

Life Group Notes

These notes are to serve you as you lead your group.

*Please feel free to select the passages and **only use the questions which are most relevant to your group** and for the way you want to lead the session. (There are more questions here than you'll need)*

- *Please choose (or adapt) the questions which you believe will **bring about the most honest, faith-building and life changing conversations**, and add others if you want to.*
- *The readings and questions develop from one section to the next. Please **take time to move through the ones you want to use, giving time for discussion and sharing - ideally leading to a response to God's word.***

Life Group Notes

Theme: #Blessed
Exploring Blessing

Today we are starting a new series looking at blessing, and at what it means to be blessed. We trust that over the next few weeks we'll all be encouraged and helped as we unpack this religious sounding word which is actually a huge and important biblical theme.

Today we are looking at bible passages which show us that God is the source of all life, and all blessing. He blesses all people and provides abundantly for all. On Sunday we also saw that God's blessing is his provision linked to his commission. He commissioned people to fill the earth and rule over it as his 'image bearers' - those who represent him in the world. Blessing is ultimately God's enabling and provision to fulfil his commission to bring his reign to the world.

Setting the scene

1. **What might being 'blessed' or 'receiving a blessing' mean to people outside of a church / faith context?**
2. **What does 'being blessed' bring to mind for you?**
3. **What questions do you have about 'blessing'?**

[If you'd like to send me your group's questions, please do. Whilst I won't claim to have the answers, the questions may help shape preparation for preaching.]

Read **Genesis 1:20 - 2:3**

This is a crucial part of the key opening chapters of Genesis, which contain so much wisdom and teaching about God, creation, and about our place in the world.

God issues blessings three times in this passage, in **1:22; 1:28** and **2:3**

4. **What do you notice about the first two blessings?**
5. **What do the first two blessings show us about God, and about us?**
6. **What aspects of people's God-given creativity and giftedness are you most thankful for?**

Gen 2:3 - Sabbath

7. **As you read Gen 2:3, what do you think of scholar Walter Bruggemann's comment that Sabbath "announces that the world is safely in God's hands. It will not disintegrate if we stop our efforts. The world relies on God's promises and not on our efforts."?**
8. **How is this attitude and practice reflected in your own approach to life?**

9. **What sometimes prevents us from trusting God's ongoing blessing and provision?**
10. **It seems significant that humanity was commissioned, and then immediately found that next day was one of rest with God. How does this help us get a healthy perspective on our roles as God's image bearers?**

Extension questions

Read Genesis 9:1, Genesis 12:1-3, then Matthew 28:18-20.

1. When we get familiar with the blessing formula God used when calling people and blessing them, the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 sound like a blessing on the disciples. (In fact in Luke 24:50-53, we read that Jesus' last words to them were a blessing). **How do you reflect on the thought that God's commission is a blessing, and God's blessing is a commission? How does this affect your view of both God's blessing and God's call?**

2. We've looked at some foundational examples of blessing out of the hundreds available, and so far it seems that the focus of these verses is less about us receiving 'stuff' from God than about us being carriers of God's blessing into the world. **In the light of this, how do you reflect on God's blessing in your life?**

Application

It may be that a time of worship, reflection, or response is appropriate for your group, thanking God for all that he has given and for his calling on us as his people.