

# THE GOSPLE OF NEW LIFE

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## Teaching Guide

## *The Gospel of New Life*

### **This Week's Reading Assignment**

Living skillfully in light of the Gospel involves growing in our relationship with God, developing Christ-like character, thinking Christianly and becoming skilled ambassadors for the kingdom. Seek to help the learner examine his/her life and answer one question, "What do I need to do *now* in order to gain greater skill in living the life Christ died to give me"?

The *Gospel of New Life* is designed to help us plumb the depths of this concept by exploring four fundamental aspects of our new life in Christ; realm, scope, orientation and vitality.

### Lesson Objectives

1. To understand the hope of the gospel and how it reorients us for life in this world
2. To begin to learn to live "*Missionally*" both personally and corporately

### **A Note to the Teacher**

This session is divided into four main sections mirroring the four aspects of our new life in Christ mentioned in the article. Each section relies heavily on discussion.

### **Class Structure**

Please plan 2 ½ hours for this session.

#### **15 minutes**

**Hook and Prayer:** *The Princess Diaries*

#### **10 minutes**

**Review** the main points of the article

#### **20 minutes**

**Discussion 1:** Vitality -- The Holy Spirit

#### **25 minutes**

**Discussion 2:** Orientation

#### **30 minutes**

**Learning Activity 3:** Realm - In the world *but not* of the world

#### **15 minutes**

**Discussion 4:** Scope - Eternal

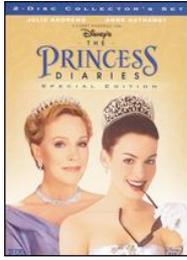
#### **Discussions 1-4 above**

This is a long lesson. If you are not splitting the lesson into two sessions you may want to consider doing only 2 of the 4 discussions.

#### **20 minutes**

**Project Discussion:** As pertinent

*Hook and Discussion*  
*The Princess Diaries*



**Starring:** Anne Hathaway, Julie Andrews, Hector Elizondo, Heather Matarazzo  
**Created By:** Garry Marshall  
**Released By:** Buena Vista  
**Run Time:** 115 min  
**Genre:** Comedy  
**Rating:** G

*Movie Synopsis:* Mia, (Anne Hathaway) an awkward San Francisco teenager, learns that her deceased father was the crown prince of Genovia. To keep the throne from passing to another family the queen (Julie Andrews) seeks the favor of her estranged granddaughter in hopes that she will take her father's place as the crown princess. While Mia contemplates her future, her grandmother insists on turning her from a social misfit to a princess fit for the throne. What these two discover about each other is that blood is more important than bloodlines.

*Scene Introduction:* In this scene Mia is going to the Genovian Consulate to meet her grandmother. She is unaware that her grandmother is a queen or that her father was the crown prince. In this scene Mia makes a great discovery about her identity that will shape the rest of her life.

*Food for Thought:* In finding out that she was a princess, Mia was faced with accepting a whole new way of living. Much like Mia, our new life has serious implications and we need to accept the responsibility of living according to a much different plan than our old life offered.

*Discussion Activity:* In the movie clip Mia becomes aware of and begins to internalize her newfound identity, this leads to the question of how the "old" Mia and "new" Mia fit together? How does this same question affect us as we internalize our new lives?

The objective of today's time is for each of us to begin to ask ourselves, "What do I need to do now in order to gain greater skill in living the life Christ died to give me"? Discuss/share how each person wants the group to pray for them in light of new life.

Stop here and pray as a group; ask the Lord to speak to each person individually about their new life in Christ.

## *Article Discussion*

25 minutes

Our new life is truly and in every way new. We now have a different time and space orientation, new philosophical and heart orientation and a new power source. The article is designed to help us to continue to internalize the truths that govern our new life.

### **Chapter 1** The Vitality of New Life

*The Spirit Filled Life*

**Definition:** Life is the source of vitality or animating force. Life has *vitality* or power source.

### **Chapter 2** Our New Life reorients us.

Two examples are given:

*Understanding the Created Order*

*Embracing the Way of the Cross*

**Definition:** To live or conduct one's existence according to a particular manner. Our lives have an *orientation*.

### **Chapter 3** The Realm of New Life

*Living In the World not Of the World*

**Definition:** To live or to reside in a specific place. Our lives take place in a *realm*.

### **Chapter 4** The Scope of New Life

*Practicing the Spiritual Disciplines*

**Definition:** Life is the interval of time between birth or conception and death. Life has *scope*.

### Discussion Questions

- 1) What from the reading challenged your thinking?
- 2) Was there anything that you disagreed with?
- 3) What scripture impacted you from the article?

Also see each section for more questions. Feel free to ask questions from the sections that you choose not to do as discussion.

## Learning Activity 1

### Discussion 1- *The Holy Spirit Our New Vitality*

Apart from the Holy Spirit, it would be impossible to live our new life in Christ. The purpose of this learning activity is to help the learners think about the Holy Spirit in new words so as to develop a greater understanding and vocabulary.

NOTE: There are several books, tools and Bible studies that explain about the Spirit filled life. If your group is not familiar with the ministry of the Holy Spirit this session presents a good opportunity to help clarify the concept.

**Objective:** As a group, you will describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit in light of the chapter on our new vitality.

**Instructions:** Approach the task as if you have been tasked with writing a white paper that explains the power source of our new life in Christ. Your audience is a group of young believers who have asked you to explain how we are to entrust our selves to God and how the process of transformation takes place.

### Discussion 2- *Our New Orientation*

**READ:** This discussion is designed to help uncover the subtleties that govern the relationship between all-dependant faith and rigorous work that honors God.

At one extreme of the faith/works spectrum, all responsibility for rigorous thought and work is abdicated in favor of faith. We are admonished to "let go and let God." People living at this extreme often set arbitrary faith goals thinking that somehow any thoughtful discussion shows a lack of faith. Unless one becomes inured to this faith game, feelings of bewilderment can set in when goals go unmet. At the other extreme hard work stands alone. People living at this extreme often find themselves trying to manage God rather than believing and obeying him.

The problem stems from our cultural understanding of the words *faith* and *work*. In our world, faith has become synonymous with mental assent. But that is not how the word has traditionally been understood. To the Hebrew authors of the Bible a better synonym for faith would be obedience. Faith and work are the same thing. We are saved completely by grace but our response to God is obedience not simply mental assent. It is impossible to have faith without works.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Consider and discuss the quote: *Our dominion is submitted to God and for God but it is administered by us.* (Albert Wolters, *Creation Regained*)
2. In Matthew 4:19 Jesus says, "follow me." What does this verse say about the discussion at hand?
3. In the Great Commandment we are told to how to love God. It is interesting to note that Jesus added the clause "with all your minds" to the original. What does it mean to love God with your mind? How does the command to love God with all your mind tie faith and work together? Evangelicals are accused (often rightly) of being anti-intellectual. In light of Matthew 22:37, how and why is this true?

### **Discussion 3- Our New Realm: Living in the world but not of the world**

**Premise of the Discussion:** The realm of our new life is *in* the world, but not *of* the world.

It is impossible to live a missional life if we either over identify with the world or separate from it.

**Instructions:** Below are four assignments. Divide your group into pairs or small groups and give them each an assignment. Allow them 15 minutes to complete their work. Ask your group to pay close attention to the instructions.

NOTE: Included in each assignment is a **red paragraph** that supplies additional information about the assignment. The red paragraphs come from Dr. Tim Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City.

#### Being Missional - Assignment #1

Imagine that you are with a non-Christian friend who treats a person in the service industry with a great deal of contempt. Your assignment is to explain in "the vernacular of the wider world" why the person in question is worthy of respect. See the description below for what it means to speak in a vernacular.

*Missional people speak in the vernacular of the wider world.*

Our words and how we speak, define us and give us our place in society. With our language we can include or exclude, we can engage or ostracize, we can intrigue or offend. As a result missional people choose their words carefully, avoiding church jargon and explaining religious terms when necessary, even among church friends. Always speak as if non-believers are present. In order to speak as an insider missional people refuse to use we/them language, which unnecessarily alienates non-believers. When we aim to engage the culture with humility and joy our words will be gentle and worthy of consideration, even to those who deeply disagree with us.

#### Being Missional - Assignment #2

Choose an aspect of your local culture and determine what can be accepted, what needs to be rejected and what can be adapted. Explain how you would adapt in a real life situation. Consider choosing a value/practice expressed in the family or relationships, in business or in the area of beauty. See Dr. Keller's explanation below in red.

- What should be accepted, rejected and adapted?
- How will you express your thoughts and opinions using missional language?
- How will you have to live differently because of the gospel?
- How can you continue to identify with the culture even though you disagree?

*Missional people trained for public life and vocation.*

Missional people are trained and able to face radically non-Christian values in their public life- work and neighborhoods. They are able to think and work with Christian distinctiveness; understanding which part of the wider culture can be accepted, what needs to be rejected and what can be adapted or revised. Missional people use the gospel to demonstrate true biblical love toward those with whom they deeply differ.

### Being Missional People - Assignment #3

Describe a Christian community made up of missional people. Consider Dr. Keller's description of Christian community (below in red). How would such a community "embody that which is counter culture?"

- List several aspects of kingdom culture that is counter to Chinese culture.
- What would it look like for a body of believers to embody each of those aspects of kingdom culture?
- What practical differences would it make for the group?
- Evaluate your hypothetical church. Where would it be strong? What problems might it face?

*Missional people create Christian community, which is counter to the culture and counter-intuitive.*

In community, missional people go far beyond nurturing relationships to embody that which is counter culture - showing the world how radically different a Christian society is, particularly in regard to sex, money and power. To be missional we must be deeply and practically committed to both deeds of compassion and social justice and to evangelism.

### Being Missional People - Assignment #4

Consider the Christian culture in your city. Are there areas where the church chooses to separate from the culture? What are several accepted church/Christian practices, habits and values that that keep the church from being missional? See the description below for clarity.

- How do Christians view non-Christians?
- How do Christians view other Christians?
- Are there many taboos for Christians?
- Are there things demanded of believers that unnecessarily separate them from the culture they want to impact?
- Write a defense for why you would or would not ascribe to these habits.

*We can create a separation that refuses to be missional. First, because of an improper fear that we may become polluted by society, we keep a safe distance from the people and cultural institutions around us, and choose to be **neither in the world nor of it**. This happens when a misshaped sense of holiness causes us to separate ourselves out from the world. We burrow into our Christian fellowships and refuse to get our hands dirty with the problems of a fallen society. We are willing to tell people about Jesus and bring them out of the world but we are either unwilling or incapable of living in the world and addressing the problems of society.*

### **Discussion 4 - Our New Scope: Eternal**

Possible Discussion Questions:

- How does understanding that our eternal life starts immediately rather than when we die give meaning and purpose to the life we live now?
- How does eternal living today help us live life to the glory of God?
- How does understanding this idea help us live morally upright lives?

### **Project Follow Up**

Discuss recent project work as a group and assign new project.