



elev8

life on another level

Student Workbook

YEAR 1

Life and Action
Blessed are those who Mourn

Bible Readings

1 Kings 19:1–19

Matthew 5:4

John 11:1–43

Romans 8:28



Learning Outcomes

At the end of this week you will be able to:

- Begun to understand the ways in which hard times can help to build your relationship with God.
- Gained insight into Brother Lawrence and his ideas about God.
- Further developed an understanding of God's character, i.e. that He loves you and cares about the hurt and pain you go through.

Notes from Bible Reading

Scripture A word or phrase that stood out to me:

Observation What is happening in this Bible reading?

Application Something that I learned about who I am or how I should live:

Prayer What I would like to say to God, ask of God, or what I think God is saying to me:

Key Question How could suffering possibly be a good thing?

Engage

Go around the group and share one thing for each heading that has happened since you last met:

- Plus – What has been good or enjoyable?
- Minus – What has been difficult or painful?
- Interesting – What has been unusual or thought provoking?

Discussion starter question:

Do you think God cares when you or others go through hard times? Why/why not?

Some interesting facts:

- Some of the themes of today's lesson have drawn upon a book called "Practising the Presence of God". This little book is made up of material written by a monk in the 1600's named Brother Lawrence.
- 'Practising the presence of God' means developing a constant awareness of God's presence, even as you do things as basic as washing the dishes! It is as though you are having a constant conversation with Him, and He is always on the line.
- 'Mourning' means "to show deep sorrow or regret", and is more often replaced by the word 'grieving' these days. Grief is what humans experience when they suffer loss and can include denial, anger, depression, bargaining, and acceptance (Kubler-Ross, 1969).

Explore – Locate

- *What stood out to you in the Bible readings this week?*
- *What did you find meaningful or significant?*
- *Is there anything that you didn't understand or found confusing?*
- *Any questions or comments you may have?*

Read together: John 11:4–5; 17–43; Romans 8:28.

'Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted'

It is often so hard to understand suffering and loss, and to accept it as a part of life. So often it doesn't make sense.

When bad things happen, many people blame God. They let hard times divide them from God; they feel that God is against them, or He wouldn't have allowed such things to happen.

It is definitely okay to be angry with God at times - being honest with Him is what he wants and it's how we grow closer to Him. But blaming Him doesn't really help anything or anyone. Sometimes we have to accept that life is just really hard - for everyone - and that we really can't ever understand why God allows certain things to happen.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.'

Brother Lawrence made sure that every single thing he did, no matter how big or small, would be used as an opportunity to show God how much he loved

him. He even used suffering as an opportunity to bring him closer to God.

Sometimes you don't know the true depth of a friend's love or care until you reach a point where you really need it. Sometimes we can't know the true depth of God's love and comfort until we really need it. It seems ridiculous to say that those who mourn are blessed - but to know the comfort of God, despite the crazy ups and downs of the world around us, really IS a blessing. If Lazarus hadn't have died, Jesus would not have had the chance to show him and his sisters how much he and God their Father cared for them. If we don't lose things and suffer and grieve and mourn, how will we ever truly learn to experience God's comfort, and to trust Him despite everything else?

I pray that God would give you the strength and wisdom to use suffering and loss to bring you closer to Him.

Explore – Express

Imagine you are in God's position as He sees you journeying through life.

Individually or in pairs write a song, poem, or story depicting what it might be like for God as He watches you go through suffering and pain.

Explore – Integrate

- Have you ever had a friend or loved one go through hard times or suffering, and felt their pain because you loved them? What was it like?
- Has a hard time or a time of loss ever caused you to grow closer to others, or further apart from them? What was it like?
- Do you think God should be blamed for the bad things that happen to people? Why or why not?
- How do you think God feels when you, a person he loves dearly, is suffering or sad?
- How do you think you can experience God's comfort when you are hurting?

Extend

Discuss with your group the challenges you are tackling. Use the time to ask for any help you might need, or to work together on any shared projects that you have.

Questions that may be helpful include:

- What challenges are you working on at the moment?
- Do you need any support or assistance?
- Are there any challenges that you have completed that we need to recognise and celebrate?
- Are there any new challenges that you want to work on?

Encourage

Tell another student in your group something you value or appreciate about them.

Share one thing you would like to pray for and pray for one another.

Pray together:

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgements, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?

Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever!

Amen.

Romans 11:33 – 36