

THE BEATITUDES

North Highland Church Reading Companion
Adapted from the RightNow Media Study with Matt Chandler

WEEK 1 SEPT 6-12

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

READ:

Matthew 4:23–5:12

REFLECTION:

The Beatitudes are not a set of virtues or behaviors that we are called to manufacture on our own. Instead, Jesus is working the Beatitudes into us. They're a way of being that, over time, Jesus accomplishes in us. In the Beatitudes, we find the ethic of the kingdom of God. We learn in the first Beatitude that God pronounces blessing on those who know their need for Him and who accept Jesus' invitation to come to him. All that's expected of us is to come, weary and weak as we are, "for the kingdom of heaven is [ours]." Take a few quiet moments to bring your weariness, your frustrations, and any ongoing struggle with sin into the presence of Jesus, and confess your need for Him, either alone or in the company of others. Assure yourself of the truth of this passage by reciting it aloud.

JOURNAL:

On what foundation does Jesus build the Beatitudes? Is blessedness a subjective feeling or an objective reality? Why is that an important distinction?

PRAYER:

Lord, help me to empty myself of any understanding of what blessed means. Help me to reframe it according to your Kingdom values and help me to understand what that means in my daily walk with you. Amen.

WEEK 2 SEPT 13-19

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN

READ:

Matthew 5:1–12

REFLECTION:

In our culture, mourning is not seen as something to embrace. Instead, it is viewed as something to distance ourselves from or avoid altogether. But when we mourn, by Jesus's own assurance, we can be certain that we will be comforted. God often takes us through mourning, not around it. You don't have to grieve alone. God himself wants you to come to Him so that He can comfort you. He has given you a community to support and mourn with you. And, through mourning, we grow in compassion. As He said, "Blessed are those who mourn," for in our mourning there is comfort.

JOURNAL:

Have you ever considered that godly mourning creates compassion? In what way does mourning with others fulfill Jesus's promise that those who mourn "will be comforted"?

PRAYER:

Lord, thank you for the promise that you will comfort me in my times of mourning. Help me to consistently pour out my mourning to you so you can bring comfort from the Prince of Peace. Amen.

WEEK 3 SEPT 13-19 **BLESSED ARE THE MEEK**

READ:

Matthew 5:1–12

REFLECTION:

Meekness is not weakness. Rather, it is strength under control and the practice of holy restraint. Jesus is our perfect example of meekness, using His strength to serve others and restraining His power according to the will of the Father. Now, “all authority in heaven and earth” belongs to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is living proof that the meek will inherit the earth. So, as you go about your normal, day-to-day life, strive to imitate the meekness of Jesus, whose strength was displayed most vividly in the act of laying his life down for his friends.

JOURNAL:

How could meekness diffuse an argument? What are some specific examples and opportunities (at work, in a church small group, with a friend) where you can practice meekness?

PRAYER:

Lord, help me to be a person who actively seeks ways to be meek in my everyday interactions with those around me. Help me today to be an active peacemaker to situations that seem heated or charged. Amen.

WEEK 4 SEPT 27 - OCT 3 **BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

READ:

Matthew 5:1–12

REFLECTION:

There exists in each of us a deep restlessness, or a hunger, as Jesus says, that won’t be calmed or satisfied until our relationship with God is made right. And as long as we try to skirt around our dissatisfaction, suppress it, or fill it with other things, our hunger and thirst will remain. The pathway to satisfaction runs right through dissatisfaction. Only those who, by God’s grace, come awake to our need to have our relationship with God restored will be filled. Only those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled. Whenever you are dissatisfied, seek God and his presence. Because there, and there alone, will you be satisfied.

JOURNAL:

To what extent are you currently experiencing dissatisfaction in your relationships? How could that dissatisfaction, that yearning, be a hunger or thirst for righteousness?

PRAYER:

Lord, help me to see that you are the only way for us to be filled in this life. May my relationship with you take a greater importance in my life, so that I can be more like you every day. Amen.



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WEEK 5 OCT 4-10 BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

READ:

Matthew 5:1–12

REFLECTION:

The Bible pulls no punches. Before receiving the mercy of God, we were his enemies. We were all on the fringes! “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ” (Eph 2:4–5). We have been pulled from the fringes of our rebellion against God, the one who is “rich in mercy” and who will “show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:4, 7). Blessed are those who have received this mercy and who extend this mercy, for they will get more of it.

JOURNAL:

In what ways can you practice extending the mercy of God to others today? To whom can you share God’s mercy today?

PRAYER:

Lord, showing mercy to those who don’t deserve it is something that I struggle with. Allow me today to remember the mercy that you have shown me in covering my sins, and help me extend that to those in my life. Amen.

WEEK 6 OCT 11-17 BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

READ:

Matthew 5:1–12

REFLECTION:

The pure in heart are not perfect people. The pure in heart are those who exercise honesty and transparency before God, knowing that to hide from God is to hide the very thing we need most, which is His mercy. So, we run to Him, especially in our distress. And as we do so, God welcomes us into His presence with love and grace.

JOURNAL:

When you think about being completely honest with God, what emotions does it stir in you? In what ways do you find yourself reluctant to be honest and transparent with God? In what ways could honesty and transparency build your relationship with God and give you freedom from your sin?

PRAYER:

Lord, help me to be honest and true with you. Show me the areas that I am holding back from you out of fear, and allow my heart to be purified towards you. Amen.

WEEK 7 OCT 18-24

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

READ:

Matthew 5:1–12

REFLECTION:

In a world filled with disorder and division, the shalom (or peace) of God feels impossible, far out of reach. But you have been uniquely wired and uniquely placed to bring peace into the world. God is simply calling you to live faithfully right where you are. You can't solve world peace, but you can start to create it on your block. So, get to know your neighbors and serve them when opportunities arise. Seek forgiveness and to restore broken relationships in your family. Be kind and encouraging to the people you encounter every day. Pray for your enemies. Carry the shalom of God with you everywhere you go.

JOURNAL:

What specific opportunities do you have in your neighborhood, at your job, and in your extracurricular activities to make peace? What is the next step you need to take to serve God with that opportunity?

PRAYER:

Lord, allow me to carry your peace with me into every situation I find myself this week. Allow the Holy Spirit to fill me with peace when I am feeling frustrated, angry, or anxious. Amen.

WEEK 8 OCT 25-31

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

READ:

Matthew 5:1–12

REFLECTION:

The Beatitudes give us a glimpse of what it looks like to live in God's kingdom. What at first seems like an upside-down way of living is actually right-side up. The Beatitudes are the way to "the blessed life," to the life of flourishing, to life as God intended it. So, embrace the way of the kingdom, which includes the poorness of spirit, the mourning, the meekness, the hungering and thirsting for righteousness, the mercy, the purity of heart, the peacemaking, and, yes, the persecution. When you do these things, you can know that the kingdom of heaven is yours.

JOURNAL:

In what ways does a heavenly reward change your view of your present persecution? Do you think it is worth enduring? Why, or why not?

PRAYER:

Lord, let me see everything that happens to me as a way to bring glory and honor to you. Allow me to take joy in EVERY circumstance, knowing that you will make it all right in the end. Amen.



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