's Word to Life





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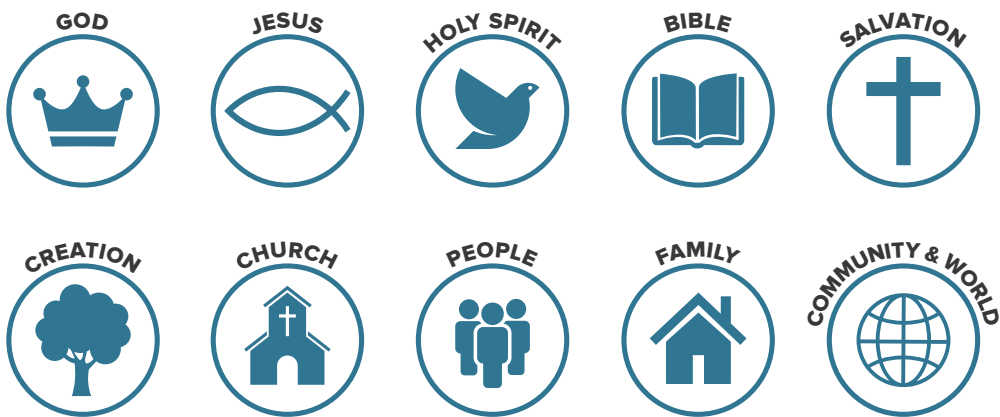
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MILESTONES / INTRODUCTION

Milestones was developed by the creators of *Bible Studies for Life: Students*, which exists to point students and student leaders to the application of biblical teaching to everyday life through weekly group Bible studies and additional resources. Every lesson within *Bible Studies for Life* contains a bible study that points students to Jesus, is rooted in Scripture, and provides application for living in today's context. The topics and subjects chosen in each quarter of *Bible Studies for Life* fit within a larger framework called *Levels of Biblical Learning*. *Levels of Biblical Learning* consists of ten theological topics we believe students should grasp before graduating high school. These include:



Within these ten topics are 52 theological statements, which make up the core content students would be exposed to and learn each year as they go through *Bible Studies for Life*. The quarterly topics and Scripture passages that make up each lesson in *Bible Studies for Life* are tied the framework of *Levels of Biblical Learning*, which guides the Scripture selection.

While we are able to connect students to the *Levels of Biblical Learning* and the theological statements in each lesson of *Bible Studies for Life*, we wanted to provide a resource capable of going deep into the weight and significance these levels have for personal faith and discipleship. This is what *Milestones* seeks to do. Over the course of six volumes, each of the 52 theological statements will be explored in depth, noting both the theological importance and personal application each has for everyday life. By going through these six volumes, we hope students will grow in their personal knowledge and understanding of God and His world. We also pray that God will use these resources to equip another generation to boldly proclaim the truth of the gospel in a world where Jesus—the truth—is desperately needed.

MILESTONES / HOW TO USE

This Bible-study book includes eight weeks of content for group and personal study. Each session is divided into the following components:

ENGAGE

Each session opens with a *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement*, which gives an overview of the session's topic. Following the statement, each session contains an introduction to help your group as you begin your time together, setting up a natural transition into the material for each week.

DISCUSS

The Discuss section expands upon the *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement*. During this time, groups will explore Scripture, answer questions, and engage with additional content to help explain the session statement.

LIVE IT OUT

The Live It Out section is designed to close out your group time by calling out three specific points of application under the headings of Christ, Community, and Culture. By doing so, this section seeks to demonstrate specifically what the session material teaches us about Christ, how to live in Community, and how to engage with Culture.

DOING, BEING, AND APOLOGETIC STATEMENTS

This section also contains Doing, Being, and Apologetic statements. These statements are directly related to the *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement*, and provide opportunity for the group to expand on what these doctrinal truths communicate about us as individuals, how we are to live, and how we might engage culture apologetically.

DEVOTIONS

Three personal devotions are provided for each session to take students deeper into Scripture and to supplement the content introduced in the group study. With biblical teaching and introspective questions, these sections challenge students to grow in their understanding of God's Word and to respond in faith.

LEADER GUIDE

At the back of this book, you'll find a leader guide to help you prepare each week. This guide will help you gain a broad understanding of the content and learn ways to engage with students throughout your time together.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING STATEMENT



Jesus is fully God and fully man, and despite being tempted while on earth, remained altogether free from sin.

Jesus is not like anyone else who ever lived. No religious tradition has anyone like Him. Nobody even comes close. Some religions have people who claim to be hearing directly from God. Others believe God is in the trees or in the sun. But Jesus is something completely different and, at least on the surface, a little strange: He is fully God and fully human. He's both. All at the same time.

Why is it important that Jesus is both fully God and fully man?

THE WORD

It's difficult to imagine something that is two separate things at once. Try to think about a perfectly round edge that is also totally jagged. Or a snail that is also a falcon. We're not good at thinking like this, because it is what we call a contradiction.

Try to imagine more contradictions like this. What other things can only be one thing or the other—not both?

Even more difficult to imagine that happens to also be a central idea in Christianity: Jesus was totally, completely, perfectly human. But He was also totally, completely, perfectly God. How could this be?

What are some things you know to be true about humans?

What are some things you know to be true about God?

Read Genesis 1:1-3.

Investigate the text. What does verse 1 tell us about God and what He did?

Who else was around when God was doing this (v. 2)?

These three verses—the first three verses of the Bible—are the first place we see what people call the Godhead, or the Trinity. It tells us something about God and what He's like: He's one God, one Divine Creator. But He also exists as three distinct Persons. We see the first Person of God in verse 1. He's the One who created everything. We see the second Person of God in verse 2. God's Spirit is never far from God, because they work, observe, and move together.

But verse 3 tells us something incredibly important. When God created everything, He did it by speaking. He used His Word. God, His Spirit, and His Word are three distinct Persons of the same Creator. We're going to focus on that third person: God's Word.

GOD'S WORD MADE FLESH

Our words have incredible power. They have the power to hurt, as well as the power to heal. However, God's Word is even more powerful: His Word created everything around you. God's Word came to prophets and kings, to shepherds and priests. Finally, God's Word did something incredible: it came in the form of a person.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it. ... The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

JOHN 1:1-5,14

What amazing things do these verses say about the Word of God?

John went on to explain that when the Word became flesh, the world got to know Him as Jesus. To call this occurrence anything less than a miracle would be doing a disservice. Jesus was both fully God (because He is the Word-made flesh) and fully man (because He was born to a human woman), but there's something else about Him that is simply incredible.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.

HEBREWS 4:14-15

If Jesus were just a man, then He wouldn't be God. If He were only divine, it wouldn't be a big deal that He didn't sin. The fact is that He is both. And He was certainly tempted to sin.

Sin entered the world the second mankind put themselves above God. God told them not to do something, but they decided they wanted to be on the throne of their own hearts instead of God. But unlike human beings, Jesus overcame temptation—every single time. We have three examples of this for us in Scripture (Matt. 4:1-4). Jesus had the power to do anything He wanted. Instead, He was submitting Himself to God's timing, not waiting for "permission" from the devil.

When is it difficult for you to trust God's timing?

LIVE ON THE WORD

If God is the one in charge of the way we live, His Word is sufficient for us to rely on when the temptation to do otherwise comes along.

Notice what Jesus did here. He is the Word of God in the flesh, but He still used resources that we have available to us to show us how we can act like He does. His entire life was completely rooted in the Word of God—to the point that even when He was tired, hungry, and weak, it was the first thing out of His mouth.

Do you think that it is reasonable to expect humans to behave exactly like Christ did? Why or why not?

What do you think is something we can do to help us start to respond to temptation the way Jesus did?

Jesus' comparison of God's Word to bread was on purpose. Just like physical bread fills our physical needs and gives us physical strength, God's Word fills our spiritual needs and gives us spiritual strength—the kind of strength it takes to stand up to temptation. If we're going to be like Jesus and stand up to temptation, we need to follow His example and lean on the Word of God.

How many times did you eat yesterday? Would any of those meals have kept you from being hungry the next day? Why or why not?

How many times did you read God's Word last week? Were any of these "spiritual meals" enough to satisfy you for the next day? Why or why not?

Let's take a cue from Jesus, and commit ourselves to knowing and trusting God's Word like Jesus did.

BEING // Because Jesus took our sin and gave us His righteousness in its place we are now accepted into God's presence—even though we were once separated from God.

DOING // Because Christianity necessarily involves following Christ, we should continually live in obedience to His commands as an expression of our faith in and love for Him.

APOLOGETIC // Whereas many claim that Jesus was a good man or a great teacher, the truth is that Jesus is God (John 1:1,14; 8:58; 10:30).

CHRIST

Most ancient Jews would have put us to shame when it comes to knowing the Word of God, but Jesus is a cut above the rest. He lived and breathed nothing but God's Word: teaching it at every opportunity and letting it guide His actions, motivations, and desires. While His standard is one we will never reach this side of heaven, writing the Word on your heart is something you can begin doing right now (Prov. 7:3).

Can you quote a verse from memory? If so, write it out.

Commit to memorizing at least one verse this week. You may even start with one Jesus quoted. The first verse He would have memorized as a child is Deuteronomy 6:4-5: "Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." Write out the verse you plan to memorize this week.

COMMUNITY

Even Jesus, the Son of God, didn't do everything by Himself. The majority of His ministry was spent investing in His closest friends. You probably have a godly community around you, too—at your church, perhaps in your family, and maybe in your friend group. Develop close godly relationships with the people around you and help each other through both the good and the bad times. Sometimes, it's the people around us who can give us the extra push we need to avoid temptation.

How do you think having godly people around you can help you avoid temptation?

CULTURE

In Ephesians 2, Paul divided people up into two categories: Those who are “dead in [their] trespasses and sins” (v. 1) and those who have been made “alive with Christ” (v. 5). Nothing has changed in the two thousand years since he wrote those words. The people around us are still divided up into those two categories. As followers of Jesus, we have a prime opportunity to demonstrate an alternative to living a life dead to sin and temptation.

Out loud, read Ephesians 2:1-5. What do you think the difference is between those who are “dead” and those who are “alive”?

What kind of life do you think would catch the eye of someone who doesn't know Jesus and make them ask, “I wonder what they have that I don't”?

Session 1

DEVOTIONS

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

In the Book of Exodus, when God introduced Himself to Moses, it was the first time in centuries God gave mankind a name by which we might know Him. To Moses, God referred to himself as “I AM” (Ex. 3:14).

The Gospel of John records seven “I am” statements spoken by Jesus; identifying Himself with the same “I am” of the Old Testament. He is the God who was, the God who is (meaning that He exists now), and the God who is coming back. Take a look at the way Jesus continued this beautiful practice of identifying Himself with elements of the Old Testament.

“I am the bread of life,’ Jesus told them. ‘No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again.’”

JOHN 6:35

Consider the grammatical tense of the words “I am.” Any adjective added to those two words would give a descriptor that falls short of who God is. Any statement of God speaking only of the past, as in “he was,” without affirming His consistency today suggests that God has changed. He has not. Any statement of God suggesting “he will be” presupposes that He is not already that way now. He is. Thus, God is the great “I am.”

Thinking of the bread God gave the Israelites from heaven in Exodus, describe ways in which Jesus is similar.

Since Jesus is obviously not describing Himself as literal bread, what was He saying?

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Do not let the darkness of this world overwhelm you. If you are a Christian, you serve the God who overwhelms the darkness. Your Savior is the One who first said, “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3) and it was so. So, do not let your heart be troubled by the darkness in your personal life, or in the world at large. Fix your hope in heaven where the light lives forever. The Bible talks about Jesus, the light, this way:

Jesus spoke to them again: “I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.”

JOHN 8:12

As a Christian, you have something. You know the Light. Jesus is the Light of the world who shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome Him (John 1:5). He is simply greater. God is aware of the darkness. He knows about your pain. This is why Jesus’ statement is significant and necessary. We all know the darkness well, but how many people in your life are acquainted with Jesus, the Light?

Exactly what is darkness? In what seasons of your life have you walked in it?

Journal a prayer inviting Jesus to light up the darkness in your life. Be specific and ask God to strengthen your trust in Him.

I AM THE GATE

The next two “I am” statements of Jesus revolve around the same metaphor of a sheep pen. The people of God are the sheep and Jesus is our Shepherd. The pen itself may be interpreted as a symbol of our sinful state. Other voices may call out to us as God’s sheep, but we know His voice because He has given us His Holy Spirit and has spoken to us through His Word. Here we find ourselves penned in by our sin and no more capable of making a way out than a sheep has a way of making an escape from a stone pen. Jesus claims to be both the shepherd and the gate.

Jesus said again, “Truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.

JOHN 10:7-10

This means He not only made the way for salvation, but He has also called us to it. Others had claimed to be the Messiah before Jesus came and many have had the audacity to repeat the claim since Jesus’ life. Religious leaders of the years before Jesus’ birth had weighed down God’s people of Israel with man-made legal burdens impossible to carry. These impostors are like the sheep thieves and robbers in Jesus’ metaphor. Instead of acting like a sheep thief who leads the sheep of God’s people through some impossible way, Jesus is our Gate.

In light of this passage, why does God not allow His people to worship other gods?

Describe some of the “thieves” and “robbers” in your own life who would claim that there are other ways to God.

LEADER GUIDE / SESSION 1

ENGAGE

Start the session by reading the *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement* on page 6. Then, use the introduction provided as a way to begin your group time before transitioning to the Discuss section.

DISCUSS

Be sure to read the Discuss section on pages 7-9 before coming together as a group. Doing so will allow you to be familiar with the material and will help you select which portions of the material you would like to cover in the allotted amount of group time. Look for places in the Discuss section where you can add a personal anecdote to a question or a Scripture passage to share in addition to what has been provided. Making preparations like these will help your group time run more smoothly and be more effective in the end.

LIVE IT OUT

After your group works through the Discuss section, take some time to move through the application found in the Live It Out section on pages 10-11. Look for specific, personal ways you can connect with the material from your own past. Sharing a personal story or illustration that connects with the lesson is a great way to connect with students and creates an atmosphere where students also feel comfortable sharing.

WEEKLY LEADER TIPS

- Introduce the personal devotions that follow Session 1, and remind students to complete the session devotions on pages 12-15 before your next meeting.
- Challenge students to memorize the Levels of Biblical Learning Statement for Session 1.
- Encourage students to be in the habit of building into their personal prayer lives with what they have learned this week.

WEEKLY LEADER NOTES

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