**Study Series: The Blessing of Humility**

Author: Jerry Bridges

**Lesson Title: “Merciful and Pure” (pp. 145-154)**

May 23, 2021 Session 12

The main point of this lesson is: Humility means acting mercifully to others and striving for purity of heart.

Focus on this goal: To help adults strive for the purity of heart that consistently displays mercy to others.

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 5:7-8

Before the Session

1. **Watch** for a real-life example of purity of heart and mercy. (Step 1)

2. **Prepare to summarize** Matthew 18:23-35. (Step 3)

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

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

**Group learners** into two teams.

**Instruct** Team A to find the best photo on their phones exemplifying a pure heart. Team B is to find the best photo exemplifying kindness.

**Provide time** for adults to share photos within their teams.

**Invite a few volunteers** from each team to share their photos with the entire group.

**Share** any purity of heart and mercy you observed this week.

**Say:** As we continue our study of the Beatitudes, we’ll see how these two traits lead us to godly humility.

**Step 2. Day One – Mercy and Physical Needs**

**Invite a volunteer to read** Matthew 5:3-8.

**Quickly review** the first four elements of humility (poor in spirit, mourning, meekness, hungering and thirsting for righteousness).

**Say:** The first four Beatitudes point to our relationship with God. Starting with verse 7, Jesus’ words point to our relationship with others.

**Use** Day One content (p. 146) to **explain** that the word translated “merciful” is stronger than pity or compassion, denoting feeling as well as action.

**Read** Luke 10:29-37 and **use** the Day One content (p. 146) to **help learners** see the outward expression of action, not the feelings, of the Samaritan.

**Say:** The first element of mercy is helping to meet the physical needs of the poor and needy.

**Step 3. Day Two – Mercy and Spiritual Needs, Part 1**

**Use** the first two paragraphs of Day Two (p. 147) to **point out** that we should neglect neither the physical nor the spiritual needs of people as we show mercy; instead, we should attend to both.

**Invite volunteers to read** Ephesians 2:1-4; Exodus 34:6; and Psalm 145:8, pointing to the mercy of God.

**Summarize** the parable of the unmerciful servant from Matthew 18:23-35, **using** the Day Two content (p. 148) to **express** the current-day value of the monetary amounts in the parable.

**As a group, compare** our sin against God to others’ sins against us.

**Stress** the author’s statement (p. 148), “We are all ten-thousand-talent debtors to God.”

**Encourage** learners to practice merciful forgiveness, not because others deserve it, but because God forgave us.

**Step 4. Day Three – Mercy and Spiritual Needs, Part 2**

**Lead a group discussion** based on the question, “What does it mean to forgive?”

**Use** the Scriptures and comments in the first two Day Three paragraphs (p. 149) to **help learners understand** that God’s forgiveness means He no longer remembers our sins.

**Stress** we are called to intentionally not remember the sins of others who offend us.

**Ask:** What are practical, real-life ways we can do this?

**Point out** that we choose not to replay the sin in our minds, don’t bring it up in conversation, and choose to forgive over and over.

**Read** Matthew 5:44.

**Say:** Another way we show forgiveness is to choose to be genuinely concerned over the salvation of the person that offends us.

**Remind learners** that forgiveness costs us; we must be committed to reflecting God in our willingness to forgive.

**Step 5. Day Four – Pure in Heart, Part 1**

**Say:** The second aspect of today’s session is understanding that humility comes from a pure heart.

**Direct learners** to the bulleted list on page 151.

**Say:** In addition to the physical organ, these are other aspects of our lives for which our heart is responsible, according to the Bible.

**Confess:** I struggle to have pure \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (emotion, motives, etc.). I know it’s/they’re not pure because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. If your group is trusting enough to do so, **invite a few volunteers** to follow the same pattern.

**Say:** Just as our hungering and thirsting for righteousness will never be perfected, so we will not have a perfectly pure heart in all these ways. **Ask:** So why try?

**Use** the information from Day Four (pp. 151-152) to **help learners understand** that we begin to have a pure heart when we see Jesus as our Lord and choose to walk in light of the fact that He owns our hearts.

**Step 6. Day Five – Pure in Heart, Part 2**

**Invite a volunteer to read** Romans 12:1-2.

**Say:** This is the next aspect of living with a pure heart: when our hearts are purely and wholly His, our entire lives follow.

**Use** Day Five content (pp. 153-154) to **connect** Romans 12:1-2 to the concept of being pure in heart.

**Read** Psalm 86:11, **impressing** upon learners that it is our responsibility to grow in purity of heart.

**Ask** how we do that (Bible reading, studying, meditating, memorizing, and application).

**Read** Kenneth Wuest’s expanded translation of 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (Day Five, p. 153).

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

**Invite a volunteer to read** the paragraph from Day Five (p. 119) that begins, “There is yet one more application ….”

**Say:** We might think we are responsible for confessing and mourning for our own sins but nothing more.

**Ask:** How does this paragraph challenge us differently?

**Read** Ezra’s prayer from Ezra 9:6 and **use** the last paragraph from Day Five (p. 119) to **encourage learners** to mourn daily this week, not only for their own personal sins, but also for congregational, national, and global sins, as well.

**Close in prayer**

**Additional Questions for Discussion**

1. Explain the difference between showing pity toward someone and showing them mercy.
2. What did it cost God to be merciful toward us by forgiving our sin?
3. Think back to the last time you were merciful to someone who wronged you. What did it cost you to be able to say, “You don’t owe me anymore”?
4. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart.” What did He mean by pure? What did He mean by heart?
5. How would you evaluate the purity of your heart, on a scale of 1 to 10, in light of this lesson?
6. What is the most powerful motivation for surrendering to the fact that you do not own yourself, but Christ does?
7. As you seek to be pure in heart, what is the vital role of the Holly Spirit? The Scriptures?
1. Additional questions for discussion are included on pages 5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)