Experiencing God: Collegiate Edition

(Knowing and Doing the Will of God)

By Richard and Henry Blackaby

Leader’s Guide
Session One
Seeing Life from God’s Perspective

Opening
1. As students arrive, point out the copy of the “Session One Review Quiz” that you have placed in the chairs and instruct students to complete the quiz. Challenge them to complete the quiz without referring to the book, but that they may refer to page 25 if they need help. When all the students have completed the quiz, display the “Five Spiritual Realities” poster. Lead students to review the five realities. Instruct students to identify key words in each of the realities. Call on volunteers to share key words and write them on a large sheet of paper or board.

2. Lead students in a time of prayer, thanking God for bringing the group together. Acknowledge God’s presence in the group and ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher during the session. Ask God to begin bonding the lives of each person in the group together in Christian love and accountability.

Discussion
3. Point out the quote of George Bernard Shaw on page 11 when he replied, “I would be the man George Bernard Shaw could have been, but never was.” Lead students to discuss the questions: What are the things you can do that will really matter in life? How can you discover the person God intends you to be?

4. Call on a volunteer to summarize the illustration of William Borden’s life (p. 12). Remind students of his statement to his mother: “When I look ahead a few years, it seems as though the only thing to do is to prepare for the foreign field.” Lead students to respond to the following questions: How do you imagine your life five years from now?

5. Refer to page 14 and the concerns about the future that they checked. (If students have not completed this response activity, allow them a few minutes to do so.) Ask: What did you list as ways God’s knowledge of your future affects the way He leads you? How are you currently investing in the future?

6. Ask: How does God speak to us through the Holy Spirit? (Answers: the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church) Lead students to discuss the following questions: What is one thing you’ve heard God speaking to you recently as you’ve read the Bible? How have you acted on it? What is one thing you’ve heard God speaking to you through prayer? How have you acted on it? What is one thing you’ve heard God speaking to you through a circumstance? How have you acted on it? What is one thing you’ve heard God speaking to you through a person? How have you acted on it?

7. Instruct students to open their books to page 32 and note the boxes they checked regarding their relationships with God. Direct students to form pairs and to share with each other two actions they have identified that will enhance their relationships with God.
8. Lead students to compare the investments lists of Jesus and the rich fool (p. 36). Call on volunteers to share their answers to the first three questions under “Personal Application” (p. 37).

**Closing**

9. Give each student an index card. Instruct them to write God’s Perspective and to list ways their perspective on life has been changed during this study. Ask: What changes do you plan to make in your life so that you view life through God’s perspective?

10. Lead in a time of prayer.
Session One Review Quiz

1. God is ________________________________ around you.

2. God _________ you and __________ you to become
____________________ with Him in ____________.

3. God speaks to you ______________________ through
________________________________________________________

4. God’s invitation will create ______________________________
which will require you to
________________________________________________________

5. When you ________________, you experience God’s
________________________ working through you and you bring Him
________________________.
1. God is always at work around you.
2. God loves you and invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
3. God speaks to you by His Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church.
4. God’s invitation will create a crisis of belief, requiring you to make adjustments in your life.
5. When you obey, you experience God’s power working through you and you bring Him glory.
Session Two
Character: The Basis for Your Future

OPENING
1. Arrange the chairs in pairs or threes. As students arrive, invite them to find a
chair, give them a copy of “Session Two Review Quiz,” and instruct them to
complete the quiz. Allowing time for all students to complete the quiz, instruct the
pairs or threes to discuss their answers with each other. Instruct groups to appoint
one person in each group to lead the group in prayer, calling on God’s leadership in
today’s session.

DISCUSSION
2. Call on a volunteer to explain why God matches assignments with character. Ask:
Why is character important to God? Enlist a volunteer to read Luke 6:43-45. Ask:
What is one way to evaluate one’s character? (Answer: by the fruit of their lives) Call on
volunteers to share practices or attitudes in their lives that are not godly fruit. Ask:
What are you doing to develop godly character in your life?

3. Read Matthew 6:19-21. Arrange the students in pairs and instruct them to list things
that create a divided heart in a person’s life. Call on the pairs to share their lists.
Record their responses on a large sheet of paper or board. Lead the students to list
ways that they can develop an undivided heart. Call on students to share what items
they checked on pages 54 and 55. Guide students to discuss the answers to their
questions under “Personal Application” on page 56.

4. Call on a volunteer to read Matthew 25:21. Invite students to share their answers
to the two questions on the bottom of page 58. Ask: What responsibilities or tasks
has God assigned you? What does the size of the responsibility imply about your
level of faithfulness to God? Refer to the “Faithfulness Exam” on page 60. Call on
volunteers to share what the exam revealed to them about their faithfulness to God.

5. Give each student an index card and instruct them to write one failure they have
experienced recently. Ask: Based on your study this week, what is one lesson you
can learn from your failure? Instruct them to write their answers on the index card.
Call on volunteers to discuss their answers.

6. Divide the group into three teams and assign each team one of the character
studies on failure (“David the Murderer,” “Peter the Denier,” and “Thomas the
Doubter”) on pages 63-64. Instruct the teams to list the biblical principals about
failure they learned from the three men. Call on teams to report. Encourage students
to share one area of failure for which the group can pray during the week. Lead the
group in a time of prayer.

CLOSING
7. Invite students to share their answers to the two questions under “Personal
Application” (p. 65).

8. Arrange the students into pairs or threes for a time of prayer.
Session Two Review Quiz

1. What are three things that greatly affect your character?
   1. __________________________________________________
   2. __________________________________________________
   3. __________________________________________________

2. You will give the majority of your ________________,
   ________________, and energy to those things that are most
important to you.

3. The most important thing in my life for which God looks is: (Check all that apply.)
   - [ ] my ability
   - [ ] my resources
   - [ ] my personality
   - [ ] my faithfulness
   - [ ] my availability
   - [ ] my character

4. True or False
   __ Nothing can separate me from the love of God.
   __ God’s assignment and His love for you will never change.
   __ God loves you and does not expect you to change.
   __ There are no shortcuts to character.
   __ What happens around you should determine how you act.
Session Three
Career: A Vehicle for God’s Purposes

**Opening**
1. Arrange the chairs in pairs or threes. As students arrive, invite them to find a chair, give them a copy of “Session Three Review Quiz,” and instruct them to complete the quiz. Allowing time for all students to complete the quiz, instruct the pairs or threes to discuss their answers with each other. Instruct groups to appoint one person in each group to lead the group in prayer, calling on God’s leadership in today’s session.

**Discussion**
2. Refer to the Introduction on page 67 and ask: **What evidence would you cite to demonstrate your life has made a difference?** Be sensitive to students who may feel discouraged about their lives regarding this question. Discuss the comments under “God Has a Plan” (p. 73) to encourage students about God’s plan for their future.

3. Ask: What is the difference between being called to a relationship and being called to a job? Refer to “Career or Relationship” (p. 70). Lead students to discuss their answers to the first two questions on the bottom of page 69.

4. Arrange students in pairs or threes and instruct them to discuss their answers to the two questions on page 75. After a few minutes ask: **What are some ways God might use you in a job to make a difference for His kingdom?**

5. Call on volunteers to share the biblical truths they recorded on pages 78-79. Review the five truths that Henry Blackaby noticed in the verses (p. 79). Ask: **Based on these truths, what adjustments do you need to make in your life?** Read the statement about circumstances on the middle of page 81 (above “Personal Application”). Share an experience from your own life when you discovered that circumstances can be confusing when viewed without listening to God’s voice.

6. Ask: **What are spiritual markers and how are they significant in our spiritual maturity?** As students respond, affirm their answers based on the content under “Spiritual Markers” (pp. 83-84). Place students in pairs and instruct them to discuss with their partners their answers to the questions on page 84. Call the students back together and lead them to discuss their responses to the questions relating to 2 Kings 20:12-18 and Exodus 14:10-13, 21-22. Call on volunteers to share what opened or closed doors they are presently facing.

7. Lead students to share their responses to the first two questions on page 92. Make a list of the career choices represented in the group. Ask: **How can God use these careers to build His kingdom? How are you investing your life in God’s kingdom right now?**
Closing
8. Call on volunteers to share their answers to the first question under “Personal Application” (p. 93). Direct students in pairs and instruct the pairs to share their answers to the final two questions on page 93 and to spend time in prayer together.
Session Three Review Quiz

1. What are ways to discover God’s will as revealed by the Holy Spirit?
   1. __________________________________________________
   2. __________________________________________________
   3. __________________________________________________
   4. _________________________________________________

2. Fill in the blanks:
   • God doesn’t necessarily call you to one, life-long job but He does call you to a ________________ that will last for an eternity.
   • Your faith in God is not proven by what you say, but by what you ____________.
   • _____________ doors can be just as misleading as _____________ doors.
   • The question at the end of life will not be “What degree did you earn?” but “What did you _________________?”

3. Match the truth found in God’s invitation with the verse that best applies.

   __ Honoring God is more important than obtaining a certain job.   a. Proverbs 23:4-5
   __ Whatever job you have, you should commit to the Lord.        b. Proverbs 22:29
   __ Money isn’t everything.                                     c. Proverbs 16:3
   __ Plan to be skilled in your work.                            d. Proverbs 10:9
Session Four
Relationships: For Better or Worse

**OPENING**

1. Arrange the chairs in pairs or threes. As students arrive, invite them to find a chair, give them a copy of “Session Four Review Quiz,” and instruct them to complete the quiz. Call for answers and review.

2. Call on volunteers to describe the worst and best relationships they have experienced in their lives. Ask: What made the difference between the best and the worst? Lead in prayer, asking God for leadership as you focus on relationships.

**DISCUSSION**

3. Read John 13:1-20, then lead students to answer the questions on the top of page 97. Lead students to list the characteristics of a good friend. (Refer to “Qualities of a Christian Friend,” p. 98.) Ask: Based upon your evaluation of your own friendship qualities on page 99, what changes did you identify that you need to make in the way you respond to others? How does your love for others compare with Jesus’ love for others?

4. Guide students to list people who have impacted their lives. Ask: What did this person do or say that impacted your life? As students answer this question, reveal the metal file and small gardening tool you brought to the session and begin sharpening the tool. Call on a volunteer to read Proverbs 27:17. Lead students to suggest ways this verse can be applied to relationships. Challenge students to form accountability partnerships with two or three others. Refer them to page 100 for ideas about accountability groups.

5. Ask: What do you consider to be the greatest dangers people face when approaching dating? Review the five guidelines that will help students maintain dating relationships that honor God and their dates (pp. 103-106). Ask: Of which of these guidelines do you struggle the most? Write the words purity and temptation on the board or a large sheet of paper. Lead students to share their strategies for maintaining purity and avoiding temptation. Remind them of 1 Corinthians 10:13. Lead them to share their answers to the questions on the top of page 107.

6. Arrange the students in pairs and instruct them to discuss the question: What worries you most about marriage? After a few minutes of discussion, review the three principles mentioned on pages 110-112. Call on volunteers who completed the “Optional Exercise” (p. 113) to share the character traits they listed.

7. Call on volunteers to share the best qualities of their families. Share how your family has impacted your life. Lead students to share their responses to the questions on page 116. Ask: How did the four principals for responding to hurtful parents (pp. 117-118) help you? What actions have you taken this week to apply these principals?

8. Arrange students in pairs and instruct them to share what they learned about how to mend broken relationships and actions they have identified to mend current broken relationships.
**Closing**

9. Instruct students to review their answers to the “Personal Application” questions during the week. Call on volunteers to share one thing God revealed to them this week and one action they will take or have begun to take to respond to God.

10. Guide students to stand in a circle and to take turns offering sentence prayers to God regarding relationships.
Session Four Review Quiz

1. Fill in the blanks:
   • You have to ______________ a friend to ______________ a friend.
   • What you do while dating reveals your ______________ to God and to others.
   • Christian dating too often reflects the ______________ thinking.
   • Perhaps the greatest tragedy among students is when they refuse to trust that God will give them His ______________.
   • The cost of not reconciling is always far greater than the cost of ______________.

2. List three of the five guidelines which may help you as you seek to maintain a dating relationship that honors God and the one you are dating. (If you are not dating, think about a special relationship.)
   1. ______________________________________________
   2. ______________________________________________
   3. ______________________________________________

3. List the five types of relationships studied this week.
   1. ______________________________________________
   2. ______________________________________________
   3. ______________________________________________
   4. ______________________________________________
   5. ______________________________________________
Session Five
Crises: Your Moments of Decision

Opening
1. As students arrive, invite them to find a chair, give them a copy of “Session Five Review Quiz,” and instruct them to complete the quiz. Call for answers and review.

2. Call on volunteers to describe the worst crisis they’ve experienced. Ask: What did God teach you through the crisis? Lead the group in prayer, asking God for leadership as you examine how God uses crises in our lives to shape us and teach us.

Discussion
3. Say: None of us are immune to crisis in our lives. Ask: Do you agree or disagree with this statement. Why? Enlist two students to read 2 Timothy 3:12 and Philippians 2:5-11. Ask: What do these Scriptures teach us are the costs of following Jesus? Do most Christian students act as if being a Christian makes one less susceptible to crises in life or do they expect difficulties? As students respond to the last questions, probe the reasons for their responses.

4. Lead students to discuss their answers to the three questions on the top of page 130. Ask: What promises has God given us regarding suffering? What are four reasons we can trust God through crises? (See “Four Reasons to Trust God,” p. 132.)

5. Write Crises promote gaining life by losing it on the board or a large sheet of paper. Lead students to discuss this apparent paradox. Challenge them to express circumstances in their lives that give evidence of this biblical truth. Enlist a student to read John 12:24-25, then call on students to discuss the questions on the top of page 134. Ask: How does obeying God bring crises in our lives? Note the examples of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Ask: What other people in the Bible faced crises because of their obedience? How did obedience cost Jesus?

6. Read Luke 8:22-25. Challenge students to consider how their response to moments of crises has tested their faith. Explain that the word sincere comes from a term used in the ancient procedure of testing precious metals. Placed under extreme heat, trained merchants could determine whether a metal was pure or contained alloy. If the metal contained no alloy, it was determined to be sincere, thus the origin of our English word sincere. Ask: How is this ancient process of testing the sincerity of precious metals similar to the suffering that Christians endure? Read Philippians 3:10. Ask: Can you sincerely pray as Paul did that you want to share in the sufferings of Jesus?

7. Ask: What is a God-sized assignment? How does God prepare you for one?

8. Read Matthew 26:36-46 and Hebrews 5:7-10. Guide students to discuss their answers to the three questions following “Jesus’ Example” on page 154.
**Closing**

9. Arrange students in pairs and instruct them to discuss their answers to the top two questions on page 154 and the questions under “Personal Application” on page 155.

10. Give students a book of matches. Instruct them to write on the inside cover of the book of matches one principle they will apply to their lives when they encounter crises. Challenge students to keep their books of matches in their pockets, purses, or other prominent places so as to be reminded of how God can use crises to shape them into the image of Christ.
Session Five Review Quiz

1. True or False.
   __ Tragedies are an indication that someone is out of God’s will.
   __ In a world of hurts and difficulties, we should strive to avoid suffering at all costs.
   __ There is no such thing as “Christianity without cost.”
   __ Our faithfulness to God is based on whether or not He protects us from hardship.
   __ God does not give big assignments to little characters.

2. Match the statements on the right with the word on the left that best fits.
   __ suffering a. The testing of your faith produces this
   __ perseverance b. It tends to make you either bitter or better
   __ self c. Every call of God involves this
   __ a cross d. One way God develops character
   __ a crisis e. Our society encourages you to affirm this
Session Six
Created for Interdependence: Living with God’s People

Opening
1. As students arrive, invite them to find a chair, give them a copy of “Session Six Review Quiz,” and instruct them to complete the quiz. Call for answers and review.

2. Call on volunteers to describe times of loneliness they've experienced. Ask: What causes loneliness? Do you think it's possible to feel lonely even when you're not alone? Why or why not? Lead the students in a time of prayer.

Discussion
3. Arrange students in threes and instruct them to discuss the following questions that you have written on a large sheet of paper or the board: Would other students consider you interdependent or independent? Why? How do you tend to be independent? How do you demonstrate interdependence? Review the first paragraph on page 160 that begins, “Sin affirms self and independence . . .” Read 1 Peter 2:9-10 and call on students to share their answers to the questions regarding this passage (p. 160). Use information under “God’s Remedy” (p. 160) to supplement the discussion. Ask: What are some ways you can be a vital part of God’s church while you are a college student?

4. Lead students to brainstorm various ways the church is like a human body. Ask: Are you a dismembered part of the body of Christ or are you vitally attached? Probe their answers. Lead students to discuss their answers to the questions on page 166.

5. Discuss the three ways that students can effectively minister to each other. (1. Helping one another; 2. Forgiving one another; 3. Praying for one another; See pages 168-171.) Call on a volunteer to explain the meaning of the Greek word koinonia (p. 173). After reading 1 John 1:3, call on students to share their responses to the questions on the top of page 174. Lead students to list two or three ministries that have impacted their lives. Ask: How have these ministries helped you experience koinonia? How can these ministries be more effective in helping others experience koinonia?

7. Invite students to share how God is using them to be on mission with their church. Summarize “Our Mission” on pages 182-183. Instruct students to consider these important questions about your church’s ministry to college students: Do you believe God wants to use your church to impact your community? What must you adjust in your life in order to be a part of God's redemptive plan for your church?

Closing
8. Direct students to evaluate their answers to the last questions under “Personal Application” for each day. Direct them to list their responses on a sheet of paper or index card. Challenge them to prayerfully consider immediate actions they need to take this week in response to what God is teaching them.
Session Six Review Quiz

1. What is the chief cause of loneliness?

2. What is God's remedy?

3. Define the word *koinonia*:

4. List three ways we can experience koinonia in the church.
Session Seven

Kingdom Living: Getting the Bigger Picture

**Opening**

1. Arrange the chairs in pairs or threes. As students arrive, invite them to find a chair and to share with the person(s) seated near them at least one way this study has changed their lives.

2. Call on a volunteer to quote from memory Matthew 6:33. Lead the group in singing the chorus “Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God.” Enlist a volunteer to lead in prayer, seeking God’s wisdom and courage to obey this Word from Christ.

**Discussion**

3. Call on a volunteer to summarize the BeachReach story on page 187. Ask: **What are some of the barriers that were overcome in this ministry? Do you think it’s always worth the personal sacrifice involved to perform ministries like BeachReach? Why or why not?**

4. Say: **We learned in Day One that Jesus taught that becoming a citizen of the Kingdom is the most important thing you will ever do. How would you support such a truth to someone who wanted to live for themselves and by the standards set by the world?** Direct students to find a partner and discuss their responses to the questions on page 193. Call on students to share their answers to the questions under “Personal Application” on page 194.

5. Give each student a key. Ask: **How did Jesus use this symbol to describe their part in God’s kingdom?** Guide students to recall the promises God has given us as partners in His kingdom. (See pages 196-197.)

6. Arrange students into three teams and give each team one of the following assignments:

   **Team One.**—A student is faced with dilemma of regularly attending a weeknight Bible study or his campus organization. As a citizen of God’s kingdom, how does he make the right decision?

   **Team Two.**—A student is faced with the dilemma of giving to her church’s missions offering or buying Christmas gifts for her suitemates. As a citizen of God’s kingdom, how does she make the right decision?

   **Team Three.**—A student is faced with the dilemma of spending time alone with God in prayer and Bible study every day while struggling with having enough time to study. As a citizen of God’s kingdom, how does this student make the right decision?

After a few minutes, call the teams together to discuss their case studies.
7. Call on a volunteer to explain what is meant by the term “world Christian.” (See page 206.) Refer students to the evaluation they performed of their own lives as a world Christian on page 207-208. Call on volunteers to share the changes they are making in order to be more involved in missions.

8. Read 2 Corinthians 5:9-10. Ask: What was the major motivating factor affecting Paul’s life? What does it mean to be accountable to God? Read 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 and direct students to share their responses to the questions on page 211-212.

**Closing**

9. Direct students to choose a partner and prayerfully discuss “Personal Application” on pages 213-214.

10. Share with students other Bible study opportunities, ministry actions, and other items that will move them beyond this study to continued growth and ministry. Say: What you’ve completed in this seven-week study may actually be a beginning. Imagine this as the beginning of an exciting journey with Christ. What will the following days look like? Call on volunteers to share their responses. Lead in a closing prayer.