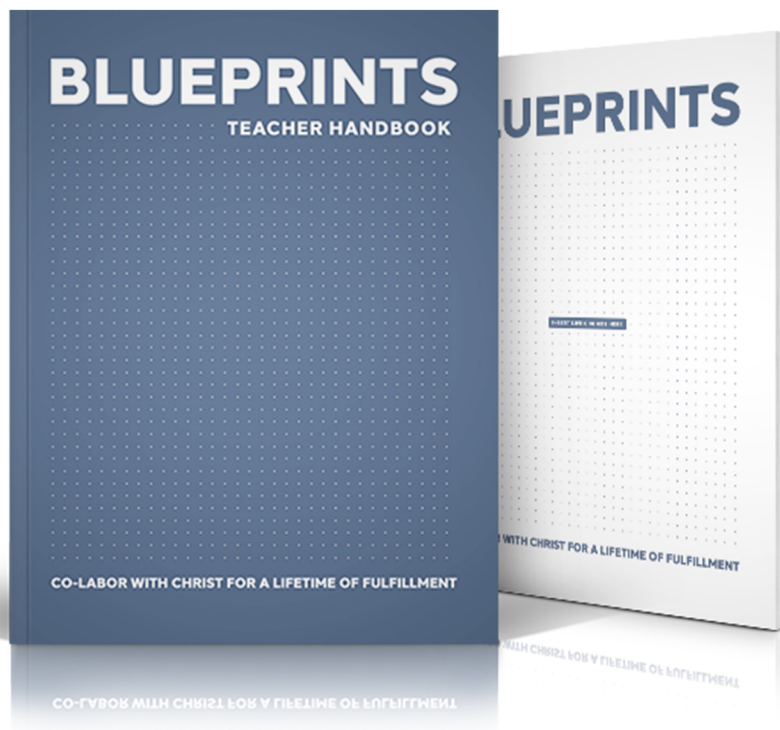


# BLUEPRINTS SAMPLER



# BLUEPRINTS

## TEACHER HANDBOOK

CO-LABOR WITH CHRIST FOR A LIFETIME OF FULFILLMENT

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## PREFACE

Many students in today's world are stressed out by the workload of school and the pressures to succeed inside and outside the classroom. However, there is often a lack of clarity for why they are even sitting in the classroom in the first place. Is it just about making good grades, or is there a deeper purpose? This lack of vision and disconnect has a number of negative effects.

Further, the “youth culture” of modern society seems to only celebrate the years of adolescence and youth but speaks very little in to how one moves into the maturity required to lead successful jobs, cultivate healthy marriages, raise vibrant families and make sustaining impact in the world.

Blueprints Bible course is about empowering students to build a life of godliness that sustains over the course of a lifetime. The curriculum aims to orient students' lives, bringing clarity to their present while also casting a hopeful but realistic vision for their future as followers of Christ. Combining biblical theology with research and insights from other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and neurology, Blueprints walks students through the major phases of life, and the specific opportunities and challenges of each phase.

Our hope is that as a result of taking this course, students will have gained a greater awareness of themselves, the natural stages of human development, and how their own Christian faith is lived out over the course of a lifetime. By gaining this perspective, we believe students will be ready to successfully co-labor with Christ in every season and age, building a life that glorifies God and blesses the world around them.

Our goal for the Blueprints Bible course is nothing short of transformation in the lives of your students, and we believe that with your partnership and commitment, this is exactly what will happen. As you teach this course, I hope you find that it's not only biblically faithful, but empowering for students to think critically and collaborate with each other.

Thanks for who you are, for serving in the development of these students, and for your role in God's greater plan of redemption. If you ever have any questions or concerns about the course, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team. We are committed to doing anything that we can to help facilitate an incredible classroom experience for you and your students.

In the fullness of Christ,

Brian Burchik  
Author of *Blueprints*

# COURSE DESCRIPTION

## Target Audience

*Blueprints* Bible course is designed for high school and college students in any Christian school classroom setting. The curriculum includes 90 days (one semester) of instruction with 50 progressive lessons that can be taught inside one-hour (or less) class periods. Allowance is given for additional sessions required for student presentations and other assessments.

## Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this one semester course, all students will have:

1. Articulated a biblical understanding of God's original intention for humanity and how we can reclaim our identity and purpose in this broken world.
2. Learned about seven specific phases of life, and the specific opportunities and obstacles that correlate with each phase.
3. Understood what it means to have an "identity in Christ" and the ways that this identity shapes how we view ourselves and others.
4. Engaged an intentional process of identifying significant events and major turning points thus far in their life and how God has been shaping them as individuals.
5. Considered the benefits of education and learning, not only for humanity in general but specifically for followers of Christ.
6. Gained insight in to the kinds of experiences they should be embracing and seeking in order to maximize their current phase of life, leading to greater preparation for adulthood.
7. Assessed what biblical adulthood looks like and how it differs from what is most often celebrated in modern culture.
8. Examined how perseverance and difficulty shapes one's own character and leads to godliness with contentment.
9. Envisioned, to the best of their ability, what an entire life of faithfulness to God looks like and how to intentionally start moving in that direction today.

## Course Materials

*Blueprints: How to Co-labor with Christ for a Lifetime of Fulfillment* (2016) by Brian Burchik  
Teacher Edition: 50 Lessons with Appendices A & B for supplemental materials and assessments.

Student Workbook – Readings, Activities, and Key Takeaways for each lesson

# COURSE DESCRIPTION

## Equipment:

Whiteboard, dry erase markers, and eraser for lesson illustrations  
Audio-visual projection capabilities (laptop, cord, monitor, Internet access)  
Props (see Appendix A)  
DVDs and Online websites (see Appendix A)

## Bibles

## Major Course Assignments and Assessments

1. **Classroom Engagement** – This includes daily engagement, small group interactions, creative writing assignments, as well as overall participation in class discussions.
2. **Student Workbook** – Students will interact with the Student Workbook that includes class notes, exercises, and occasional homework assignments. Workbooks will be graded periodically throughout the semester based on the completion of all classwork.
3. **Unit Quizzes** – Each unit quiz is comprehensive of the entire unit and includes fill-in-the-blanks, matching, true/false, and short answer questions.
4. **Phases of Life in the Movies – Essay (Lesson 2.7)** – Students will prove their understanding of the phases of life by identifying them in a movie. They will also assess the specific blessings and burdens of each phase of life that is depicted in the film.
5. **Identity Movie Reflection (Lesson 4.7)** – students will view a movie that deals with the theme of personal identity and then respond to questions based on the film.
6. **Past Experiences Timeline (Lesson 5.7)** – Students will engage in an interactive process of considering their past and how God has been at work through their various experiences – both positive and negative ones. Students will be assessed primarily for their participation and engagement in this process.
7. **Lifetime Project (Lesson 5.1)** – Students will interview people in the various phases of life, do a written reflection, and present what they've learned to the class. Although introduced in unit five, these presentations will occur at the end of the course.

# COURSE DESCRIPTION

## Methodology

To be effective in any learning environment, it is important to consider the context of those you are seeking to teach. To best educate and empower high school students today, it's imperative that the content is presented through a medium that connects with their everyday setting, is sensitive to their natural development, and engaging to their heart, mind, and imagination. To that end, this course uses dialogue education and an effective sequence of learning tasks.\*

## Dialogue Education

The primary principle of Dialogue Education positions dialogue as the means to the end result of learning, rather than as an end in itself. The principle assumes that any student has enough life experience to converse with the teacher and that learners learn best when content relates to their experience. Thus, two-way, open dialogue is an important facet of this course.

## Lesson Plans

The daily lesson plans use active verbs to engage the student and work at proficiency in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This leads to the development of the **Four I's**—an effective sequence for many of the lesson plans.

**Inductive** work that allows the learner to reflect on their past experience (Connect)

**Input** which provides some new information for the learner to consider (Teaching Points, Readings)

**Implementation** which invites the learner to apply this new information (Challenges)

**Integration** to bring the new understanding back into the context of the learner. (Key Takeaways, Homework)

\*We are indebted to the work of Jane Vella, *On Teaching and Learning*, for an understanding of dialogue education, as well as the practical order of the Four I's implemented in the lesson plans.



# COURSE SYLLABUS

Teacher Name:

Phone

Email

## Course Description

Blueprints Bible course is about empowering students to build a life of godliness that sustains over the course of a lifetime. The curriculum aims to orient students' lives, bringing clarity to their present while also casting a hopeful but realistic vision for their future as followers of Christ. Combining biblical theology with research and insights from other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and neurology, Blueprints walks students through the major phases of life, and the specific opportunities and challenges of each phase.

As a result of taking this course, students will have gained a greater awareness of themselves, the natural stages of human development, and how their own Christian faith is lived out over the course of a lifetime. By gaining this perspective, students will be ready to successfully co-labor with Christ in every season and age, building a life that glorifies God and blesses the world around them.

## Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this one semester course, all students will have:

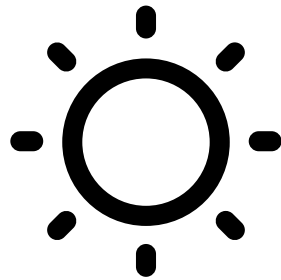
1. Articulated a biblical understanding of God's original intention for humanity and how we can reclaim our identity and purpose in this broken world.
2. Learned about seven specific phases of life, and the specific opportunities and obstacles that correlate with each phase.
3. Understood what it means to have an "identity in Christ" and the ways that this identity shapes how we view ourselves and others.
4. Engaged an intentional process of identifying significant events and major turning points thus far in their life and how God has been shaping them as individuals.
5. Considered the benefits of education and learning, not only for humanity in general but specifically for followers of Christ.
6. Gained insight in to the kinds of experiences they should be embracing and seeking in order to maximize their current phase of life, leading to greater preparation for adulthood.
7. Assessed what biblical adulthood looks like and how it differs from what is most often celebrated in modern culture.
8. Examined how perseverance and difficulty shapes one's own character and leads to godliness with contentment.
9. Envisioned, to the best of their ability, what an entire life of faithfulness to God looks like and how to intentionally start moving in that direction today.

## Course Materials

Bible

Blueprints Student Workbook

# Fulfillment



unit one



Materials

- Blueprints Student Workbook, Lesson 1.3
- Bible
- Music Video (Optional):
  - “Only You Satisfy” by Housefires Music  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuqKaK-G-8Y>) (03:14)

Overview

This lesson will begin by examining various passages in the Bible that articulate God as the source of fulfillment and satisfaction. Many students simply do not believe that God is good in this way, so it’s important for them to see it communicated in the Scriptures. We will also learn how the universal desire for happiness is not bad, but rather God-given, and He alone is able to satisfy that desire.

Introduce

Start this lesson by reviewing some of the major ideas from the previous lesson. Specifically, remind them of the human tendency to “wish away” the present phase of life, only to later “wish for it back” once we are older.

Also, review the Key Takeaway from yesterday, which is found below.

- Godliness and Contentment are not **mutually exclusive**; in Christ they can exist **together**.

Challenge #1

Picking up where we left off yesterday, this lesson begins with a study of what the Bible has to say about God as the source of fulfillment and contentment. Encourage students that this is a great opportunity to spend time in God’s Word. They shouldn’t just rush through it or read it as a textbook. Rather, encourage them slowly take in what these verses are saying, and then write one sentence about how each passage relates to the truth that God is the source of fulfillment. (Consider playing some worship music in the background to create a good atmosphere for this extended Bible study time.)



- **Psalm 16:11**
- **Isaiah 55:1-2**
- **Psalm 103:1-5**
- **Psalm 37:4**
- **1 Timothy 6:17-19**
- **Matthew 11:28**
- **Matthew 6:28-34**

### Discuss

After students have finished, ask volunteers to read each passage aloud, to review together as a class. You can also ask students what their favorite passage was as a way to engage them.

Feel free to add any further insights about the verses as they are read aloud. The more passionate you are about the passages, the more the students will see the goodness of what the Bible is saying.

### Challenge #2

After having read these Bible passages, it is now important to think practically. How do we actually find fulfillment in God in our everyday lives? This is, of course, a very important question!

The reality is that how we find fulfillment in God can vary depending on the phase of life we are in. For example, the way that you spend time with God will look different as a college student versus how you spend time with God as a father or mother to several young children (with fairly constant demands). God is sensitive to where we are in our lives, and meets us there.

Ask students to divide into groups of 2-3 and brainstorm various ways that they can find fulfillment in God as a high school student. Stress that these ideas should be very practical and concrete. (Students tend to just say very general things like “pray” but push them to be more specific. Where do you pray? How long?) They should jot these ideas down in the Workbook.



After groups have finished, have a representative from each group share one of their answers. You can record these on the whiteboard.

### Read

Next, read Jeremiah 2:13 to the class, which is also found in the Workbook.

#### **Jeremiah 2:13**

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

Explain how this passage communicates that God is the spring of living water—the one who satisfies us. However, as broken human beings, we do not seek Him, but instead try to create our own happiness in other ways.

### Challenge #3

As a final reflection, ask students to individually consider the things in their lives right now that most often distract them or take them away from spending time with God. Again, challenge them to think personally and be specific. This is an individual exercise and should be done silently. They should jot down their thoughts in the Workbook, but they will not be asked to share with the class.

- **What are the things that most easily distract you from connecting with God on a daily basis?**

### Summarize

To begin summarizing the lesson, read the quote below from John Piper, found in the Workbook as well.

*“The longing to be happy is a universal human experience, and it is good, not sinful. We should never try to deny or resist our longing to be happy, as though it were a bad impulse. Instead, we should seek to intensify this longing and nourish it with whatever will provide the deepest and most enduring satisfaction. The deepest and most enduring happiness is found only in God. Not from God, but in God. The happiness we find in God reaches its consummation when it is shared with others in the manifold ways of love. To the extent that we*



*try to abandon the pursuit of our own pleasure, we fail to honor God and love people. Or, to put it positively: The pursuit of pleasure is a necessary part of all worship and virtue. That is: The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever.”*

- John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*

This quote of John Piper helps reiterate the idea that the pursuits of godliness and contentment are part of the same journey. Some religious institutions might express something contrary, but it is important for students to see that the desire for happiness is not a bad, evil desire. This desire is universal, deep in the heart of every human being. It is not that we should abandon the pursuit of happiness, but rather take that honest desire to God for Him to fulfill. In fact, God is deeply glorified when we are satisfied in Him.

### Key Takeaway

Ask students to fill in the Key Takeaway in the Workbook:

Our desire for happiness and fulfillment is God-given and only He can truly **satisfy** this desire.

### View

To worshipfully reflect on the idea of this lesson, you can conclude by listening to a worship song that reflects the idea that God satisfies our heart. Examples include the following:

- “Only You Satisfy” by Housefires Music  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuqKaK-G-8Y>)  
(03:14)



### Materials

*Blueprints* Student Workbook, Lesson 1.4  
Bible

### Overview

In this lesson, we will look at Jesus as a model for growth and human development—physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. Students will also be introduced to the various disciplines that will help inform their learning about the different phases of life. The Bible is the primary guide for *Blueprints*, but we will also glean research from other fields of science and human development, and it's important that those fields are identified for the students.

### Introduce

Start this lesson by reviewing the Key Takeaway from the previous lesson. It is critical that students realize that the desire for happiness and fulfillment is not, in and of itself, bad. In fact, this desire is God-given, and He desires to fulfill it.

- Our desire for happiness and fulfillment is God-given and only He can truly **satisfy** this desire.

Remind students that a major focus of this course is to consider how following Jesus translates across the different phases of life.

We are going to start today by looking at the growth and development of Jesus as observed in an account of his youth in the gospel of Luke. We will see Jesus himself as a model for our own development.

### Read

Ask volunteers to read the following passage out loud while the rest of the class follows along.

**Luke 2:41-52**



### Instruct

Point out that this passage is so significant because it is the only recorded event in the Bible that gives us a glimpse into the childhood and early adolescence of Jesus. Verse 52 describes four different areas of Jesus' growth and development. Go through each of these with your students, having them fill in the blanks in the Workbook, and ask them to provide evidence using the questions below:

- **Intellectually** – Jesus grew in wisdom

**Question:** How could Jesus have grown intellectually? What evidence is in this Luke 2 passage that sheds light on how Jesus was growing his mind and intellect?

**Evidence:** Jesus was in the temple (religious center for spiritual teaching and practice) asking questions to the spiritual leaders and learning from them. (Luke 2:46)

- **Physically** – Jesus grew in stature

**Question:** What are some ways that Jesus would be growing up physically around age 12?

**Evidence:** At this point Jesus would be approaching puberty—body changing, voice cracking, etc. (NOTE: This may be a little awkward, but students need to understand that Jesus was fully God but also fully human, and therefore experienced natural physical development just like us.)

- **Socially** – Jesus grew in his favor with men

**Question:** How would Jesus be growing socially at this age?

**Evidence:** From the passage, we see Jesus developed relationships with spiritual leaders at the temple; beyond this, it can be assumed that Jesus is developing relationships with family, friends, and peers.

- **Spiritually** – Jesus grew in favor with God

**Question:** How would Jesus be growing in favor with God?





## MULTIFACETED GROWTH

1.4

**Evidence:** Jesus was learning from the Old Testament as a kid, just as most Jewish children in Israel would have at this time. He was learning new things as he grew older, continually deepening his relationship with God the Father.

**NOTE:** Explaining this aspect of Jesus' development is tricky because he is fully God, and many assume that since Jesus is God, he must just know God and the Scriptures perfectly all at once.

### Summarize

We are not just called to grow “spiritually.” Rather, we are called and invited to grow as Jesus did in various ways—intellectually, physically, socially, and spiritually.

### Explain

Since our growth is not just “spiritual,” but multifaceted, we will take time throughout this course to study pertinent insights from other fields and disciplines. Specifically, we will look at research from psychology, endocrinology, sociology, and neuroscience that helps us understand how we change and grow throughout a lifetime of faith. Let's take a closer look at the definitions of these disciplines.

### Challenge #1

Refer to the chart in the Workbook and ask students to match each discipline with its proper definition. Review the correct answers below.

<b><u>Psychology</u></b>	the scientific study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior in a given context
<b><u>Endocrinology</u></b>	the branch of physiology and medicine concerned with endocrine glands and hormones
<b><u>Sociology</u></b>	the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society
<b><u>Neuroscience</u></b>	any or all of the sciences, such as neurochemistry and experimental psychology, which deal with the structure or function of the nervous system and brain



### Discuss

Check your students' understanding by asking the following three questions, which are also included in the Workbook:

- **Which discipline are you most familiar with?**
- **Which discipline are you least familiar with?**
- **Which discipline are you the most interested to learn more about?**

### Challenge #2

Ask students to individually read the personal reflection “Looking Back, Looking Forward” by the course author and then respond to the three questions in the Workbook. After they have finished, let them share their responses with a partner nearby. Then solicit some responses from volunteers and record them on the whiteboard.

#### **Looking Back, Looking Forward**

Although I am now well beyond my high school years, it's still easy to reflect back upon this phase of life. Whether it was my obsession with being the world's greatest basketball player (which I fell short on), my first serious girlfriend and the drama that comes with that, or a transformational time of life when I began to get to know Jesus for the first time—these memories are etched on my timeline.

In these years, I was blessed with a supportive family, an incredible group of friends, and a community and school that offered an abundance of opportunity. However, even with all these things going for me, I cannot think about the high school years without also remembering the moments of discouragement, guilt, melancholy, and perhaps even some depression.

Was it the hormones of adolescence, throwing my body into a violent windstorm of emotions? Was it my teenage brain that was still developing, not fully able to consider the light at the end of the tunnel during a tough time? Was I missing a strong sense of confidence and acceptance, perhaps because I was not experiencing it at home? Or did I lack a clear vision for why I was even going to school each day and giving so much of my time to pre-calculus and memorizing random



dates for world history? On a deeper level, was I in need of a spiritual peace with God?

The answer to all these questions is “yes.” Yes, raging hormones affect the teenage body and emotions in ways that can make this temporary time a tricky one to navigate. We will discuss that. And yes, the teenage brain is still developing and neurologists have been making incredible discoveries to help us understand just what the effects of this development are. We will discuss it. And yes, of course there was plenty of insecurity and unhealthy need for approval, and I am sure there was some affirmation that was not happening in my family and more broadly in my spiritual life. Our families are broken, and thus, we experience some level of brokenness being passed down from one generation to the next. And yes, I did lack vision for how my present as a high school student connected with my future.

For all of these reasons and more, there were times in adolescence when it felt like I was drowning with little hope for a bright future. And I was not alone. Adolescence is one of the most difficult, even dangerous, phases of life to navigate. In fact, “by age group, adolescents have the highest rates of violent crime, auto accidents, homicide, and suicide,” according to Thomas Armstrong in *The Human Odyssey*.

Some of this can sound extremely negative, but you shouldn’t be discouraged. There is also unparalleled opportunity for growth and development in the teenage years. As we will see throughout this course, every phase of life has pros and cons, blessings and burdens, opportunities and obstacles. Our goal will be to learn how to maximize the opportunities, while building perspective and perseverance to make it through the obstacles.

### Questions:

- **Does it surprise you that adolescence is a “dangerous” phase of life? Why do you think this is the case?**
- **What do you think are some of your obstacles and burdens at this time in your life?**



- **What do you think are some of the opportunities and blessings at this time of life?**

## Summarize

After drawing out their responses and highlighting any insights, let students know that every phase of life has its opportunities and its obstacles. There is no such thing as the “perfect” phase, not even retirement is problem free. The reality is that every phase of life has its own unique challenges, but also its own blessings. The goal, therefore, is to embrace the opportunity of each phase, while embracing the needed perspective and perseverance to make it through obstacles.

## Key Takeaway

Ask students to fill in the Key Takeaway in the Workbook:

Every phase of life has its own unique opportunities and obstacles.

## Review

Jesus is a model for our growth – physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. As we make this journey, we are wise to recognize that every phase of life has its burdens and its blessings. Rather than constantly trying to skip ahead to the next phase, we are called to embrace the present and find God’s fulfillment there.



## Materials

*Blueprints* Student Workbook, Lesson 1.5

Video: movie clip from the Disney Movie “Up”

Start (5:19)

End (11:36)

## Overview

In this lesson, we will begin defining seven specific phases of life. The primary way that we will begin this study is by watching a scene of the movie “Up”, which depicts the various phases of a husband and wife’s life together. In response to the movie, we will define seven specific phases of life.

## Introduce

Start this lesson by reviewing the Key Takeaway from the previous lesson:

Every phase of life has its own unique **opportunities** and **obstacles**

Reiterate that every phase of life has its challenges, as well as its blessings. There is simply never a time of life that will fail to provide both sides of this spectrum. And yet, we often believe that what comes “next” (college, marriage, kids, etc.) will somehow rid us of our unhappiness or discontentment. We fail to see that “what’s next” will bring its own new challenges and obstacles.

For example, getting married brings a whole new excitement and relationship into our life. Yet, it also forces us to die to ourselves in ways that we’ve never had to do, and this process of becoming more mindful and considerate of another person presents brand new challenges. The same is true of having children. They bring new happiness, but also new challenge.

## Read

Ask a volunteer to read the following quote in the Workbook then present the key point.

*“Each stage of life is a world unto itself, a veritable ecosystem with its own atmosphere, geography, fauna and flora, and other environmental features.”*

– Thomas Armstrong, *The Human Odyssey*



## PHASES OF LIFE

1.5

Armstrong wants us to appreciate that each new phase of life really is a new experience, a new environment that calls out of us new attitudes and behaviors as we embark on new territory.

Recognize with them that because they have been grade school students for so long, it can be hard for them to really feel like life could be that different. However, when they graduate and move forward, whether to college, a job, marriage, etc., there will be entirely different lifestyles to embrace.

### Challenge #1

Before defining each phase of life, begin by watching the following clip from the movie “Up” that portrays various phases of life for a husband and wife. As students watch this clip, have them identify the different phases of life that are portrayed, as well as key events that occur in those phases. Instruct them to record what they observe in the chart in the Workbook.

### View

Play movie clip from “Up” (Start 5:19 - End 11:36)

### Discuss

Ask volunteers to share their responses, capturing the major phases and events on the whiteboard. Possible answers:

Phase	Key Events
Childhood	Opening scene with two kids using their imagination, talking about adventure under their “tent”
Early and Middle Adulthood	Marriage; buying and renovating first house; working jobs over time; trying to have children; miscarriage
Late Adulthood	Husband realizes they haven’t lived their dream; planning a trip; wife gets sick and goes to hospital; wife dies; husband not figuring out how to live as a widower

Next, continue the conversation by asking the questions below, jotting down responses on the whiteboard:



## PHASES OF LIFE

1.5

- **What were some of the opportunities (blessings) of the phases portrayed?** Possible answers:

Phase	Opportunities
Childhood	fun, excitement, imagination; first feelings of love/romance
Early and Middle Adulthood	new opportunities; making a home together; lots of energy to take on projects; dreaming about their future (as they stare at the clouds in the park); able to spend lots of time together (working at the zoo, at the park, etc.)
Late Adulthood	their relationship and love runs so deep (seen as they dance together, the husband serves his wife so well in hospital, etc.)

- **What were some of the obstacles (challenges) of the phases portrayed?** Possible answers:

Phase	Obstacles
Childhood	nothing really portrayed negative
Early and Middle Adulthood	the disappointment of losing a child; a desire for a child left unfulfilled; the practical and unpredictable expenses of life that keep them from being able to save for their dream trip
Late Adulthood	bad health and going to the hospital; the grief of losing your spouse; husband now figuring out how to live as a widower

- **Which phases of life were not portrayed?** Possible answers:
  - adolescence (jumps straight from childhood to marriage)



- parenthood (because of their miscarriage)
- mature adulthood (jumps from middle adulthood to very late adulthood, perhaps skipping the 50's and 60's)

## Summarize

This movie clip reveals powerful truths about the journey of life. Reiterate the following three larger truths strongly to the class:

- **Life does not go just as we planned**—displayed in the continuous emergencies that require the couple to “break the bank” and spend their dream trip savings. Things like this (car trouble, house maintenance, etc.) cannot be avoided and often cause us to have to sacrifice things we really would like to do (or at least delay them).
- **Life can be tragic**—this couple, like so many others, had a huge desire to have a baby and grow their family. Everything was seeming to work out perfectly until the major disappointment of miscarriage. “It would never happen to me,” we find ourselves saying, and yet as life goes on, all of us to some degree will experience major disappointment, perhaps even tragedy. God does not promise we will avoid tragic circumstances. He does, however, promise to always be with us and to never give us more than we can handle (with His grace).
- **Certain goals will take much longer than we ever anticipated, and other goals may not happen at all.** Although this sounds quite depressing, we have to come to grips with the reality that some things just don’t happen the way we hoped they would. As Christ followers, we have incredible hope for a future, where Jesus makes “all things new” (Revelation 21:5), but all hopes may not be realized on this side of eternity.

## Instruct

Now we will define seven specific phases of life, as well as the approximate ages that correlate to each phase. It is important to emphasize that the ages are rough estimates and do not match perfectly. In fact, circumstances and life events can propel us into different phases at different ages. The life process is too adjustable and fluid to fit perfectly into age categories. However, this will serve as a helpful grid for our discussion of growth and development.





## Challenge #2

Have students fill in the following phases in the Workbook, then CIRCLE the phase in which they think people feel the happiest.

1. Childhood (ages 1-9)
2. Adolescence (ages 10-17)
3. Emerging adulthood (ages 18-25)
4. Early adulthood (ages 26-39)
5. Middle adulthood (ages 40-55)
6. Mature adulthood (ages 56-69)
7. Late adulthood (ages 70+)

## Discuss

Lead an informal discussion asking students to share why they chose the phase they did as “the happiest.”

**NOTE:** It is likely that some students will say “emerging adulthood” because of the freedom gained from their parents. As a few of my former students have asserted, “you can do whatever you want.” It is interesting to let your students know that oftentimes people claim that the “Mature adulthood” phase is the “time of greatest life satisfaction” (The Human Odyssey, page 182).

## Summarize

Each phase in our life’s journey presents a new environment with new opportunities and obstacles. There are predictable patterns, yet most people never stop to really reflect on them, therefore they live their whole life missing out on the fullness of life that God longs to give in the present moment.

Naming these phases is one step toward learning to embrace the life God gives and finding fulfillment in Him through every season. As the course continues, we will take a deeper look into these phases and find ways to apply what we discover.



### Materials

*Blueprints* Student Workbook, Lesson 1.6  
Bible

### Overview

In this lesson, we will discuss how every stage of life has a unique “gift” to offer society. For a culture to flourish, we need the contributions from every phase of life. However, an aspect of our brokenness is that we are not good at respecting and appreciating people that are outside of our current phase of life. God calls his people to overcome this temptation by appreciating the unique qualities and gifts of every age. In this lesson we will define the specific gifts of each phase of life, as well as focusing on the imagination of the “childhood” phase of life.

### Connect

Start this lesson by reviewing the seven phases of life that were given in the previous lesson, and reiterating that every phase of life has its own burdens and blessings. Rather than fooling ourselves into thinking that the “next” phase will be free of challenges, we are wise to embrace the reality that with each new opportunity there will be new obstacles as well.

1. Childhood (ages 1-9)
2. Adolescence (ages 10-17)
3. Emerging adulthood (ages 18-25)
4. Early adulthood (ages 26-39)
5. Middle adulthood (ages 40-55)
6. Mature adulthood (ages 56-69)
7. Late adulthood (ages 70+)

### Read

Today we are going to be discussing the specific “gift” of each phase of life. By “gift,” we mean that each age group has a unique contribution to make to the wider society that they live within. For our world to flourish, we need the gifts of every age group being offered and appreciated.



The following Bible passage written by the apostle John captures the unique gifts of several different age groups within the body of Christ. Have a volunteer read the passage found in the Workbook.

## **1 John 2:12-14 (MSG)**

I remind you, my dear children: Your sins are forgiven in Jesus' name. You veterans were in on the ground floor, and know the One who started all this; you newcomers have won a big victory over the Evil One. And a second reminder, dear children: You know the Father from personal experience. You veterans know the One who started it all; and you newcomers—such vitality and strength! God's word is so steady in you. Your fellowship with God enables you to gain a victory over the Evil One.

### **Instruct**

In this passage, we see the author's intention to encourage each age group in a different way, as well as affirming their unique contributions. Here are a few observations to point out to the students:

- He addresses the children, telling them that their sins are forgiven and that they have in fact experienced God in real, authentic ways. This encouragement makes sense because when you are young, both in age and in your faith, you need constant reminders that you are accepted and that your experience is valid.
- He addresses the veterans, telling them that they know God in a deep way. This encouragement makes sense because the oldest age group has a depth of relationship to God that no other age group has because of their long-time experience with God.
- He addresses the “newcomers,” that they have won a big victory over the evil one, and that they have vitality and strength. This encouragement is made to the age group in between “children” and “veterans.” Translations call them “young men,” and so we can assume these are young adults. The encouragements of “victory” and “strength” make sense, as they are in the phase of life with a lot of energy and zeal, serving in the front lines of advancing the good news of the gospel.
- The reason John affirms each age group differently is because they have different needs and different gifts to bring to the table.
- The body of Christ is most powerful when all age groups offer their gifts for the benefit and appreciation of all.



## Discuss

Share an example of how another Christ follower that is not in your current phase of life blessed you or helped draw you closer to God. Then, ask students to consider an example of how they have been blessed by someone who is in a much different phase of life than them—preferably outside of their immediate family.

Even though we need each other to flourish, one of the biggest struggles as human beings is simply appreciating the age groups that are not our own. Pursue this conversation by asking students the following two questions. Ask volunteers to share:

- **What words would you use to describe those people in a life stage directly behind you? (i.e., middle school or junior high students)**
- **Why is it so hard to appreciate and respect people that are not in our current phase of life?**

It is tempting to judge others, especially those who are in the stage of life that directly precedes our own. Starting in grade school, we look in disdain at those “annoying,” “immature” students that are sitting in the very classrooms we ourselves sat in just a few years before. We all struggle to give grace to people younger/older than us. But we are all on the journey of life, just at different points along the way.

## Key Takeaways

Have students fill in the following two Key Takeaways in the Workbook:

For humanity to flourish, the unique gifts from every phase of life are needed.

We usually approach people outside of our current phase of life with judgment rather than appreciation.

## Challenge #1

Write the seven gifts to choose from on the whiteboard in a scrambled order as shown below. Divide students into groups of 2-3 and ask them to match each phase of life in the Workbook with its corresponding gift.



## UNIQUE GIFTS

1.6

- generosity
- enterprising - ready to undertake projects of importance or difficulty, or untried schemes; energetic in carrying out any undertaking (Definition provided to clarify meaning)
- wisdom
- passion
- contemplative
- imagination
- adventurous

### Summarize

Provide the correct gift for each phase, asking students for their answers as you go.

1. Childhood - imagination
2. Adolescence - passion
3. Emerging adulthood - adventurous
4. Early adulthood - enterprising
5. Middle adulthood - contemplative
6. Mature adulthood - generosity
7. Late adulthood - wisdom

\*These phases and corresponding gifts are inspired by the work of Thomas Armstrong and his book *The Human Odyssey*. See credits for more.

### Explain

In the next few lessons, we will take a closer look at each of these phases, and their gifts, as well as their challenges. First, we begin with “childhood.”

The gift of childhood is imagination. Kids live in the world of pretend and fantasy, and there is something beautiful about this kind of play and thought.



Share a specific memory that you have using your imagination as a child. The more detailed the better. Then, after leading the way, have students reflect on specific memories they have of pretending and using their imagination. If time permits, ask volunteers to share some of those examples.

The reality is that as we grow older it seems that we lose touch with our imagination. As responsibilities increase and the pressures of life become more demanding, it is easy for adults to neglect their imagination. Instead, they think only in terms of concrete matters, things that must get done to keep moving forward. However, to lose touch with our imagination is not only less enjoyable, but it hurts our society as a whole. This is because the imagination is where innovation and creative problem solving begins.

## Read

Ask a student to read the next quote in the Workbook:

“Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life’s coming attractions.”  
– Albert Einstein

## Challenge #2

To practice using our own imagination, have students respond to the following question in the Workbook. Discuss as time allows:

- **What would the world be like if there was no judgment or disrespect between the different age groups of people? What would your relationship with your family look like?**

## Summarize

Every stage of life has a gift to offer society, and for the world to flourish we need each other’s gifts. The gift of childhood is imagination, and although it comes more natural for children, adults of all ages desperately need to hold onto their imaginative capabilities. The ideas and innovations that will have the greatest impact on the future will only happen by tapping into our God-given imaginations today.

## Homework (Optional)

Propose a “virtual show and tell” to your class. Ask students to find one meaningful object from their childhood, take a picture of it on a device, and bring the photo to share with the class. They should be prepared to share why this object was meaningful to them as a child.

# BLUEPRINTS

**INSERT LIFE CHOICES HERE**

## CO-LABOR WITH CHRIST FOR A LIFETIME OF FULFILLMENT



# SOURCE OF FULFILLMENT

1.3

Read each Bible passage and then write one sentence explaining how the passage relates to the truth that God is the source of fulfillment.

**Psalms 16:11**

**Isaiah 55:1-2**

**Psalms 103:1-5**

**Psalms 37:4**

**1 Timothy 6:17-19**

**Matthew 11:28**

**Matthew 6:28-34**





## Jeremiah 2:13

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”



What are the things that most easily distract you from connecting with God on a daily basis?

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“The longing to be happy is a universal human experience, and it is good, not sinful. We should never try to deny or resist our longing to be happy, as though it were a bad impulse. Instead, we should seek to intensify this longing and nourish it with whatever will provide the deepest and most enduring satisfaction. The deepest and most enduring happiness is found only in God. Not from God, but in God. The happiness we find in God reaches its consummation when it is shared with others in the manifold ways of love. To the extent that we try to abandon the pursuit of our own pleasure, we fail to honor God and love people. Or, to put it positively: The pursuit of pleasure is a necessary part of all worship and virtue. That is: The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever.”

–John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*

Our desire for happiness and fulfillment is God-given and only He can truly

\_\_\_\_\_ this desire.



**“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”**

**– Luke 2:52**

Name four areas of Jesus’ growth and development that we find in this verse, and provide evidence for each.

\_\_\_\_\_ – Jesus grew in wisdom

**Evidence:**

\_\_\_\_\_ – Jesus grew in stature, maturing in his body and physical strength

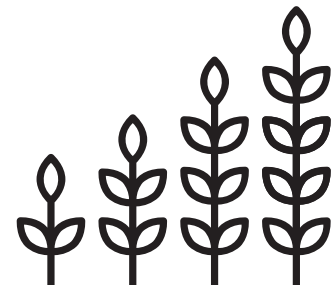
**Evidence:**

\_\_\_\_\_ – Jesus grew in his favor with men; he developed relationships with people in his community and found favor with them

**Evidence:**

\_\_\_\_\_ – Jesus grew in favor with God; he continuously deepened his relationship with God the Father

**Evidence:**





### Fields of Research in Human Growth and Development

Psychology

Sociology

Neuroscience

Endocrinology

Match each field of research with its definition below:

	the scientific study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior in a given context
	the branch of physiology and medicine concerned with endocrine glands and hormones
	the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society
	any or all of the sciences, such as neurochemistry and experimental psychology, which deal with the structure or function of the nervous system and brain

1. Which discipline are you most familiar with?
2. Which discipline are you least familiar with?
3. Which discipline are you the most interested to learn more about?



Read this personal reflection from the course author, then complete the three questions that follow.

## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Although I am now well beyond my high school years, it's still easy to reflect back upon this phase of life. Whether it was my obsession with being the world's greatest basketball player (which I fell short on), my first serious girlfriend and the drama that comes with that, or a transformational time of life when I began to get to know Jesus for the first time—these memories are etched on my timeline.

In these years, I was blessed with a supportive family, an incredible group of friends, and a community and school that offered an abundance of opportunity. However, even with all these things going for me, I cannot think about the high school years without also remembering the moments of discouragement, guilt, melancholy, and perhaps even some depression.

Was it the hormones of adolescence, throwing my body into a violent windstorm of emotions? Was it my teenage brain that was still developing, not fully able to consider the light at the end of the tunnel during a tough time? Was I missing a strong sense of confidence and acceptance, perhaps because I was not experiencing it at home? Or did I lack a clear vision for why I was even going to school each day and giving so much of my time to pre-calculus and memorizing random dates for world history? On a deeper level, was I in need of a spiritual peace with God?

The answer to all these questions is “yes.” Yes, raging hormones affect the teenage body and emotions in ways that can make this temporary time a tricky one to navigate. We will discuss that. And yes, the teenage brain is still developing and neurologists have been making incredible discoveries to help us understand just what the effects of this development are. We will discuss it. And yes, of course there was plenty of insecurity and unhealthy need for approval, and I am sure there was some affirmation that was not happening in my family and more broadly in my spiritual life. Our families are broken, and thus, we experience some level of brokenness being passed down from one generation to the next. And yes, I did lack vision for how my present as a high school student connected with my future.

For all of these reasons and more, there were times in adolescence when it felt like I was drowning with little hope for a bright future. And I was not alone. Adolescence is one of the most difficult, even dangerous, phases of life to navigate. In fact, “by age group, adolescents have the highest rates of violent crime, auto accidents, homicide, and suicide,” according to Thomas Armstrong in *The Human Odyssey*.



Some of this can sound extremely negative, but you shouldn't be discouraged. There is also unparalleled opportunity for growth and development in the teenage years. As we will see throughout this course, every phase of life has pros and cons, blessings and burdens, opportunities and obstacles. Our goal will be to learn how to maximize the opportunities, while building perspective and perseverance to make it through the obstacles.

## Questions:

1. Does it surprise you that adolescence is a "dangerous" phase of life? Why do you think this is the case?

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2. What do you think are some of your obstacles and burdens at this time in your life?

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3. What do you think are some of the opportunities and blessings at this time of life?

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Every phase of life has its own unique \_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_.



**“Each stage of life is a world unto itself, a veritable ecosystem with its own atmosphere, geography, fauna and flora, and other environmental features.”**

**– Thomas Armstrong, The Human Odyssey**

Jot down the different phases of life that you observe in the movie clip from the movie “Up” and include key events that occur in those phases.

PHASE	KEY EVENTS

**Phases of life:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.



## I John 2:12-13 (MSG)

I remind you, my dear children: Your sins are forgiven in Jesus' name. You veterans were in on the ground floor, and know the One who started all this; you newcomers have won a big victory over the Evil One. And a second reminder, dear children: You know the Father from personal experience. You veterans know the One who started it all; and you newcomers—such vitality and strength! God's word is so steady in you. Your fellowship with God enables you to gain a victory over the Evil One.

Fill in the gift for each phase:

1. Childhood -

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2. Adolescence -

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3. Emerging adulthood -

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4. Early adulthood -

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5. Middle adulthood -

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6. Mature adulthood -

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7. Late adulthood -

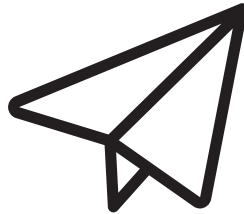
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**“Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life’s coming attractions.”**

**– Albert Einstein**



What would the world be like if there was no judgment or disrespect between the different age groups of people? What would your relationship with your family look like?

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For humanity to flourish, the unique \_\_\_\_\_ from every phase of life are needed.

We usually approach people outside of our current phase of life with \_\_\_\_\_ rather than \_\_\_\_\_ .