

Study Series: Follow Me

Author: David Platt

Lesson Title: “Superficial Religion and   
Supernatural Regeneration” (pp. 129-142)

Session 10

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The main point of this lesson is: Following Jesus results in a changed life because of the Spirit of Jesus coming into the believer.

Focus on this goal: To help adults evaluate whether their lives reflect superficial religion or supernatural regeneration

Key Bible Passage: Ezekiel 36:25-28; Matthew 4:19; John 3:3,5

Before the Session

1. Continue displaying the Matthew 4:19 poster.

2. Create another poster that says: Try harder, work harder, do more, become better.

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Draw attention to the “Try harder” poster. Consider areas of life where that kind of motto can be beneficial. Recall from the introduction (p. 100) that this study explores common Christian phrases. Consider how that motto reflects a common Christian concept and evaluate whether it is beneficial or dangerous.

State: Following Jesus results in a changed life not because we try really hard, but because the Spirit of Jesus comes into and flows out of us. This lesson challenges us to evaluate whether our lives reflect superficial religion or supernatural regeneration.

Step 2. The Burden of Rules

Compare the Matthew 4:19 and “Try harder” posters and analyze how Christianity is radically different from every other religion.

Discuss Day One, activity 1 (p. 129). Declare that Jesus certainly does send us out into the world to bear fruit, that’s evident from John 15:16 that we looked at in Session 9 (Day Five, activity 2, p. 125), but that flows out of first being with Him in a personal relationship.

Request a volunteer read Luke 10:38-42. Consider how the story of Mary and Martha emphasizes the truth of the Day One Note (p. 130). Evaluate why and how Christians have missed that.

Read Matthew 11:28-29. Consider how Jesus’s call to follow Him was so liberating for the first disciples, and for us today. Declare: Our greatest need is not to try harder, that is superficial religion. Our greatest need is a new heart, that is supernatural regeneration.

Step 3. A New Heart

Analyze the difference between superficial religion and supernatural regeneration. Explain how Nicodemus had superficial religion.

Ask a volunteer to read John 3:3-5. Explain Jesus was referencing an Old Testament promise. Request adults follow along and circle all the “I will” and “you will” statements as you read Ezekiel 36:25-28. Explain being born again means getting a new heart. Being born of water means that new heart is cleansed of sin. Note the Old Testament is filled with promises of God remembering our sins no more.

Read John 1:29 and declare God doesn’t remember a believer’s sin because Jesus takes it away. Read the Day Two Note (p. 132). Discuss Day Two, activity 2 (p. 132). Consider which phrases in Titus 3:3-7 indicate being born of water and the Spirit.

Request adults look back at the statements they circled in Ezekiel 36. Consider how the relationship between those statements is the complete opposite of the “Try harder” motto.

Invite a volunteer to read the last paragraph of Day Two (p. 133).

Step 4. Our Greatest Need

Declare that when God gives us a new heart that is “born of water” and cleansed of sin, He meets our greatest need of forgiveness. Analyze how many professing Christians get stuck at that point and what happens when they do.

Request adults look back at Ezekiel 36:25-28 and identify what else God promises to do in addition to cleansing of sin. Ask how that gives clearer understanding to Jesus’s words to Nicodemus in John 3:5.

Draw attention to the Day Three Note (p. 134). Use the Day Three remarks and activities (pp. 134-135) to explore what happens when Jesus fills His followers with His Spirit.

Step 5. From Being Disciples to Making Disciples

Read the Matthew 4:19 poster, emphasizing the words “I will make you.” Explore how Jesus’s words emphasize the distinction between superficial religion and supernatural regeneration.

Request adults read Matthew 4:19 aloud in unison, emphasizing the last three words. Determine what results from being a disciple of Jesus. Request a volunteer read Matthew 28:19-20. Analyze how these very imperfect disciples became disciple-makers. Discuss Day Four, activity 1 (p. 137).

Step 6. Supernatural Overflow

Analyze how the “Try harder” motto prevents believers from boldly obeying Jesus’s Great Commission like the first apostles did (see first two paragraphs of Day Five, p.138 ). Evaluate why a superficial religion results in a church spectator mentality. Explore what happens when people are supernaturally regenerated. Discuss Day Five, activity 1 (p. 138-139).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Request adults silently consider the questions in Day Five, activity 2 (p. 139). Read again Matthew 11:28-29 (Step 2). Declare: Jesus’s yoke is not a heavy “try harder” religious burden on our backs; it’s Jesus putting His arm around our shoulders and saying, “Follow Me and let’s walk this road together.”

Draw attention once more to the two posters and ask volunteers to share how their lives would be different if they discarded the “Try harder” motto and embraced the “Follow Me” invitation.

Close in prayer.

After the Session

Each session has provided opportunities for participants to follow Jesus. Follow up with any who have asked questions about being born again.

