

Pick two of these topics and discuss both sets of questions after reading the verses.

School/Grades: Slaving Away in Egypt (Exodus 5:1-21)

1. *What do you like the most about school? What do you dislike the most?*
2. *What keeps you from getting better grades?*
3. *Are the expectations of your parents generally too high, reasonable or too low?*
4. *Concerning schoolwork, whose expectations cause you the most stress: You? Your teachers? Your parents? Others?*
5. *What about the expectations you have for yourself, are you too hard or too easy on yourself?*
6. *What expectations do you think God has for you?*
7. *In the past week in your spiritual life, are you encouraged or discouraged? Is there any connection between that and your schoolwork? Why or why not?*

School/Grades: Trials and Temptations (James 1:2-18)

1. *What's your GPA? Or how are your grades right now?*
2. *How satisfied are you with your grades? How satisfied are your parents?*
3. *What's your usual approach to a test: Fear? Joy? Prayer? Study all night? Others?*
4. *Why is perseverance important (see v. 4)? What reward comes with persevering in the faith?*
5. *On a scale of 1 (not very) to 10 (very), how serious are you about your schoolwork? Explain your answer.*
6. *When have you been tempted to cheat on a test or assignment? What your response to temptation?*
7. *If God were handing out crowns today according to how well you have persevered over this past school year, do you think you'd get one? Why?*
8. *Where do you need wisdom? Pray and ask God for it.*

Decisions: God's Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)

1. *When you were a little kid what did you want to be? What do you want to be now?*
2. *What do you want to be doing 10 years from now? What will it take to get there?*
3. *What do you feel are the most important decisions you will make in your life?*
4. *How much influence does your commitment to Christ have in choosing your career?*
5. *What's one of the best decisions you've made? What's one of the worst?*
6. *Looking back on the last big decision you made, did you listen more to the world's wisdom or God's?*
7. *How does your schoolwork and education tie together with making good decisions?*
8. *Christ was "a stumbling block" and "foolishness" to some. What decision have you made about following Christ?*
9. *How can the group pray for you in making wise, Christ-centered decisions?*

Success/Ambition: James & John Make a Request (Mark 10:35-45)

1. *Who is the most competitive person in your family? Do you see competitiveness as a positive or negative quality?*
2. *Who do you know that is a "great" person? What is it that makes them great?*
3. *What would you need to accomplish in your life to consider yourself a success?*
4. *How is Christ's teaching about how to be great (v. 43) different from what others teach?*
5. *Who do you compare yourself against to see if you measure up?*
6. *What could you do this week at home that would live out your commitment to Christ to be a servant to others? What about at school?*

Success/Ambition: Nothing Compares to Knowing Christ (Philippians 3:1-11)

1. *What person in your school would you vote "most likely to succeed"? Why? What have they got going for them?*
2. *Would your parents say you have too much ambition or too little? Why?*
3. *What is it going to take for you to be a success in the eyes of your parents? Your friends? God's?*
4. *According to Paul, what's the secret to success (v. 8)?*
5. *Paul desires to know Christ better (v. 10). On a scale of 1 (none) to 10 (great), how does your desire in this area rank?*
6. *What "rubbish" do you need to give up to know Christ better?*
7. *How would you compare your life goals to the apostle Paul's goals in this passage?*
8. *What role does getting good grades and giving your very best in your schoolwork play in accomplishing these life goals?*

Setting Priorities: Counting the Cost (Luke 14:25-35)

1. *In a "high-stakes" game, are you more likely to play it safe or gamble everything on the next play?*
2. *When was the last time you went to buy something and found you didn't have enough money? How did you feel? What did you do?*
3. *What are your top three priorities in life right now? School? Work? Family? Friends? Dating? Church? Other? What should be your top three priorities right now?*
4. *Why would Jesus tell us to hate our own families?*
5. *Do you tend to give Jesus pieces of yourself (certain moments, some lifestyle choices, etc.) or give him your whole self? Which is better and why?*
6. *When did you first realize that following Jesus was costly? What price have you had to pay?*
7. *On a scale of 1 to 10, how heavy has your "cross" been this past school year – 1 ("I can barely lift it") to 10 ("Jesus is carrying it for me")?*
8. *How can this group pray for you and help you to "carry your cross"?*

Future Plans: Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21)

1. *If you could have fame, fortune or good looks, which would you choose?*
2. *How important is it to have money at your school? Fame? Good looks? What other qualities are important?*
3. *What would you like to be doing 10 years from now? Where would you like to be living?*
4. *What was Jesus warning us against when he said, "watch out!" in verse 15?*
5. *"Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry" (v. 19). What is your attitude towards this philosophy? The attitude of those in your school?*
6. *In your plans for the future, on a scale of 1 (irrelevant) to 10 (essential), how important is making a lot of money?*
7. *How can you be "rich toward God" (v. 21)? How can you show this to others in your school?*

Future Plans: Boasting About Tomorrow (James 4:13-17)

1. *What are your plans for this weekend?*
2. *How do you go about deciding what to do for the weekend?*
3. *How far into the future have you planned for your life?*
4. *What attitude should you have towards planning (v. 15)?*
5. *Who do you admire for the way they live one day at a time – making every day count for God? Why?*
6. *On a scale from 1 (little) to 10 (much), how much influence does your commitment to Christ affect your life goals?*
7. *Where do you need God's guidance in your plans for the future?*
8. *How can the group pray for you and support you?*

Choosing A Career: Living Sacrifices (Romans 12:1-8)

1. *What is your best subject in school?*
2. *What is the most memorable Christmas present you received as a child?*
3. *In your school, who do you admire because they march to a different drum?*
4. *How can you offer your "body" as a living sacrifice?*
5. *Of the gifts listed in verses 6-8, which one is most evident in your life? How will that affect your choice of a career? How will that affect the choices you make now in school?*
6. *How do you use your gifts within the church (Christ's body)? What holds you back from using your gifts more fully?*
7. *This past school year, did you feel more "conformed" or "transformed" (v. 2)? Why?*
8. *If you knew you could not fail, what goal or dream would you like to set for next school year?*

Key Words:

Education – Not found in Scripture

Educated - Acts 7:20-22 "At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for in his father's house. 21When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. 22Moses was **educated** in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action."

School – Not found in Scripture

Lecture Hall – Acts 19:8-10 "8Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the **lecture hall** of Tyrannus. 10This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord."

Teach – Used 349 times

Colossians 3: 16 "16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you **teach** and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

Wisdom – 215 times

James 3:17-18 "17 But the **wisdom** from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. 18 And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness."

Understanding – 114 times

Psalms 49:20 "A man who has riches without **understanding** is like the beasts that perish."

Psalms 111:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good **understanding**. To him belongs eternal praise."

Psalms 119:104 "I gain **understanding** from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path."

Learn – 105 times

Titus 3:1-4, 14

"1Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, 2to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

3At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. 4But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit..."

"14Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives."

Principles:

1 Corinthians 10:31

31So whether you eat or drink or **whatever** you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Colossians 3:17

"17And **whatever** you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 1:9-11

"...We have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the **knowledge** of his will through all spiritual **wisdom** and **understanding**. 10And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may *please him in every way*: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the **knowledge** of God, 11being strengthened with all

power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.”

Philippians 2:1-5

“¹If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. **3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit**, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Your **attitude** should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”

Philippians 2:14-15

“¹⁴Do **everything** without complaining or arguing, ¹⁵so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe...”