

Study Series: The Good Life

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Lesson Title: “Happy Are the Pure” (pp. 66-79)

Session 5

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The main point of this lesson is: The good life only comes to the pure.

Focus on this goal: To help adults behold the pure beauty of Jesus

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 5:8

Before the Session

1. Bring a clear glass, water, spoon, and a small container of salt. (Step 1)

2. Continue using “The Good Life” chart begun in Session 1. (Step 1)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Set a glass of water on a table. Say: This is a glass of pure water. It’s good for a variety of uses; I could drink it, cook with it, bathe in it, wash clothes with it, or any number of things. Add the salt to the water and stir well. Say: This may still look like pure water, but we know it’s not. And that impurity changes what I can do with the water.

Explain that, in today’s passage, Jesus’s words teach us to seek purity in order to live the good life. Add Pure to “The Good Life” chart.

Step 2. Not Our Purity

Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 5:8. Acknowledge: Most of us would probably not say that we have a totally pure heart, and that would be the truth.

Use the Day One content (p. 66) to walk learners through the basic steps revealed by the author: We cannot make ourselves clean (Rom. 3:10), but Jesus takes our place by standing purely before God.

Read the paragraph (p. 67) that begins “Often our lack of happiness . . .” and engage learners in exploring the disconnect between our identity through Christ and our perception of ourselves in the world.

Invite volunteers to read Romans 6:5 and Galatians 2:20 to drive home that Christ in us is the only source of our purity.

Step 3. This Is Worship

Briefly recount the author’s star struck experience of seeing Magic Johnson (Day Two, p. 68). (OPTION: If you have a similar experience, share your own.) Then read the pull quote (p. 69).

Invite a volunteer to read Revelation 5:9-13. Instruct the volunteer to read slowly and deliberately and the other learners to close their eyes and envision this scene in heaven as they hear it unfold.

Read Psalm 27:4 and ask: Have you ever turned David’s prayer into your own prayer? Have you ever desperately sought to see God as He really is? As a group, brainstorm how seeing God as exalted purifies one’s own faith.

Step 4. Self-Improvement?

Guide adults to read the opening paragraph of the Day Three (p. 70) to themselves. Ask: *What is wrong with this Self-Help Coach Jesus?* If the discussion does not make it clear, stress to learners that we miss the fact Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords when we view Him only as a daily life coach.

Invite a volunteer to read Luke 9:23-26. Point out that Jesus’s words reveal He requires more than acknowledging He has good ideas; He requires that we lay down our lives willingly for His service.

Use Day Three content under the heading “New and Better” (pp. 71-72) to draw a parallel between God’s initial commands for the Israelites and Jesus’s fulfillment of the Old Testament law.

Step 5. His Best > Our Worst, Part 1

Invite a volunteer to read John 8:1-6. Use Day Four content (pp. 73-74) to point out the condemnation, shame, and guilt being absorbed by the woman and the injustice of the situation (see Lev. 20:10).

Help learners understand that the religious leaders cared nothing for the woman; rather, they were seeking only to trap Jesus. They were planning to reveal Jesus as either a fraud rabbi or an insurrectionist (p. 74).

Read Micah 7:18-19. Contrast the shame heaped on the woman by the Jewish leaders and the mercy applied lavishly by Jesus.

Encourage learners to see that even when we are guilty—and we are all guilty of sin—God is merciful and loves us.

Step 6. His Best > Our Worst, Part 2

Read the opening paragraph of Day Five (pp. 74-75). Invite a volunteer to read Exodus 34:6-7. Point out the fact that this same compassionate, gracious, slow-to-anger God was sitting on the ground, asked by religious leaders to give immediate judgment.

Stress that Jesus revealed the compassionate, gracious qualities of God when He stooped to write in the sand and in His thoughtful answer to the would-be stoners.

Help adults recognize in Jesus’s closing words to the woman (John 8:10-11), His mercy as well as His call for holiness on the part of the woman.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Invite a volunteer to read Titus 2:11-14. Say: Only in receiving the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ can we truly be pure. That’s the purity demanded in Jesus’s words in Matthew 5:7; we are pure only through saving faith in Jesus Himself.

Challenge learners to consider the impact God’s grace and mercy have had on their lives by determining how well they exhibit grace and mercy to others.

Close in prayer.

