

## Matthew 5:7 (Merciful) Leader Notes

### 1. Read Matthew 5:7. How would you describe what it means to be merciful?

Hello! Welcome to week 5 of our Beatitudes Life Group Video Series! You have six questions coming up based on Pastor Dusty's video lesson! Remember that these leader notes are to serve as a guide for further and deepening conversation with your Life Group, not as the answers! Enjoy this week's discussion and always remember to ask an extra question such as "Why do you believe that?" to draw out some more conversation from your group members!

In the video, Dusty defined merciful as "to be moved beyond pity into active compassion for someone in need." This is an amazing definition that can center everyone's personal definition of "Mercy" onto a single track. Using Dusty's definition, as a foundation, you can ask a follow up question such as "**Has there been a time when you felt God's mercy move in your life?**" to keep the conversation going and to draw out instances of mercy in your group member's lives!

### 2. In the video lesson, Dusty defined merciful as "to be moved beyond pity into active compassion for someone in need." How would you describe the difference between pity and mercy?

Merriam's Webster online dictionary defines "Pity" as a "Sympathetic sorrow for one suffering, distressed, or unhappy." Using Dusty's definition for "Mercy" that can be found above and this definition for "Pity" that was just shared, have your Life Group dissect each word by way of definition and find the differences together.

Another action you can take in your Life Group is that of sharing some more stories and instances where you or your group members were moved into active compassion for someone in need and ask a question such as "**How come that wasn't pity and why was it the active compassion of mercy?**" This could help generate more conversation and cause people to think about their own view of pity and mercy.

### 3. Read Hebrews 2:17 and Hebrews 4:15-16. In what ways do these verses describe Jesus as merciful?

Hebrews 2:17 says, "For this reason he had to be made like them,<sup>[a]</sup> fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people." & Hebrews 4:15-16 says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach God's throne of

grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

One way we see Jesus described as merciful through these biblical passages is that they show us the extent of Jesus sacrifice in that as it says in Hebrews 2:17, “He had to be made like them, fully human in every way...” By doing this, he was able to understand the heartache of death, the weariness of exhaustion, and the joy of serving in His Father’s kingdom. Jesus’ essence was that of 100 % humanity and 100 % divinity and by Him living on earth as he did (100 % human and 100 % divine), He was showed a divine compassion for those in need and those in need are us, His creation; His beloved he came to the world to rescue (Luke 19:10).

#### **4. Read *Matthew 6:14-15* and *Proverbs 11:17*. Why is it wrong for someone who has experienced God’s mercy to not be merciful toward others?**

Matthew 6:14-15 says “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” & Proverbs 11:17 says, “Those who are kind benefit themselves, but the cruel bring ruin on themselves.”

This is a heavy question as it can lead to those in your Life Group to ponder the question, “**What if I have not be merciful to some in my circle of influence?**” If that may be the case, let your group members know that God is merciful towards us and loves us. He forgives and shows us mercy first and it is our responsibility to be merciful to all those around us just as God is merciful.

Guide the thoughts and actions of your Life Group members to think through this follow up question: “**Who do I need to show mercy too this week? Is there someone in my circle of influence that needs me to show them an active compassion?**” This may even be the application/homework assignment for these next few days until you meet again!

#### **5. Have each person in your group silently read *Matthew 18:23-35*. How did the servant’s behavior (whose debt was cancelled) reveal what he actually thought about the king’s forgiveness? How much did the servant actually value the king’s forgiveness?**

The story in question five gives way for us to reflect on how we can potentially view mercy from God. We can either be appreciative of God’s loving mercy, or, we can be dismissive of such loving mercy. In reality, we as Christians can be forgetful of God’s mercy and on occasion, we ought to practice thanking God for such great mercy and love. The servant in the story missed the frankness and grandness of his king’s forgiveness and mercy and became dismissive of it. Let’s be Christian men and women who strive after God’s mercy in a manner of being appreciative and thankful for such great mercy and love!

**6. What are some ways that we can be merciful without enabling or justifying the harmful decisions of others (especially in regard to toxic people in our lives)? *Read Romans 2:4.* How might recognizing God's mercy and kindness toward you help you show more mercy to others?**

Some ways we can be merciful without enabling certain harmful decisions is by being honest with the person making harmful decisions and having the crucial conversations with them about their decisions. This will be hard and painful but it'll be necessary as well as it won't be a "one and done" conversation. There may be more than three. Remember that as you receive God's mercy, you will have to pass it on to others.

Remind your Life Group that God has patience for us, His creation and that He has patience for us. As God shows mercy to you, you are to show mercy to others. This week, keep in mind the application/homework that was encouraged in question 4: **"Who do I need to show mercy too this week? Is there someone in my circle of influence that needs me to show them an active compassion?"**

As your Life Group comes to a close, try praying something like this: "Our Father in heaven, this week, every morning when we wake up, show us your mercy and love and may we show it to those in our circles of influence. Amen."

**Take a few minutes to:**

- **Write down the name of someone you know who is in need.**
- **Now, write down how you could meet their need or help them towards the goal of meeting their needs.**
- **Finally, if you're comfortable doing so, share your name and plan to help meet their needs with the group.**

If you have a chance to give the group time to do this exercise, it would be good... but don't feel pressure to rush through the other questions (if you're having healthy discussion) to do this exercise. If you run out of time but still want to take part in this exercise one idea is for group members to do this on their own time during the week and share what they've written with other group members via email or text.