**Study Series: A Long Obedience in the Same Direction**

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**Lesson Title: “Happiness” (pp. 17-25)**

September 13, 2020 Session 02

**The main point of this lesson is:** True happiness comes from knowing and conforming to God’s design for our lives.

**Focus on this goal:** To help adults determine where they are losing happiness by living contrary to God’s design for their lives.

**Key Bible Passage:** Psalm 128

Before the Session

1. **Write** Happiness is … at the top of two poster boards and display one of those posters. Have a marker on hand. (Steps 1-7)

2. **Obtain** the CSB and Amplified Bible translations of Psalm 128:1. (Step 1)

During the Session

**Step 1. Introduction / Discussion Starter**

**Draw attention** to the poster and **ask** how the participants would finish the statement, “Happiness is …”

**Ask:** How might many people you know complete that statement?

**Record** responses on the poster.

**Write** “not really” after “Happiness is” and **evaluate** whether that makes the statements on the poster more accurate.

**Ask:** Why would happiness be included in a study on discipleship—isn’t that a worldly topic?

**Declare** much of Scripture, including the Song of Ascents examined in this week’s study, speaks of happiness and blessing.

**Read** Psalm 128:1 from the CBS and Amplified Bible.

**Explain** “Happy” is a reliable translation of the word ‘Blessed” (see endnote 1, p. 25).

**Display** the second “Happiness is” poster.

**State:** As we examine Psalm 128 today, we’ll seek to understand what true happiness is and where it comes from, and we’ll be challenged to determine where we are losing happiness by living contrary to God’s design for our lives.

**Step 2. Day One – “Enjoy the Blessing! Revel in the Goodness”**

**Invite a volunteer to read** The Message paraphrase of Psalm 128 (p. 17).

**Draw attention** to the Day One margin/pull quote (p. 18).

**Ask:** It might be easy to agree with that statement just based on Psalm 128, but how do we reconcile that statement with verses that tell us we must deny ourselves in order to follow Jesus (Luke 9:23-25)?

**Discuss** Day One, activity 2 (p. 18).

**Point out** life is hard; every person is either in the midst of a trial, coming out of a trial, or getting ready to enter a trial. It is easier to be a Christian, not because we don’t have struggles in this life, but because we don’t go through those struggles or carry those burdens on our own.

**Step 3. Day Two – Promises and Pronouncements**

**Declare:** True happiness means that, regardless of the struggles, we can “Enjoy the blessing! Revel in the goodness!”

**Invite responses** to Day Two, activity 1 (p. 19).

**Ask:** How can enjoying and reveling in seemingly small things help sustain our faith when God doesn’t seem to be fulfilling His promises of the blessed “good life”?

**Briefly relate** from Day Two (pp. 19-20) how the Bible from Genesis to Revelation speaks of God seeking to bless His people.

**Request adults** silently read the second paragraph of page 20 and identify what happiness is and is not.

**Record** responses on the appropriate posters.

**Step 4. Day Three – Sharing in Life**

**Use** the remarks and activities in Day Three (pp. 20-22) to **analyze** how believers today can interpret and apply the familial illustration the psalmist used to describe a blessed and happy life.

**Write** ease, honor, wealth on the “Happiness is not really” poster.

**Explore** how people end up taking happiness from others when they selfishly seek a false happiness.

**Invite a volunteer to read** the Day Three margin/pull quote (p. 21).

**Urge** the group to identify marks of true happiness.

**Record** responses on the “Happiness is” poster.

**Step 5. Day Four – Traveling by the Roads, Part 1**

**Ask:** How can someone get in on this happy and blessed life?

**Emphasize** the only “smooth straight road” to God and a life of blessing is through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Remind adults** discipleship is not just a one-time decision, but a long walk of obedience.

**Discuss** Day Four, activity 1 (pp. 22-23).

**Write** knowing and conforming to God’s design for our lives on the “Happiness is” poster.

**Ask:** Why does that kind of true happiness require that we fear God?

**Invite responses** to Day Four, activity 2 (p. 23).

**Step 6. Day Five – Traveling by the Roads, Part 2**

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 1 (p. 24).

**Analyze** how the rebellious stumble in God’s ways.

**Request a volunteer read** the last paragraph of Day Five (p. 25).

**Invite adults** to add additional responses to the “Happiness is not really” and “Happiness is” posters.

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 2 (p. 25).

**Step 7. Live Out the Lesson**

**Draw attention** to the “Happiness is” poster and **urge adults** to consider where they are living contrary to those marks of true happiness.

**Declare:** One way people live contrary to God’s design is to lead lives of entitlement and ingratitude. We are blessed when we choose to “Stand in awe of God’s Yes.”

**Invite volunteers to state** specific ways they “stand in awe of God’s Yes.”

**Urge adults** to set aside time every day this week to “Enjoy the blessing! Revel in the goodness!” and take specific actions to share God’s blessing and goodness with others.

**Close in prayer.**