

Study Series: The Good Life

Author: Derwin Gray

Lesson Title: “Happy Are the Sad” (pp. 21-34)

Session 2

June 11, 2023

The main point of this lesson is: The good life only comes to those who lament sin.

Focus on this goal: To help adults mourn their and their church’s sin that they might experience God’s comfort and share it with others

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 5:4

Before the Session

1. Continue using “The Good Life” chart you began last week. (Step 1)

2. OPTION: For any or all of the stories shared in this session, enlist a class member to share their own story of mourning. Call on learners at appropriate times during the session.

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Briefly review last week’s lesson, the first of this study on The Beatitudes from The Good Life. Remind learners that you previously saw that the first step of living the good life was to be poor in spirit, or humble, or “beggars” as the author put it.

Say: Today’s verse teaches us that “blessed are those who mourn” (Matt. 5:4). What images come to mind when you think of mourning? What emotions are often associated with mourning?

Direct attention to “The Good Life” chart started last week and add Sad. Say: It may seem contradictory to think that the sad are on the path to the good life; let’s explore Christ’s words.

Step 2. Abigail

Read the first Day One paragraph (p. 21), repeating “Lamenting is a holy hurt.” Say: The word lament is not one we use often these days, but maybe we should.

As a group, consider the idea of lamenting and how it can be cathartic. Ask: What is the opposite of lament? Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 5:4. Paraphrase it using the author’s words at the start of the second paragraph (p. 21): “Those who lament will be cemented in God’s comfort.”

Briefly share Abigail’s story and how she found hope in the lamenting of the author’s wife. (Or call on the enlisted learner to share a personal testimony.)

Step 3. Dwayne and Pam

Read the opening Day Two paragraph (p. 23), then read the closing words of the next paragraph (p. 24): “He owned his sin. He lamented his sin. And God’s comfort was on its way. But it would take time.” As a group, consider that people often want to skip those required steps: admitting sin, mourning over it, and patiently waiting as God’s comfort begins to heal.

Share how Dwayne’s lamenting led to his reconciliation with Pam. Invite a volunteer to read the final paragraph of Day Two (p. 24).

Read Matthew 5:4 again. Say: As we believe this verse, we can expect God’s comfort as we mourn our sin.

Step 4. Bryan

Invite a volunteer to read Psalm 33:5. Say: We saw in Day One that “happy are those whose hearts break for what breaks God’s heart” (p. 21). We see here that injustice breaks God’s heart.

Briefly recount the author’s narrative about Bryan, the lawyer who fights for people who have been erroneously condemned. Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 25:44-46. Stress that Jesus did not call us to believe in mind only, but to follow through on our faith including by treating some of the most mistreated people in society with love, compassion, and hope.

Step 5. Pain Before Comfort

From the opening paragraphs of Day Four (p. 26), point out the different causes of lamenting in the author’s examples: sin, evil, injustice, suffering, and tragedy.

Read the paragraph (p. 27) that begins “Lamenting the way things are . . . .”Say: But our God is a God of mercy. When we see the effects of sin in this world and mourn them, we can be sure He sees and mourns, as well.

Invite a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 1:3-5. Point out that God’s comfort as we mourn enables us to comfort others.

Use the Day Four content under the heading “God’s Comfort” (pp. 27-29) to drawattention to the lamenting of Jesus during His years upon earth. Say: We’re not called to depression or hopelessness, but we are called to lament and fight against the effects of sin in our world.

Step 6. We, Not Just Me

Summarize the opening paragraph of Day Five, (p. 29). Point out that lamenting personal sin turns our focus to Jesus and hope in Him.

Use the remainder of the Day Five content (pp. 29-31) to stress that we should also be focused on mourning corporate sins of the church. Invite volunteers to read Isaiah 6:5 and Matthew 6:12. Highlight the words “us” and “our” in Matthew 6:12 from the Lord’s prayer. As a group, consider how adults might individually and together mourn corporate sins and take action against them.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

State: The good life comes to those who lament. We don’t let it undo our hope and our joy, but we certainly make lamenting a regular part of our faith life so that we see our own sin, corporate sin, and the effects of sin in our world. We take action, we lift up our prayers, and we remember our hope in a perfect eternity with Christ.

Share how you plan to incorporate lament into your daily prayer time and challenge other learners to consider the same.

Close in prayer.

