

The Gospel Project for Adults, Winter 2015-2016
Extended Instructional Approaches for Session 5

Introduction: *Help your group to connect with the major theme.*

Ask your group, “Have you ever received everything you have always wanted only to realize that your dreams are met but you are still unhappy? Let’s watch this clip from the movie *Moms’ Night Out* and see what Allyson does as she wades through the normality of life.”

The clip “I’m Not Happy” is available at <http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/moms-night-out/im-not-happy> (1 minute, 18 seconds). In this scene, Allyson wonders why she is still unhappy after realizing her life’s goal of creating a wonderful family.

Explain the following to your group: “It is interesting when you have it all and yet you are still feeling down, trapped, like you are walking through the wilderness. The Israelites had been set free from slavery, walked through the Red Sea on dry ground, and saw the Egyptians die as God protected them. They also knew that the Lord had promised provision in Canaan. Yet, In Exodus 17 we pick up the story with Israel’s wilderness experience. The Israelites are hungry, weary and worried and have forgotten all that the Lord has done and brought them through.”

Part 1: *Help your group connect with the lesson by using an illustration.*

Say something like the following to your group: “Sometimes, just like the Israelites we get used to the blessings and forget to be grateful for the provision. Israel had grown accustomed to the provisions of the Lord and grumbled and complained when they felt their needs were not being met. They had a complaining spirit and a sense of entitlement. We must be careful that as we are receiving God’s provision and blessing, we remain thankful to Him for how He is at work.”

Use the following illustration to remind your group members why we should always be grateful.

“Getting Used to Blessings”

Carol decided she wanted to do something nice for her neighbor Mrs. Smith, so she baked a pie and carried it next door. When Mrs. Smith opened up her door, she was surprised to see her holding a pie. She replied, “For me? Oh, thank you so much! You just don’t know how much I appreciate it! You are so thoughtful for doing this! Thank you!”

Because Mrs. Smith liked the pie so much, Carol decided the next week to bake her another one. When she took it over, Mrs. Smith opened the door and said, “Thank you so much you are so kind!”

Carol took another pie over the following week, Mrs. Smith simply replied, “Thanks.”

Carol took another pie over the next week, and Mrs. Smith responded, “You are a day late with that pie.” The following week, Carol baked her another pie. This time her neighbor said, “Try using a little more sugar and don’t bake it quite as long. The crust has been a little bit hard lately. And I’d like cherry instead of apple filling next time.” The next week Carol was so busy, she was unable to cook for her neighbor. When Carol passed by her house on the way to the store, Mrs. Smith looked through the window and noticed she wasn’t carrying a pie. She then stuck her head out the window and yelled, “Where’s my pie?!”

It is so easy to get used to our blessings. After enjoying them for a while, we begin to think we deserve them. Then instead of being thankful, we complain. It’s a process that occurs so slowly, we don’t even realize it’s happening.

[Kent Crockett, *The 911 Handbook* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 157-158.]

Ask this question after reading the illustration: “Can you think of a time when you have had that same sense of entitlement about the blessings and provisions of God?”

Part 2: *Engage using another passage to amplify the theme.*

Read Romans 8:28 out loud to your group: “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose” (HCSB).

Break your group into 3-4 smaller groups to debrief on Romans 8:28 by having them discuss the questions below in their smaller groups in light of the trials that the Israelites were facing.

- If we believe God is good, then why are we hungry and thirsty?
- If we believe God is good, why are we facing trials in the areas of relationships, finances, and loss?
- Do you think that the Israelites believed that God was good?
- We have a kind of assurance that Israel did not yet have due to Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. Do you think that helps us believe in His constant goodness?

Part 3: *Help group members to connect with the lesson by applying it to their lives.*

Write the words “God is with us” on a poster board and place the board on the focal wall. Say: “As believers we know that the Holy Spirit lives inside us and there is never a time we are away from His presence. However, sometimes we can go through crisis, times of unbelief, and trials that make it difficult to believe God is there.”

Ask your group to recall a time when they felt God’s presence and give each person a post-it note on which to write, in a few words, an example of God’s presence in their lives. After they have written their examples, ask them to post their note on the poster so that everyone can see the faithfulness of the Lord.

If appropriate for your group, consider playing light music or worship songs as background while they are thinking and praying. After everyone has posted notes to the board, ask 1-2 people to share their experiences of when they have felt God’s presence.

Conclusion: *Help the group to make a commitment in light of the session.*

Read this line from the Conclusion of the session: “If Jesus is the Rock who gives living water, He is the only One in whom we find salvation.” Then ask everyone in your group to share the name of one person with whom each of them plans to share the living water with this week. Close in prayer. Pray for the people whom they have shared.