



VOL. 6

Family, Community & World

MILESTONES

Connecting God's Word to Life





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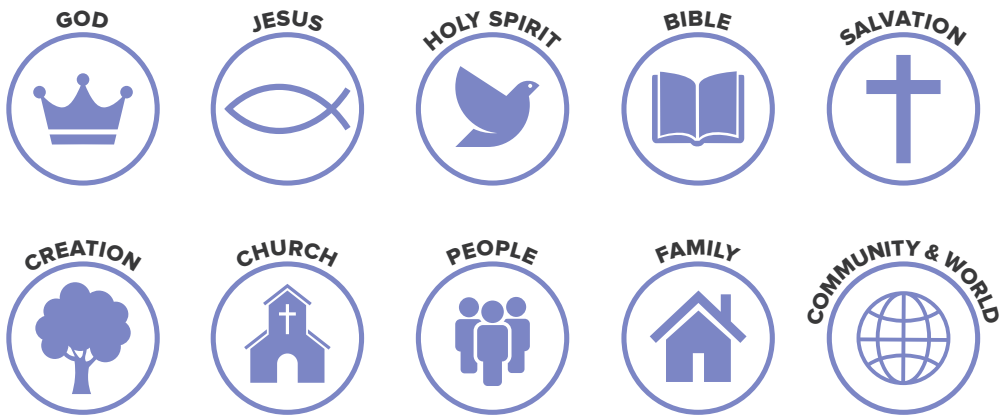
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MILESTONES / INTRODUCTION

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.

GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE FAMILY



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING STATEMENT



Families are a part of God's plan for filling the earth with His image-bearers, and are responsible for providing for the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and emotional needs of family members.

Physical traits and characteristics get passed from parent to child. Physical traits like height and hair color, as well as eye color and even dimples come from the genes we inherit from our parents. In this way, at least physically, we are like our parents.

Similarly, as people created in God's image, we are to be like our Father in heaven. Because of our salvation, we are transformed by the power of the Spirit, and we have our Father's DNA. This means we'll be characterized by features a lot like His. As we spend time with Him, we'll learn to love the things God loves, and we'll pick up characteristics and mannerisms like His. And as we demonstrate natural gifts and abilities (which He gave us in the first place according to His purposes), our Father will teach us and work with us to help us grow. He does all this to help us fulfill our purpose of reflecting His image to the world.

What are ways we show we're children of our Father in heaven?



MADE IN HIS IMAGE

New York City is a popular tourist destination. In fact, if you've ever been to New York, you probably know that it has an unending supply of cliché keepsakes—the city cab snow globe, the “I Love New York” t-shirts, and the miniature Statue of Liberty replicas.

When have you bought into the hype of something that was totally cliché?

If you've ever visited the real Statue of Liberty and seen it up close and personal, you quickly discover that the two-dollar plastic representation falls incredibly short of the real thing.

When God established creation, He did it in order to bring glory to Himself. And the way He chose to most clearly demonstrate His character throughout creation was through shaping people in His image (Gen. 1:26-27).

In people, God wove several attributes characteristic of Himself:

- **Rational:** God created us with the capacity to think and grow understanding. Further, He gave us the ability to make choices and act willfully.
- **Emotional:** We aren't simply thinkers, but we feel things deeply, which deeply affects the way we live.
- **Relational:** Though some of us are more private or independent than others, all people have been made to live in meaningful connection with other people.
- **Moral:** God wired into each person the understanding that there is right and wrong. We may not always agree about what those are, but our conscience convicts us of this reality.

Having been created in God's image, we are like Him in many ways. But just like little Statue of Liberty is an “image” of the real thing, we are small representations of our much bigger God. When we live like Jesus, the perfect human and the exact representation of God in human form, others see God in us and are reminded of who He is.

When has an “image” reminded you of the real thing?

How do you live so that others see Christ in you?

FILL THE EARTH

When God created people, He created us as “male and female” (Gen. 1:27). Here’s the reason. From the beginning, God’s plan was to fill the earth with His image-bearers (Gen. 1:28). This way, no matter where on earth we may find ourselves, we’d run into other people who reflect the image of God. And with each encounter, we’d see something unique about God in others, and they’d see something in us.

How do you see God in the “uniquenesses” of the people you know?

To actually fill the earth, God built into the physiology of the people He created the means to reproduce. As long as Adam and Eve obeyed and reproduced, God’s plan would be accomplished exactly as He desired. But we know the story. They didn’t. Sin’s curse upon creation marred the image of God in us, but it didn’t destroy it. And thankfully, God had a plan to deal with our rebellion.

But God chose a man named Abram, through whom He would spread His image throughout the world (Gen. 22:17-18). Adam and Eve failed to obey God and their descendants chose to ignore God’s calling on their lives. The Bible does say “that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time” (Gen. 6:5). So, God used Abram to accomplish His original plan.

Later, God told David, “I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. I will make a great name for you like that of the greatest on the earth” (2 Sam. 7:8-9). Much like Abram, God blessed David. God made David’s name great among the nations so others would look to him as an example of what it means to be blessed by God and to live in ways that reflect God’s character.

In Matthew’s gospel, we read of another man who was blessed by God, to whom God would give a great name: Jesus (1:1). Jesus came from the line of Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, and from David, Israel’s great king. When we follow Jesus and live like Him, we are involved in God’s command to Adam and His promise to Abraham and David to fill the earth with those who’d reflect God’s image to the world.

Why is it so important to God that the earth be filled with His image-bearers?

MEETING OUR NEEDS

There are undoubtedly times when your parents, or others in charge of raising you, exercise their authority in ways you don't appreciate. They say no to things you want, and they tell you to do things you don't really want to do.

When have you been asked or told to do something you didn't appreciate, but that was good for you?

We may not always like it, but these kinds of experiences help us to grow up. In fact, if life was always easy for us, and we got exactly what we wanted all the time, we'd remain immature our whole lives. Jesus was very clear that we'll face things difficulties in our lives (John 16:33), and learning to deal well with these is essential to becoming mature in Christ.

One of the greatest responsibilities God has given to families, particularly to parents, is that we would love each other well and help one another grow into healthy, mature individuals. Parents are called to discipline their children in order to foster their growth (Prov. 13:24). Parents are to keep in mind that this is always to be done in a loving manner. If not careful, parents may discipline in a way that does as much harm as good.

Of course, though parents do have responsibility in the lives of their children, kids are people too. They have their own personalities and preferences, and will make their own choices. The Bible speaks to this and calls children to partner with their parents in their growth (Col. 3:20).

When parents provide for their children's needs—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—and when children honor their parents in a healthy way, this establishes the best environment for young people to grow in maturity.

When have you received loving discipline you didn't necessarily appreciate at the time?

How have your parents, or others who've raised you, provided for your growth physically, emotionally, and spiritually?



BEING // Because we were meant to live in relationship, God’s design is that we would experience love, acceptance, support, and guidance through an earthly family. Further, God’s children are part of a spiritual family—the church—where we experience these things. We also find all of these perfectly in God, our Father.

DOING // We are called to honor God in the ways we treat our family. Therefore, we should work to intentionally show family members love and forgiveness.

APOLOGETIC // Many people today believe the definition of marriage is subjective and flexible, and that as long as people “love” each other, they have the right to be “married.” However, the Bible clearly defines marriage as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman for life.

CHRIST

God intentionally designed the family to carry out His plans for filling the earth with His image. As families continue to grow in their relationship with Christ, they continue carrying out God’s plan.

How can you help cultivate devotion to Christ within your own family?

COMMUNITY

Whether or not we have an earthly family, God gave us the church to serve the purpose of being a spiritual family.

What can you do to serve and encourage your church family?

CULTURE

God's desire for families is often not lived out in our world today as a result of sin's curse on the world.

How can you display God's plan for the family in your daily life?

Session 1

DEVOTIONS

HONOR YOUR PARENTS

We awkward humans get to act out something eternal and perfect. God designed us in His image—male and female. He instituted marriage in Eden and gave husbands and wives wisdom for how they can resemble Christ and the church in their marriages. Through Christ and the church, spiritual life is created. Through husbands and wives, human lives are created. Through these beautiful and lasting spiritual institutions, families have been designed by God to act out here on earth something that parallels what He has done for us by adopting us into His family forever.

The Bible gives clear instructions to children, even if these commands can be difficult to accept sometimes.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land.

EPHESIANS 6:1-3

Even when your parents are wrong, you have to honor them. Even if they are not living up to God's standards for them in the moment, you still have to live up to God's standards for you. They will answer to Him for how they have treated you. You will answer to Him for how you have obeyed and honored them.

Journal a prayer to God asking for His help obeying and honoring your parent(s) or guardian(s).

If your parent or guardian is single, send him or her an encouraging word of love right now.

LIVE LIKE AN ARROW

The Book of Psalms talks about how kids are a reward. Take a look:

Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD, offspring, a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons born in one's youth. Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them. They will never be put to shame when they speak with their enemies at the city gate.

PSALM 127:3-5

Arrows are meant to be fired out; not kept in bubble wrap. The purpose of the family is to help see God's heavenly will done here on earth. Your job as an arrow is to be ready to be launched into the world. So, what happens when we love our families more than we love God and His calling upon our lives?

Look at the way Jesus answered this question:

The one who loves a father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; the one who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever doesn't take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it, and anyone who loses his life because of me will find it.

MATTHEW 10:37-39

Journal a prayer to God thanking Him for each member of your family. Pray for them by name.

Journal a second prayer of commitment; promising God that His calling upon your future means more to you than the comfort of your present state. Commit your whole life and your future family plans to Him.

OUR FUTURE CALLING

Living out your biblical calling to obedience when you are at home with your parent(s) or guardian can be difficult, but it comes with the added benefit of not having to fund the whole operation. But now is the time to begin preparing for the day when you do shoulder this responsibility. One of the functions of a family is to grow and form new families from the children within it.

You cannot stay dependent forever. God expects you to be ready one day to provide for your own household. Read what Paul said about families in his first letter to Timothy.

Command this also, so that they will be above reproach. But if anyone does not provide for his own family, especially for his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1 TIMOTHY 5:7-8

So, God's Word shows a connection between providing for your family and holding fast to the faith. In fact, it is an outright requirement for pastors that they manage their children and households well. As Paul said of pastors in 1 Timothy 3:5, "If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of God's church?" It matters to God how pastors treat their families and it matters to God how you treat yours.

What statements have you made, or rebellious actions have you taken to defy your parent or guardian's authority lately?

In light of these passages, how will you repent from these sins and make peace with your family today?

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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