

## **Blue Like Jazz by Donald Miller** - Nonreligious thoughts on Christian spirituality

### **Lesson Objectives**

- Continue to deepen trust and relationship with the members of the study.
- Connect our study about story and our decision to let Jesus rescue us from last week with our study on grace this week.
- Lead the group in a discussion about grace and our resistance to it.
- Lead the discussion in such a way that it continues to be accessible for non-believers and young Christians.
- Begin to introduce them to scripture this week.
- Cast vision for the next study.

### **Lesson Notes**

- Remember that there are potentially non-believers or immature believers there so be aware of Christian language that is unfamiliar to them.
- Before you launch into the study, have snacks available and set aside 15-20 minutes for people to slow down from their day and connect with others. Use this time to personally build relationships and trust with individuals there.

### **Getting Started**

- After 15-20 minutes, let everyone know you are getting started and ask them to grab a seat.
- Briefly introduce yourself and other bible study leaders.
- If you feel like the group needs it, you can do a short icebreaker to warm the group up or again have everyone share their names if there are new people there.

### **Review**

Ok before we get started lets review.

- What did we talk about last week? [Last time we talked about story. We asked the question of why we respond to elements of story. We said that the Christian story offers an answer in that it has setting, conflict, climax and resolution. Most importantly we talked about if there is climax in our lives then there is a decision that needs to be made. We said we have to decide if are we in need of rescue and if we are willing to follow Jesus, allowing him to rescue us.]

What we want to do this week is to dig deeper into this idea of allowing Jesus to rescue us. To get us started, let's wrestle with the following questions:

- What is an area of your life do you enjoy excelling at? (This could be anything; school, a hobby, relationships, sports, etc) Why?
- How do you feel when you fail at or fall short in that area of your life?

## Discussion

So that is what this chapter is going to be dealing with: how do we respond to failure. Let's read the first two sections. In these sections you will read about the struggles of two men. As you read be looking for:

1. What each of their struggles are AND
2. What the *difference between their struggles is*

Read 79-83

- What was each of the men's struggles? How would you describe the difference between those two struggles? [The author struggled to do everything he felt he should in the Christian life. Rick struggled not to do things he knew he shouldn't in the Christian life.]
- Which of the men do you more identify with? Why? [Be ready to share your own experience here. Know that the more vulnerable you are the more vulnerable they will be.]
- How do each of the men respond to failure? How do you respond to failure?
- These two sections are helpful in allowing us to see that, like the author and Rick, we all fail in different ways and that we don't always respond well to failure. Let's see what solutions he offers to this predicament we all find ourselves in. Read the last three sections to the end of the chapter. Be looking for what solution the author suggests for our predicament of failure.

Read 83-86

- The author says that he loves to give charity but he doesn't want to be charity. He says that this is why he has so much trouble with grace. Do you think this is true? Why or why not?
- How do you identify with having resistance to charity and grace? In what areas do you feel like you consistently need grace from others around you? [This can be a hard question to answer. Common areas of struggle are when we have not messed up once but when we are receiving grace for the same mistake again and again and again. Also when it is someone who we deeply care about their opinion of us. If we have a hard time trusting the genuineness of the person giving us grace.]
- Between this chapter and the last, we have been hovering around the idea of grace, saved and faith. Let's look at a verse from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians to see the relationship between these three ideas.

Read Ephesians 2:8,9 below

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

- *In non-spiritual terms*, how would you define each of these words (grace, saved, faith)? [Grace: unmerited favor, an undeserved gift. Saved: to be rescued, spared from disaster. Faith: to believe in, trust in, rely upon, put your hope in.]
- *Ok, now in spiritual terms*, what is the grace you get? What are you saved from? What is your faith in?
- Ok let's talk about this a little more personally. [You can have them break up into smaller groups to answer these questions if you feel they would be more comfortable answering that way.]

**Apply**

- Whether you are a believer or non-believer, we all experience resisting God's grace. What are ways you are resistant to God's grace in your life?
- How might your life look different if you were to receive God's grace?

**Close**

- You can wrap up the time expressing that you are glad they could all make it and that you are excited to get together again next week and continue looking at who Jesus is.
- This week close the time praying for the group. (Next week you will begin to ask them to pray).