

# THE BEATITUDES

## Lesson 1: Trusting Differently

This includes:

1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

## 1. LEADER PREPARATION

### LESSON OVERVIEW

The Beatitudes are the introduction to the most famous sermon ever preached, the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus challenges us by turning the standard upside-down and revealing his heart for those who are downtrodden, overlooked, or rejected. This lesson will challenge your students to consider how God has blessed them and how they can respond with deeper trust in God as their provider.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: The Beatitudes provide us with a reminder—even in difficult circumstances—that God has blessed us and wants us to depend on him.
2. WHY: Our society, as a whole, encourages us to concentrate too much on what we don't have instead of being thankful for what we do have.
3. HOW: Your students will discuss the first few Beatitudes and consider how to place greater trust in God as their provider.

### PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:1-6

### SECONDARY SCRIPTURES

2 Corinthians 1:3-7, Philippians 4:10-14, 1 Timothy 6:3-10

### TEACHING PREP

The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you'll definitely want to refer to it as you lead.

Read Matthew 5:1-12. This lesson will focus on verses 3-6, but it's good to be familiar with the entire Beatitudes passage.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus proclaimed an idea that contradicted a common mindset for the



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people of his time—and one that remains prevalent in our current society, too. He was fighting against the belief that the rich and wealthy are more blessed or favored by God than those who appear to have little. Jesus desired to show the people that regardless of their circumstances, whether they're rich or poor, they could all be spiritually wealthy.

Jesus' message was a reminder that our current circumstances do not necessarily indicate a judgment or punishment from God, but that our situations are temporary. It is a reminder that God has a plan for each of us in our circumstances and that we can do amazing things for God regardless of our income, bank accounts, or retirement plans. Ultimately, it's a message of placing our faith and trust in God's ability to provide.

Each of the Beatitudes includes a condition and a result. The Beatitudes are often credited for ushering in this new idea of peace and humility. In this peaceful and humble approach Jesus reveals that he's not simply concerned with those who have been blessed with material possessions—he came for those who are seen as the “least of these,” the people society has cast aside and appears to care little about.

## **THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]**

### **Text Message Questions**

**We've provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry**

- If someone gave you a truckload of cash, how would you spend it all? Tell the group tonight!
- Is it easier to trust in God or in stuff? Let's talk about it tonight!

### **Parent Email**

**We've provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.**

Dear parents,

This week we launched a two-part series on the Beatitudes that Jesus spoke in Matthew 5.



This first lesson focused on God's desire for us to see we are blessed in the midst of life circumstances. No matter if we have a ton of possessions or very little, we're blessed. God is with us through those moments of our lives where life gets crazy and we are mourning. Whatever we are going through, we can depend on God above any material possession.

As you go through this week, challenge your teenager to continue thinking about what God desires for them in this area. Here are a few questions that can help start a conversation while you're in the car or eating dinner:

- How does God's desire for us to change differ from the empty promises made by commercials and other forms of advertising?
- What are some material possessions, other than money, that teenagers might desire more than they desire a deep friendship with God?
- What ways can our family depend more on God than we already do?

Have a blessed week!



# THE BEATITUDES

## Lesson 1: Trusting Differently

### 2. LESSON GUIDE

#### GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

Gather or borrow lots of pennies—ideally, an entire roll of 50 for each student. Or bring lots of peanuts or jelly beans or other small items—again, the opening activity works best if each student has 50. Each student will also need a note card and a pen or pencil.

**Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and ask students to form groups of three or four. Distribute pennies (or your substitute item) plus note cards and pens or pencils, and then SAY SOMETHING LIKE:**

*Imagine that the stack of pennies you each received represents money—specifically, \$5,000—and each penny represents \$100. For the next few minutes, decide how you would use the money if you had to spend it ALL in just 24 hours. Use the note card and your pen or pencil to write the details of your spending plan.*

Give students about three minutes to create their spending plans, and then ask everyone to explain their decisions to the other members of their small groups. Give groups about three minutes for the explanations.

#### **ASK:**

- *Let me hear from a few of you: What did you spend most of your money on?*
- *What person benefited the most from the way you would spend the money? Are you pleased with that? Why or why not?*
- *Do you think God would have been pleased with how you spent the money? Why or why not?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Ever since Adam and Eve tasted the fruit in the Garden of Eden and sin entered the world, humanity has wrestled with selfishness. It is natural for each of us to want to spend the entire \$5,000 on ourselves. On a daily basis, our culture tells us that our clothes aren't cool enough, our car isn't nice enough, and that we would be more popular if we drank a certain soda brand over any other brand. God desires more from us. God desires for us to seek him and put our dependence and trust in him, not in the temporary products and insignificant goals our culture promotes.*

## TEACHING GUIDE



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The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen are (1) Wealth means more than just money, (2) God understands when you mourn, and (3) Hunger for God and his way of living.



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Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Matthew 5:1-6 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so everyone has a chance to read.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Let's take a deeper look at how this Scripture relates to our lives.*

### 1. Wealth means more than just money

#### **ASK:**

- *According to our culture's standards, how do you know if someone is wealthy or rich? What evidence will you see?*
- *Have you ever met someone who had very little money, but was extremely happy? What do you think was the source of that person's happiness?*
- *What message do you think Jesus is communicating in verse 3? Why?*
- *What are some material possessions, other than money, that teenagers might desire more than they desire a deep friendship with God?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *We can be wealthy, even if we don't have lots of money. God's definition of wealth and blessing is more about impact on people's lives, deep friendships, a commitment to sharing Christ with others, and helping people in need. That doesn't mean money is wrong or evil, but it means we need to have God's perspective on what matters most in life, not our culture's perspective.*



## 2. God understands when you mourn

### **ASK:**

- *Look at verse 4. How have you experienced God's comfort when you have mourned? How have other people been God's instrument of comfort?*
- *When you have mourned the loss of something or someone, do you find it difficult to consider yourself blessed? Why or why not?*
- *How might some people turn toward possessions or a job or other things to find comfort after a loss? Why do those things ultimately fall short of providing true comfort?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Many people choose to seek comfort in their possessions as a distraction from the pain and emotions during times of mourning, but God wants us to lean on him. God also wants us to comfort other people during their times of loss.*

## 3. Hunger for God and his way of living

### **ASK:**

- *What was the longest you ever went without eating? What did it feel like? What was the first thing you wanted to eat?*
- *Look at verse 6. What do you think it means to hunger and thirst for justice or for righteousness?*
- *How are being hungry for food and being hungry for God similar? How are they different?*
- *How can your possessions affect your hunger for God?*
- *How does God's desire for us to change differ from the empty promises made by commercials and other forms of advertising?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Companies use various platforms—including TV, Internet, radio, and billboards—to convince you that you “need” things, that somehow your life will not be complete without their product. Basically, these advertisements create a “hunger” for things that won't truly satisfy. Only God truly satisfies, and we discover this as we place more and more of our trust in him. We can live life with confidence, knowing that God truly is our provider.*

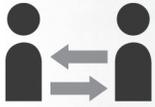


## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three for these questions.

### ASK:

- *Read 1 Timothy 6:3-10. What does this passage reveal to you about priorities, contentment, and true wealth?*
- *Look at verse 10. Why is it significant that Paul writes that the love of money—not money itself—is the root of all kinds of evil?*
- *Read Philippians 4:10-14. As you read this passage, what do you find most challenging? most encouraging? most surprising? Why?*
- *Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7. What do these verses tell you about God's involvement when you are mourning?*



PAIR SHARE

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

## APPLICATION

### ASK:

- *What are specific ways you can help comfort another person who's mourning a loss—specific ways that won't be offensive or inconsiderate, but helpful and loving?*
- *What can you do to make sure you want God more than your possessions?*
- *Do you know anyone who is going through something hard or who has been through something hard and needs to be comforted? How can today's conversation help you serve that person?*
- *Make a list of things that you sometimes place your trust in, instead of placing your trust in God—or things that you find yourself hungering for, instead of hungering for God. Pray over this list and ask God for help in seeing change in these areas.*



## SUMMARY



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End your lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.



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## FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

*Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have (Philippians 4:11).*

