



## Group Time

ENCOURAGEMENT 1-on-1 (See last page for directions)

Y / N   Y / N   \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_

### LOOK BACK:

**Point:** *A life built on Jesus will stand; building it starts with one yes.*

- Share what you said yes to this last week.

**Question:** Define *exile*. Are exiles typically blessed or suffering?

**LOOK UP:** Watch this week's Group video on the 4G web page.

**Recap:** It's easy to say we are blessed when all seems to be going our way, but what about when it's not? We might think we are being punished, or part of some cosmic game, or maybe God *has left the building*.

We need to understand what it truly means to be *blessed*. In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus proclaims blessings in situations that we honestly try to avoid as they seem more about being broken than being blessed. Other statements are about putting others first and finally, there are statements about being persecuted. These all sound like the opposite of being blessed. None of it sounds like things are going our way.

Not until we come to the realization that this world, and its ways of measuring blessing, is not our home. We are exiles in Babylon (a place that defines evil as good). But while we are here, we have a role to play. We are to build God's kingdom. It's a role that is often very difficult but results in true blessings.

### LOOK IN: Discussion

Watch this video. Search YouTube: *Bible Project: Exile*

- As a follower of Jesus, in what ways do you feel like you don't belong – that you are in exile (family, neighborhood, vocation, recreation)?
- In what ways have you been blessed that the world (Babylon) would never define as a blessing? (Reference Matthew 5:3-12)



### LOOK FORWARD: Application

**Point:** *This world is not our home, but we have a purpose in it.*

**Life Will Be Hard, Do What You Can, Celebrate the Victories**

Be honest, when life is X!Y#Z@ (definitely doesn't feel like a "blessing"), what has been your attitude towards God?

- I'm being punished.
- I'm just a pawn in some cosmic game.
- He is no longer listening – He doesn't care.
- I will turn this into a blessing according to His will.

To move from suffering to blessing you must first determine why you are suffering. Then choose to respond in a way that brings blessing.

This suffering is common to all. Examples in my life:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A response that brings blessing: *I will exhibit my faith during this time in a way that points others to God.*

I will \_\_\_\_\_

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This suffering is of my own making. Examples in my life:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A response that brings blessing: *I will repent, make amends, and serve others who are suffering in a similar way.*

I will \_\_\_\_\_

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This suffering is because of my faith. Examples in my life:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A response that brings blessing: *I will love those who would cause my suffering and encourage others to do the same.*

I will \_\_\_\_\_

