**Study Series: The Blessing of Humility**

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**Lesson Title: “Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness” (pp. 134-142)**

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The main point of this lesson is: Humility means intensely desiring righteousness.

Focus on this goal: To help adults deeply desire both positional and experiential righteousness.

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 5:6

Before the Session

1. **Divide** a piece of paper into fourths. In one quadrant **write**, In my childhood, I intensely desired… In the second, In my teens I intensely desired… In the third, Earlier in adulthood I intensely desired… In the last, These days, I intensely desire… **Make a copy** for each adult. (Step 1)

2. **Write** Hunger and Thirst on a large writing surface. (Steps 2 and 5)

During the Session[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion**

As adults arrive, **give** each a copy of the sheet you prepared.

**Encourage** them to respond with non-church answers.

Open the session by **sharing your own answer** in each period of life; **invite volunteers** to share some of their answers.

**Say:** Our intense desires change greatly throughout our lives. In today’s session, we’re going to look at what we, as believers, should intensely desire as we seek God-ordained humility.

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**Step 2. Day One – An Intense Desire**

**Invite a volunteer to read** Matthew 5:3-6.

As a group, **discuss** how the different descriptions of humility found in these verses (poor in spirit, mourning, meekness) move through the different steps of humility: seeing our sin, mourning over it, and responding to God and others meekly.

**Point** to “hunger” and “thirst” in verse 6.

**Say:** As you can guess, this is the next step in our pathway to humility.

**Guide learners** to draw an arrow in their Bibles from verse 5 to verse 6.

**Use the content** in Day One (pp. 134-135) **to describe** the intensity of the words hunger and thirst.

**Read** the verses in Day One (p. 134) and **engage learners** in describing how each verse reflects the writer’s hunger and thirst for righteousness.

**Step 3. Day Two – Positional Righteousness, Part 1**

**Invite volunteers to read** aloud the following: 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; and 1 John 3:5.

**Say:** Here Paul, the author of Hebrews, Peter, and John all confirm the same thing: Jesus was totally righteous.

**Read** 1 Peter 2:24 and Isaiah 53:5-6, **asserting** that Christ’s death bore the wrath we deserve for our sin and satisfied the requirements of God’s law. Because of that, we have positional righteousness.

**Use Day Two content** (p. 137) **to shape** a strong definition of that term.

**Step 4. Day Three – Positional Righteousness, Part 2**

**Share** with the class a recent time when an event or series of events led you to have a sinful attitude, sinful words, or sinful actions. (Or use the author’s personal story in the second paragraph of Day Three, p. 137.)

**Observe:** We are already righteous in Christ because of His perfect life and sacrificial death. Hungering and thirsting for righteousness means, then, that we more intensely desire to know and live out that righteousness that is already ours.

**Challenge learners** not to think in terms of working harder for righteousness in the face of sin but of resting more fully in dependence on Christ’s saving work, already completed.

**Step 5. Day Four – Experiential Righteousness, Part 1**

**Say:** In addition to positional righteousness through Christ, there is also experiential righteousness.

**Invite four volunteers to read** 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 3:10; and Hebrews 12:14 (printed in Day Four, pp. 139-140).

**Point out** that, in those passages, our positional righteousness is understood while our experiential righteousness is commanded.

**On the board draw** a large circle around “hunger” and “thirst.”

**Say:** Positional righteousness and experiential righteousness work together.

**Write** positional righteousness at the top of the circle, gratitude at the 4:00 spot, and experiential righteousness at the 8:00 spot.

**Use the last three paragraphs** from Day Four (p. 140) **to explain** how one leads to the other in ever-increasing intensity.

**Step 6. Day Five – Experiential Righteousness, Part 2**

**Say:** We’ve discussed positional righteousness and experiential righteousness, but what does daily righteousness look like?

As learners offer answers, **write** those on the board you’ve been using.

**Read** the first paragraph of Day Five (pp. 140-141) to help learners understand that experiential righteousness is a slow, incremental process that is completely dependent on the Holy Spirit.

**Ask:** How can we know what the Holy Spirit is leading us to do regarding righteousness?

**Use** the **information** in the second paragraph of Day Five (p. 141) to **point out** that we hear the Spirit through the Word of God; if we’re not in the Bible, we’ll miss the blessing of growing in righteousness.

**Step 7. Practical Application - Live Out the Lesson**

**Direct learners** to the question in Day Five from the Heidelberg Catechism (Question 114) and its answer (p. 141).

**As a group, break down** the rich quote into bite-sized pieces, delving into the deep meaning and the reason we hunger and thirst for righteousness that we know is unattainable.

**Challenge learners** to put this quote into their phones and meditate on it daily this week, asking the Holy Spirit to lead them from gratitude for our positional righteousness to a deeper hunger and thirst for experiential righteousness.

**Additional Questions for Discussion**

1. What is the biblical definition of righteousness? What evidence is there in the Bible to show that Jesus Christ met the requirements of this definition?
2. Why is Christ’s sinless life equally important as His sacrificial death for our sin?
3. What does the author mean by the expression “positional righteousness”? If you are in Christ, how does this make you feel inside?
4. What does the author mean by the expression “experiential righteousness”? What evidence is there in the Bible to prove that you should actively pursue it?
5. What motivates the genuine Christian to pursue experiential righteousness?
1. Additional questions for discussion are included on page 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)