

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.
- Help the members of the study begin to see their own brokenness.
- Lead the group in an exercise of confession and prayer that acknowledges their sin, acknowledges God's forgiveness and asks for His help to change.
- Continue to introduce them to scripture. We are upping the scripture to three verses this week!
- Cast vision for the next study.

Lesson Notes

- We are going back to a early chapter of Blue Like Jazz this week. We skipped this chapter because we wanted to wait to dive into a full conversation about sin until after we had introduced them to grace. But acknowledging their own brokenness can still be a hard pill to swallow. Note that we are still driving them towards grace in the end.
- The application is challenging this week. We are asking them to confess sin to each other. This will be an intimidating step for some but encourage them to confess something even if minor and pray with their partner thanking God for forgiveness and asking to help them grow and change.
- 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.
- 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 have we talked about so far? [In the first discussion we talked about story and how the climax of our lives is our decision to allow Christ to rescue us. Last time we talked about our resistance to grace and at the same time our dependence upon it.]

Launch

This week to continue our conversation about Jesus we are taking a look at ourselves. To get us started, let's wrestle with the following question:

- Do you think man is essentially good or bad? Why or why not? [Let them discuss for a while. Eventually close the discussion saying, "Let's see what our passage has to say about our condition."]

Discussion

Read 13-14

- What in life seems to strike you as most broken, discomforting, bad or frightening in the world?
- So brokenness is obviously pervasive in our world. Let's see what else the author has to say about brokenness.

Read 15-18

- The author says, “I do buy the idea that we are flawed, that there is something in us that is broken. I think it is easier to do bad things than good things. And there is something in that basic fact, some little clue to the meaning of the universe.” Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
- Let’s read the next section and see what the author has to say about how we experience brokenness personally.

Read 18-23

- On page 20 the author says, “I think every conscious person, every person who is awake to the functioning principles within his reality, has a moment where he stops blaming the problems in the world on group think, on humanity and authority, and starts to face himself... I am the problem.”

In relation to this quote how do you identify with the author?

- How willing do you think the average person is to being honest about their brokenness? Why?
- So this is a challenging reality, we all have a quality of brokenness and at the same time a resistance to acknowledging our brokenness. Let’s look at a few verses from the bible that address this issue.

Read 1 John 1:7-9

- *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- What do we learn about man from this passage? [There can be a lot of observations here but some things to make sure they see are: we can have fellowship if we walk in the light, we sometime deceive ourselves about sin, we should confess our sin.]
- What do we learn about God from this passage? [Again there can be a lot of observations here: Jesus’ blood cleanses us from all sin, when we confess he is faithful to forgive us.]
- If God faithfully forgives our sin when we confess it to him, how does it change the way we live on a daily basis?

Apply

- To finish up our time we want to spend some time putting this reality into practice. What we are going to do is practice confession. Pair up with one other person. Share one thing that you have been struggling with recently. It doesn't have to be the worst thing you struggle with; just one thing. After you share. Pray for each other. *Specifically thank God for forgiving you for what you both shared. Pray that God would help both to grow and change in that areas you shared.*
- After the group is finished you can point out that It always feels good bringing sin into the light. You never like having to motivate yourself to go to the gym but you are always glad you did afterwards.
- Cast vision for the next week.