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

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**Lesson Title: “Blessing” (pp. 90-99)**

October 25, 2020 Session 08

**The main point of this lesson is:** Blessing is a two-way street: as we receive blessing from God we are to bless (praise) Him in return.

**Focus on this goal:** To help adults develop a lifestyle of recognizing God’s blessings and blessing God.

Key Bible Passage: Psalm 134

During the Session

**Step 1. Introduction / Discussion Starter**

**Ask:**

1. Have you ever eagerly anticipated a trip somewhere exciting, only to arrive and have it not be everything you had hoped for?
2. What made arriving at that destination disappointing? (**OPTION:** Show slides from a search of the Internet using the term “unmet vacation expectations.”)

**Declare** that when we take a journey, we face the possibility the destination will not be as wonderful as we had hoped. Some believers might think that is true about the discipleship journey.

**State:** This lesson addresses questions like:

1. What’s at the end of this road of faith?
2. Will I be disappointed, or will it be even better than I dreamed?
3. How am I to live as I travel toward that end?

**Step 2. Day One – “Lift Your Praising Hands”**

**Explain** the Hebrew pilgrimage chronicled by the Songs of Ascents started in Psalm 120, while MasterWork joined the journey with Psalm 127.

**Invite a volunteer to read** Psalm 120.

**Use Day One** (pp. 90-91) to note how this psalm develops the theme of repentance.

**Invite a volunteer to read** Psalm 134 from Day One (p. 90).

**Explore** what theme this psalm develops.

**Read** the Day One margin/pull quote (p. 91).

**Write on the board** #Blessed and Berakah.

**Explore** the difference between these two kinds of blessing.

**Ask:** How is it possible for anyone to experience “berakah”?

**Explore** God’s three postures of blessing (p. 92).

**Invite responses** to Day One, activity 2 (p. 92).

**Ask a volunteer to read** the last paragraph of Day One (p. 92).

**Declare:** Blessing is a two-way street; we can learn to receive God’s blessings and “become good at blessing” Him in return.

**Step 3. Day Two – An Invitation and a Command**

**Request** adults read aloud the first phrase of Psalm 134.

**Ask:** What does that first word “Come” imply to you?

**State** if we want to become good at blessing God, we need to see the call to bless Him as an invitation and command.

**Request** adults imagine themselves as pilgrims who have traveled far to worship at the temple.

**Ask:**

1. What might you be thinking and feeling when you arrive in Jerusalem?
2. How could being invited to bless God be a positive end to what could have been a frustrating journey?
3. How could it be a challenging command after arriving?

**Use remarks** in Day Two (p. 93-94) to add to the discussion.

**Invite responses** to Day Two, activity 2 (p. 94).

**Step 4. Day Three – Feelings Don’t Run the Show**

**Ask:** What are believers to do when they don’t feel like heeding the invitation and command to bless the Lord?

**Determine** how Psalm 134:2 answers that question.

**Consider** whether the command to lift up praising hands is literal, figurative, or both.

**Invite responses** to Day Three, activity 1 (p. 95).

**Request** adults identify whom Psalm 134 specifically addresses.

**Read aloud** 1 Chronicles 9:33.

**Consider** why the Levites might not have felt like blessing God, and why they were commanded to lift up praising hands anyway.

**Draw attention** to the Day Three margin/pull quote (p. 95).

**Examine** whether that is the same or different from the “fake it ‘til you make it” mentality.

**Urge adults** to repeat Day Three, activity 2 (p. 96) this week.

**Step 5. Day Four – Taking God Seriously but Not Ourselves**

**Invite responses** to Day Four, activity 1 (p. 97).

**Declare** that when we learn to receive God’s blessings and return those blessings to Him with praise, we become grateful, joyful people.

**Ask:** How can not taking ourselves seriously, while always taking God seriously, result in us being “full of cheerfulness, exuberant with blessing” (p. 97)?

**Step 6. Day Five – The Chief End**

**Convey** from Day Five what the seminary dean might say to pastoral students.

**Ask:** Why might it be difficult to receive blessings from, or give blessings to, God when we feel like all the work of discipleship is up to us?

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 1 (p. 98).

**Guide the group** to identify the aspects of discipleship examined in the first seven sessions of this study (work, happiness, perseverance, hope, humility, obedience, community).

**Analyze** how this last aspect of blessing supersedes all these.

**Read** the Day Five paragraph (p. 99) beginning with “Glorify. Enjoy.”

**Step 7. Live Out the Lesson**

**Ask:**

1. Does the phrase, “It’s the end of the road” usually have a negative or positive connotation?
2. Is the end of the road negative or positive for believers? Why?

**Read** the last paragraph of Day Four (pp. 97-98).

**Request** adults prayerfully consider Day Four, activity 2 (p. 98), **inviting volunteers** to share their responses.

**Declare** we don’t wait to get to the end of the road in heaven to receive God’s blessings and bless Him in return, we do that all along this lifelong discipleship journey.

**Guide the group** to explore how they can develop a lifestyle of recognizing God’s blessings and blessing Him in return.

**Close in prayer.**