

Lose Your Life to Gain Your Life

MAIN IDEAS

- **The Christian life is a daily dying to self, surrendering our wills to Jesus, and walking in obedience to Him wherever He may lead.**
- **Jesus promises eternal life for all who follow Him.**

MEMORY VERSES

...*"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."*

—Luke 9:23-24

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Luke 9:23-24
- 2) 2 Corinthians 4:17
- 3) Matthew 19:29
- 4) Psalm 16:11



TEACHER INTRODUCTION

Jim Elliot's famous quote, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose," is all the more convicting and convincing when you consider that he was murdered as he sought to bring the Gospel to an unreached people group. Following Jesus did not give Jim Elliot earthly wealth or health—no prosperity Gospel. Nor did his faith demonstrate the kind of easy-believe-ism so commonly seen in the contemporary church: "Jesus loves me and is my Savior and friend," but tragically devoid of, "Jesus is Master and Lord of my life." Jesus' call to deny oneself, pick up your cross, and follow Him is an imperative truth that our students must understand. Jesus' call to lose your life in order to truly gain it must be understood with all of its obligations and rich rewards.

In this lesson, we will explore the meaning of these two calls from Jesus, and then point to the life of another missionary, Eric Liddell, to show how God led and empowered him little by little, step by step, to fully surrender his life to Christ.

Pray that the students would be characterized by lives that are increasingly and joyfully surrendered to Lord Jesus. Pray that each student would carefully consider Jesus' call to deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow Him.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

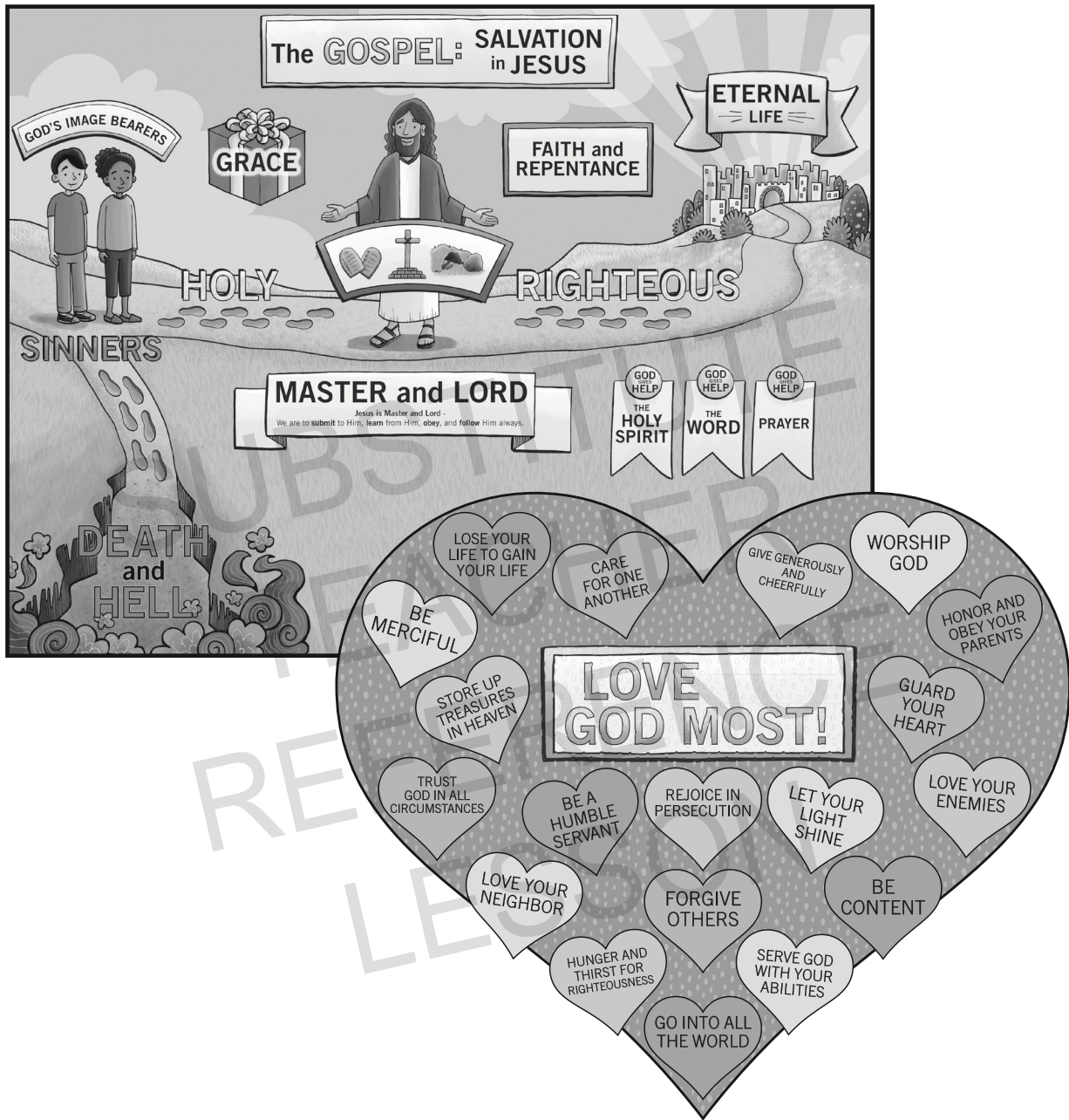
- Love God Most Heart/Salvation Sign:
 - › Life Heart (36A, cut out)
- Cut out each of these pieces:
 - › Verse 1—2 Corinthians 4:17 (36B)
 - › Verse 2—Matthew 19:29 (36C)
 - › Verse 3—Psalm 16:11 (36D)
- Elliot Quote (36E)
- Life (36F)
- Soldier (36G)
- Eric Liddell (36H)
- Growing in Faith Together Page for Lesson 36 (for each student)

OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Popsicle
- Plate
- Tape or mounting putty
- Small treat
- Whiteboard and markers

VISUALS PREPARATION:

→ This is how your combined Salvation Sign/Love God Most Heart visual will look at the end of this lesson:



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Memory Verse Puzzle (for each student)

- › Luke 9:23-24 Puzzle (OA-36, print in color on cardstock and trim the margins)
- › Scissors
- › Plastic bag or paper envelope

2. Memory Verse Game (for each small group)

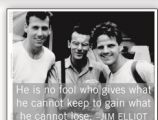
- › 10 Memory Verse Game Cards for Lessons 1–35 (Curriculum Resources DVD or downloads)

Large Group Lesson

Illustration. -----

POPSICLE, PLATE,
AND TAPE

(Tell the students that you have a special treat to give to one student. Choose a student to come up and give him the **popsicle**. Explain that he cannot eat it now. He must keep it for now and take it home after class. Ask the student if there is anything wrong with this idea. Place the popsicle on the **plate** and tell the student that he can take the popsicle home after class. Have him return to his seat.



(Display the **Elliot Quote** visual and **tape** it to the wall. Explain that the quote is by a Christian man named Jim Elliot, who is pictured on the right, standing next to fellow missionaries Ed McCully and Pete Fleming in Ecuador.)

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

(Let the students ponder the statement for a few moments. Tell them that the illustration with the popsicle can help them understand the meaning. Hold up the plate with the popsicle.)

SMALL TREAT

*Will this popsicle last? No, it has already begun melting. By the time [student's name] gets home, it will be completely melted—no more popsicle. What if I had made a different offer to the student instead. What if I had offered him something that would last beyond our class time, something like this **treat** instead. Would he be foolish or wise to trade the popsicle for the other treat?*

(Explain that it would not be foolish to give up something that you can't keep in order to gain something that you can keep. But when Jim Elliot spoke the words of the quote, he was referring to something much more important than melting popsicles or other treats.)

(Have a Sword Drill on Luke 9:24.)

Luke 9:24—“For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”

❓ *According to this verse, what does Jesus say will happen to someone who tries to save his life? [He will lose it.] What does Jesus say will happen to someone who loses his life for Jesus' sake? [He will save his life.]*



(Display the **Life** visual and **tape** it above the **Elliot Quote** visual. The photo on the Life visual shows the Auca missionary team with several local children, standing next to the plane Nate Saint piloted. Explain that the beginning quote from Jim Elliot was expressing the meaning of this verse using different words. Our life on this earth is only temporary—we can't keep it. But Jesus says that there is a way to gain eternal life—by “losing” your life for Jesus' sake.)

? What does Jesus mean by “losing” your life? Does He mean that we are supposed to look for ways to actually die?

(Have the students to look at Luke 9:23 to see the context of Jesus’ words from verse 24.)

Luke 9:23—And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

? What do you think Jesus means? (Allow some responses.)

Illustration. — — — — —



(Display the **Soldier** visual. Point out that when a young man joins the Army, he needs to understand that by doing so, he will lose some things. For one thing, he will lose his ability to do things his own way—he will have to do things the “Army way.” If his commanding officer tells him to clean his locker, he must do it. If he is told to carry a heavy load, he must do it.)

What if his commander tells him to go into battle against a dangerous enemy? Can the soldier say, “Nope, I’m not doing that. I’m out of here”? No. His life is no longer his own. It is “owned” by another. Every good soldier knows what he is signing up for—he knows being a soldier could lead to harm, or even death.

When Jesus says, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it” he meant something similar.

WHITEBOARD AND
MARKERS

(On the **whiteboard** write the following.)

Deny Yourself

This means putting yourself under Jesus’ authority—under His command. You no longer do things your way, but seek to do things His way.

Pick Up Your Cross

This means doing the hard and sometimes painful work of following Jesus and obeying His commands. It will sometimes mean experiencing persecution. And for some, it may even mean death.

Follow Jesus

Knowing all of this—you still choose to follow Him, just like a soldier knowingly joins the army and follows orders. Why would a person still want to do this? What would make it worth it?



(Read Luke 9:24 again, and then point to the **Life** visual.)

Luke 9:24—For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Story



WHITEBOARD AND
MARKERS

(Display the **Eric Liddell** visual, and tell the students that you are going to share the story of Eric Liddell. The photo shows Eric Liddell at the 1924 Paris Olympics. Point out that many people remember him as a famous Olympic gold medalist runner. But, more importantly, he was a follower of Jesus whose life was an example of Luke 9:23-24. On the **whiteboard**, make a chart with two columns titled: “Eric Lost” and “Eric Gained.” As you tell the story, write the items in the [] underneath the “Eric Lost” column.

Eric was born in China where his parents were missionaries. When he was school age, his parents sent him to live in Great Britain. As he grew up, Eric realized that God had given him a very special gift—he was a fast runner, really fast. He knew that this gift was from God, and he wanted to use it for God’s glory, so he disciplined himself to become the best runner possible.

Eric was so good that he was able to go to the Olympic games to compete. His best race was the 100-meter run. Many people thought that he was sure to win the gold medal for this race. But Eric found out that this race was going to take place on a Sunday—the day for church and worship. Eric believed it would be wrong to run on the Lord’s Day, so he withdrew from the race. He did what he believed Jesus wanted him to do, and this cost him the possibility of a medal for that race. [Olympic medal] But he did go on to win two medals for different races.

After the Olympics, Eric was very famous in Scotland where he lived. He was asked to be a speaker to many groups of people and share his faith with them. Eric was extremely shy and fearful of speaking, but he knew that Jesus had called him to share his faith, so he did it anyway. He had to lose his fear of speaking. [fear of speaking]

Two years after Eric went to the Olympics, Eric left his home and friends in Scotland in order to go to China and be a missionary. [his friends and home]

While in China, Eric met and married a woman named Flo. Soon, two little girls were added to their family. But while living in China, a war broke out. To protect his wife and daughters, Eric sent them to Canada to live. He believed that God wanted him to stay in China. [wife and daughters]

During the war Eric became a prisoner of the invading army. He was sent to a prison camp where the conditions were very difficult, but he continued to share the Gospel and help others. [his freedom]

While in the prison camp, Eric became very ill. There was no medical help for him, so he just got worse and worse. [his health]

One day as Eric was still ministering to others in the prison, he collapsed and died. [his life]

MELTING POPSICLE
ON THE PLATE

(Have the students look at all of the things that Eric lost in order to follow Jesus. It seems as if he lost everything that was important. However, Eric realized that all of the things he lost were like this—display the **melting popsicle on the plate**. He lost what he could not keep, so that he could gain what he could not lose.)

What did he gain?

(Hand out the **Verse 1-3** visuals to students to read. As they read each verse, write the words in the [] beneath the “Eric Gained” column.)

Verse 1

2 Corinthians 4:17—For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, [eternal glory]

Verse 2

Matthew 19:29—And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. [eternal life]

Verse 3

Psalms 16:11—You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. [full joy, pleasures forever]

LIFE HEART VISUAL,
LOVE GOD MOST
HEART, AND TAPE

(Remove the **Life Heart** from the pocket of the **Love God Most Heart** and **tape** this heart to the larger heart.)

Small Group Application

Choose one or more of the following suggestions for interacting with the students during this time.

Workbook

Have the students look at the three pictures in the workbook of interests or occupations people might choose. Talk about some of costs involved in pursuing each. Why do people still pursue these? What are they looking to gain? Have the students complete the table as shown. Now have the students complete the memory verse. Help the students think of ways in which there are “costs” to obeying Jesus in this way. Have the students list these in the “Cost” section. Finally, have them look up the verses listed near the “Gain” section and make a list of words that depict what is gained by following Jesus.

God is a Compassionate Father

Would your parents ask you to drive the car today? Why not? Would they expect you to go grocery shopping for the family by yourself? Would they command you to fix the roof of the house? Why not? Do your parents know your limitations? As you grow older and mature, will they expect you to do more difficult things? Remember the list of the things that Eric lost. What was first on the list, and what was last? [an Olympic medal, his life]

Point out that Eric first learned to “die” to lesser things in his life. How does this show God as a compassionate Father?

Do you think that there are any little or lesser things that Jesus wants you to “die to”? For example, does He want you to deny yourself some of the TV you watch? What could you spend time doing in its place? Have you ever had a situation like Eric’s where a sporting event was held on a Sunday morning and you were tempted to participate anyway? Does Jesus want you to “die to” your obsession with sports? How can learning to deny yourself these things help you in the future to follow Jesus in more difficult things?

Jesus Will Never Lead His Disciples Down a Path They Cannot Follow

Point out that sometimes when we read a story like Eric Liddell’s, we become fearful because we can’t imagine going through what he did. It seems scary to us. Point out that Jesus does not lead each of His disciples down the same exact path. Most Christians we know of will never be put in prison, for example.

Jesus expects you to follow Him wherever He leads you. No matter where He leads, it will mean “dying” to your own ways. It will mean doing hard things. But He will also never lead you where you cannot follow. Do you think that when Eric was young he set out to die in a prison? How had Jesus prepared him for this? What can we learn from this? What help has God given all His children? [the Holy Spirit, the Bible, prayer, the help of other Christians, etc.] If Jesus leads you to become a godly mom or dad someday, will that also require you to “die” in a way? How so?

Daily Dying to Doing Things Our Own Way

Review Luke 9:23-24. Next, have the students review some of the commands presented thus far. Then ask the following types of questions:

In order to love God most of all, what must we give up and lose? [loving other things more]
In order to guard my heart, what must I deny myself? [keeping “little” sins in my heart] *In order to love my enemies, what must I give up and lose?* [hatred for them] *In order to forgive my sister or brother, what must I deny myself?* [holding a grudge]

Emphasize that Luke 9:23-24 is not saying that we should be looking for ways to physically die or be killed. More importantly, Jesus wants us to die to “self.”

Are there situations in which it is hard for you to deny yourself? Do you ever resist doing things Jesus’ way? If you choose to do things your own way and “save your life,” what does Jesus say will be the consequence?

Optional Activities

1. Memory Verse Puzzle

Have the students cut out the individual pieces from the **Luke 9:23-24 Puzzle**, then mix them up and put the puzzle together. Give each student a plastic bag or paper envelope for their pieces.

2. Memory Verse Game

Choose a set of 10 **Memory Verse Game Cards** from Lessons 1–35 for each small group. Place the cards face down on a table or floor. Give the signal to begin. Each group must match each verse card with its corresponding reference. The groups may use their Bibles or workbooks if needed. The goal is to see how quickly each group can match all of their cards.

Send Home

- Growing in Faith Together Page for Lesson 36 (for each student)
- Optional: Luke 9:23b-24 Puzzle (OA-36, for each student)