

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ understand that Jesus is the only good thing about them.

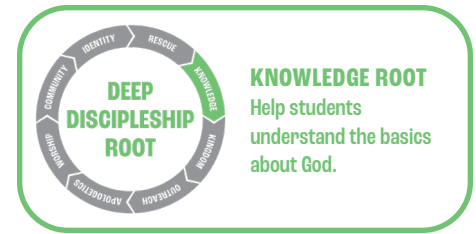
SCRIPTURE

LUKE 18:18–21, ROMANS 5:1, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21, EPHESIANS 4:31–32

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

By worldly standards, the rich ruler in Luke 18 was “good.” The title “ruler” suggests he was part of the Sanhedrin or possibly a leader in a local synagogue. He had kept God’s commandments since he was a boy (Luke 18:20–21). Because the Jewish people only applied the word “good” to God, it was unusual to address a teacher in that way. Was the ruler acknowledging Jesus as God? Jesus pressed the young man to discover for himself what he believed about Jesus.

Check out the **Teacher Prep Video** for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/815133142>



FACILITATOR NOTE: We’re giving you a lot of teaching material. Don’t feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.

OPENING

PRAYER

Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together.

OPTIONAL: Give students an opportunity to lead the prayer.

1–2 minutes

OPENING QUESTIONS

- How was the week? What’s the best thing that’s happened? Anything major going on?
- What is the most extraordinary award you have ever earned?

3–5 minutes



EXPLORE

EXPLORE GOD’S WORD

3–5 minutes

Today we are looking at the first lesson in our Asking for a Friend series that focuses on the Knowledge Root. While we all would like to think of ourselves as good people, the Bible states that God alone is good. If we are to have any chance at being “good,” it must come from the Lord because *disciples of Christ understand that Jesus is the only good thing about them.*

Read Luke 18:18–21 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **Who is the best person you know? What makes them so good?**
Answers will vary, but some of the possible qualities listed: kind, forgiving, loyal, loving, generous, etc. Help students understand that whatever good quality they list can be used to describe God.
- **Do you think of yourself as a good person? Why or why not?**
Answers will vary because this is a difficult concept to grasp. Try to help students understand that because of our sinful nature, we are naturally sinful. If we have not been changed through a relationship with Jesus, our desires will always be toward sin and, therefore, are not good (Rom. 8:5–8).
- **What implications stem from the truth that only God is good?**
If only God is good (which the Bible declares), then good things can only come from God (James 1:17). It also implies that our only chance at being good comes from God.



ASK INTENTIONAL QUESTIONS

Say something like: While we may see other people and even ourselves as good, the truth is, only God is good. His standard of perfection is something we all fall short of reaching (Rom. 3:23).

Read Romans 5:1 & 2 Corinthians 5:21 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **What can we learn about God from the fact that he (the only one who is good) loves us (a broken, wicked people)?**
This speaks even more to how good he is. We have not and cannot do anything to deserve his love, yet he gives it freely.
- **How has God made you righteous?**
Taken away our sin (John 1:29; 1 John 3:5), made us a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), and given us a new heart (Ezek. 36:26).
- **Read Ephesians 2:10 and Matthew 5:16. How do you feel when God uses you for his good works?**
Push for a deeper answer than “good” or “great.” Remind your students it’s an honor that God chooses to use us to make an impact in his Kingdom.



ASK INTENTIONAL QUESTIONS

Say something like: Thankfully, we don’t have to be good on our own. Christ makes us righteous. One of the endless reasons we know and can trust that God is good is because he makes us good.

FACILITATOR NOTE: If you have extra time, go through the next set of questions. If not, skip to the **Connection** section.

Read Ephesians 4:31–32 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **How can understanding that, apart from Jesus, there is nothing good about us affect how we treat others?**
Answers will vary, but help students understand that when we realize that we aren’t good, we are more forgiving to others when they aren’t good.
- **What can we do to show God we are grateful for his work in making us righteous?**
Following Christ’s example and his Word is a way of showing our gratitude. We demonstrate our love for Jesus through obedience (John 14:15) and loving others (John 13:34–35).



ASK INTENTIONAL QUESTIONS

Say something like: Because we have experienced the goodness of God, we can extend his goodness to those around us.



CONNECT & APPLY

CONNECTION

5-7 minutes

Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story of how you realized that Jesus is the only good in you.



SHARE PERSONAL STORIES

Example: G.K. Chesterton was a Christian apologist and influential writer in the early 1900s. There's a popular story, almost legend, about Chesterton. Most believe it to be true. The account is about a question The Times sent out to several prominent writers. Searching for deep insights, the London-based newspaper asked, "What's wrong with the world today?" Chesterton responded with an essay consisting of two words: I am.¹ Chesterton recognized that the problem with the world is sinful people, and being a sinful person made him part of the problem. He didn't try to distinguish between "good" or "bad" people because we are all bad apart from Christ's work in our hearts.

- What are some things people your age do in order to be "good"?

Answers will vary, but some possible answers are: study, follow the rules at school and home, go to church, compliment others, like posts on social media, etc.

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

2-3 minutes

Disciples of Christ understand that Jesus is the only good thing about them.

Use the Mark of a Disciple to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.

APPLY IT

5-10 minutes

Who is someone you can show God's goodness to this week? Pray for God to show you a specific way you can show a specific person God's goodness over the next several days.



MAKE LIFE APPLICATION

Be specific:

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



HOLD STUDENTS ACCOUNTABLE

FACILITATOR NOTE: Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.



CLOSING

PRAYER

2–3 minutes

Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks.
Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.

MEMORY VERSE

Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Ephesians 4:32 (ESV)

NOTES

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¹ Dayo Adewoye, "Dear Sir, I Am," The Christian Mind, December 7, 2019, <https://thechristianmindng.org/2019/12/07/dear-sir-i-am/>.

