

BRAIN SCAN

Luke 6:17-26

INTENTION

Group members will discover that Jesus wants us to take another look at the way we think about life. Christ challenges each of us to take the long, long view of our existence. He asks us to go counter-cultural and to see our lives as investments in the souls of others. He challenges us to stand on our tip-toes and peer beyond the ever approaching borders of our earthly lives.

INTRODUCTION

This section will introduce the topic by getting group members to think about what they would want if they could have anything they wanted.

1. (Optional) Stop by a Chinese restaurant and pick up enough fortune cookies for each member of your group to have one. *(For additional fun, ahead of time, one at a time, put them in the microwave for 30 seconds, open the cookies enough to pull out the fortunes and replace them with your own custom-made fortunes and then quickly close them up again)*
 - a. Pass out the cookies, allow members to read their fortunes, one at a time.
 - b. As each person reads, ask if they are satisfied with what they read?
 - c. How would they change it was more to their liking?
 - d. Would they like to trade fortunes with someone who has already read?
Why?
2. Ask volunteers to share the answer to the following questions: If you could trade places with anyone in the world; who would you want to trade places with? Why?
3. When you think of living the American dream, what does that make you think of?
4. What would the average person consider a successful life? What would they consider a successful career path?
5. If you were to stack up most Americans' descriptions of success against what Jesus might call success; what things would the two have in common? What do you think might be some of the differences?

INVESTIGATION

This section allows group members to examine today's Scripture passage as they begin to discover Jesus criteria for success.

1. Tell your group that you are about to read the first part of our passage. Ask them instead of reading, to follow along their eyes closed. Have them listen and try to consider an apt title to give to this section as you read.
2. Read Luke 6:12-16.
3. Allow members to share their title suggestions for this section.
4. Ask the group to speculate what the members of this newly formed group might have been thinking about their leader.
 - a. What kinds of things might they have been expecting to have happen?
 - b. What might they have dreamed about their roles?
5. Now, have your group to listen again as you read the next few verses and speculate on possible titles for the passage.

6. Read Luke 6:17-19.
7. Allow members to share their ideas for titles for this section of Scripture and explain why they gave it the title they did.
8. Ask volunteers to speculate how this new group of followers may have been feeling about what they were seeing:
 - a. Was Jesus living up to their expectations?
 - b. Would they have seen themselves on a potentially positive career path? Explain.
 - c. Would they think they had hitched their wagon to a rising star? Would they feel like they were “going places”?

INTERPRETATION

This section encourages group members to grapple with what Jesus really meant by what he was teaching his new followers.

1. Let the group know that we are about to examine the first few statements Jesus made to his new disciples and other would-be followers.
2. Choose two volunteers to read the passage.
 - a. Ask the first volunteer to stand facing the second volunteer.
 - b. Now ask, the first volunteer to read Luke 6:20-22, followed immediately by the second person who is to read Luke 6:23-26.
3. Ask the group to discuss what Jesus said:
 - a. Specifically what promises (positive and negative) was he making to his listeners?
 - b. How do you think his listeners may have been reacting after hearing these instructions?
 - c. What do you think Jesus was trying to accomplish by saying what he said?
 - d. Do you think Jesus was telling the rich people they ought to be poor and the poor people that they will someday be rich? Explain.
 - e. What attitude or philosophy do you think Jesus was encouraging his followers to have about their material possessions?

IMPLICATION

This section encourages group members to think about the possessions they have as God-given. It challenges them to see themselves as stewards, not owners of everything they have at their disposal.

1. Suppose we were going to try to take this teaching of Jesus’ about material possessions seriously.
 - a. Think about possessions you have at your disposal: Allow group members to begin to list various things they own or have under their control.
 - b. Would anything change if you agreed that everything you have is not actually yours, it’s God?
 - c. What difference would it make in the way you speak, think and act?
2. What attitude changes would happen if and when you acquired new things? What about if your fortunes suddenly went south? Explain.
3. Close by allowing group members to share their impressions about what they have learned tonight.

4. Allow individuals to share what they are grappling with or what changes they anticipate occurring after considering Jesus initial words to his would-be followers.