

The Way to Happiness

Love

by Annette Gulick 10/1/2001

Lesson Four

Lesson Objective: That students commit to a life of generous, humble love and service for Christ.

Bible Passage: John 12: 1-8, Mark 14: 3-11

Bible Truth: Mary and Martha showed their love in generous, humble service for Christ.

Memory Verse: John 14:15

Before You Begin:

- ◆ 5 volunteers for skit
- ◆ pens or pencils
- ◆ copies of handout "If you love me..."
- ◆ words to songs chosen for the closing.

Opening:

Caterpillar. Arrange the chairs very close to one another in a circle facing inward. Choose someone to stand in the middle of the circle whose goal is to get into the empty chair. The person sitting to the right of the empty chair should move into the chair, attempting to prevent them from sitting down, while his or her neighbor then moves into the newly vacated chair, and so on, so the whole circle ends up moving clockwise. The person standing may at any time call out, "Switch" and everyone must then move counter-clockwise, or in the opposite direction. If the person in the center manages to sit down, the person who should have moved into the empty seat takes their place in the center.

Before the meeting begins arrange the following with a few other leaders or students. When you are ready to stop playing, stand up and offer your seat to the person in the center. Act as if the game is going to continue, i.e. try to sit in the empty chair while others try to move into it, but then someone else, as pre-arranged, will offer you their seat. Do this about three or so times, then when you are again standing in the middle ask, first to the person you gave your seat to and then to the rest of the students:

- *How did you feel when I gave up my chair?*

- ***Obviously it is not wrong to try to keep someone out of the chair because this is just a game. But can you think of any examples in life where people try to get something for themselves at your expense? [corrupt politicians, pushy salespeople, classmates want to copy your work or copy off your test, etc.]***
- ***Who are some people you know who "give up their chair", or in other words are unselfish? Give an example of how they live unselfishly?***

The world around us is constantly telling us that in order to find happiness we need to "look out for Number One" and not worry about other people. But Jesus teaches that that is a lie. The true path to happiness is love--loving God first, and loving others, treating them in the way that we would like to be treated.

Interactive Learning

Have the students stand up and form a circle where everyone has their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Then tell them to massage each other's shoulders. After a few minutes have everyone sit down and say:

Every day we have opportunities to do small things for those we come in contact with. Today we are going to see how Jesus praised Mary for showing her love for him in a generous, even extravagant way.

Ask students to imagine that for one day they have an unlimited amount of money but have to spend it all on one person. What would they buy or do for that person? If you have time, go around the circle and have each student respond, but if you are short on time just get a few answers.

Bible Application

Choose students to represent the following people--Jesus, Lazarus, Martha, Mary, and Judas. If you think your students will act better with some preparation call 5 people ahead of time, or talk to them before the meeting, explain their role, and ask them to read Mark 14: 3-11 in preparation. If you have group members who are expressive and spontaneous you can call them to the front of the class and instruct them to act out the following scene in character as you read it.

As the scene opens...Lazarus, Martha, and Mary are onstage getting things ready for a dinner.

Six days before the Passover when Jesus was going to allow himself to be sacrificed for the sins of God's people, he came for dinner in Bethany with Lazarus, Martha and Mary (motion to Jesus and Judas to enter.) Lazarus and his sisters were very glad to see Jesus. Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus, while Martha served the meal.

Then Mary brought an alabaster flask filled with rare, perfumed oil over to where Jesus was sitting. While everyone watched, she broke it open, pouring some of it on Jesus' head and the rest of it on his feet, which she then wiped with her hair.

Judas Iscariot was indignant and criticized Mary saying "What a waste. This oil was worth a year's salary. She should have sold it and given the money to the poor." Now Judas wasn't really that interested in taking care of the poor. He was a thief. He was in charge of the money box for the rest of the disciples and he used to steal from it.

Jesus defended Mary and said, "Leave her alone. Why are you criticizing her? She has done something beautiful for me. You will always have the opportunity to give to the poor, but you will not always have me. She has done what she could. She has anointed my body for my burial. I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told as a memorial to her.

Then Judas went to the Jewish religious leaders to betray Jesus to them and they promised to give him money in return.

Then ask:

- ◆ *How did Mary's actions show generosity? [she gave something very valuable to Jesus]*
- ◆ *How did she show humility? [only servants washed people's feet, and she did it with her hair]*
- ◆ *Why do you think Mary acted in such a generous and humble way? [she loved Jesus so much she wanted to give him the best she had and she didn't care what other people thought about her]*
- ◆ *What is the difference between Mary's attitude and the attitude of Judas? [she was unselfish and full of love, he was greedy and selfish]*

Judas and Mary are people who choose totally different paths in life. Judas chose to love money and to be selfish; Mary chose to be unselfish and give her best to show her love for Jesus. We don't know exactly what happened to Mary, but it is safe to assume that she continued to live her life loving and serving her

Lord. But we do know about Judas, how he tried to return the money the Jews had paid him to betray Jesus and then killed himself.

As we think about our search for happiness it is important to keep in mind that happiness is not just how we feel at one moment, but it also is a deep sense of satisfaction that we feel as a result of our priorities and how we live.

Commitment

Most of us here love Jesus and would like our lives to be like Mary's, lived in such a way that Jesus is pleased by our love for him. But love for Jesus is not just something we feel when we are in church or watching a lovely sunset. Jesus says that our love for him will show itself in the way we live, so we are going to spend a few minutes reviewing what Jesus says our lives should look like.

Pass our handout "If you love me..." and invite any student who has their reading sheet, "At the Feet of Christ" to pull it out and use it as a reference. [This is a good time to recognize those who have completed the readings and give them a chance to share some of what they learned.] When you see that students have finished filling out their worksheet discuss the answers as a group.

Closing

Sing a few hymns or praise songs that specifically focus on adoring Jesus.

If You Love Me...		
Reference	What Jesus Wants Me To Do	How I Can Do It
Mt. 5: 43-45		
Mt 6: 14, 15		
Mt. 7: 3-5		
Mt. 7: 12		
John 13:34, 35		

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