

THE BEATITUDES

Lesson 2: Living Differently

This includes:

1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW

Just as the opening verses of the Beatitudes called us to trust differently, the final verses from Jesus call us to live differently—to discover what it means to live a truly radical lifestyle. This lesson will help your students explore how God wants us to lead lives that are different from what our culture promotes and praises.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: The Beatitudes teach us about God's call to live differently—to lead lives that demonstrate what it means to fully follow Jesus.
2. WHY: Society tells us to live a certain way based on certain priorities, but God says there is a better, more meaningful way to live.
3. HOW: Your students will discuss how the Beatitudes reveal a different way of living and how reliance on Jesus is the key to reaching that kind of lifestyle.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:7-12

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:31-46

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.



**LEADER
TIP**

Read Matthew 5:1-12. This lesson will focus on verses 7-12, but it's good to be familiar with the entire Beatitudes passage.

Do you remember what it was like being a teenager? Students spend so much of their time worrying about fitting in. What they will wear to school, how they will do their hair or



who will be at the next youth group event—it all revolves around fitting in. Remember how it felt to be the only one not invited to a birthday party? Remember how it felt when you got cut from the team? Remember how it felt when that rumor about you spread through the school?

It is easy for our students to not want to stick out or be labeled as different, but the Beatitudes turn our idea of normal upside-down. When we live life with an understanding of the truths of the Beatitudes, we worry less about fitting in and desire more to lead Jesus-centered lives. Jesus uses the Beatitudes to remind us about God's love—that even though we may not be as successful as the person on the cover of the magazine or as popular as the homecoming queen, God is still madly in love with us.

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

- Has anyone ever made fun of you because of your faith? Let's talk about it tonight and see how Jesus doesn't abandon us during those times.
- What does it take to lead a truly different lifestyle? Find out as we wrap up our study of the Beatitudes! Come join us!

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 wrapped up our short series on the Beatitudes, found in Matthew 5. Our conversation provided a great reminder about how living the life that God desires for us can earn us the label of "not normal."

The passage known as the Beatitudes takes things we think of as "normal" and turns them upside-down. Jesus preached the Beatitudes to challenge the popular



thinking about some important issues. Pursuing God changes our priorities, and the individuals we interact with on a daily basis might not understand this. But Scripture reminds us that even in those moments, Jesus has faced true persecution—and he walks alongside when we face rejection or mockery.

As you go throughout the week, help reinforce the conversation in your child's life by asking these kinds of questions:

- How does being merciful reflect God's character and reveal God's heart to the world around you?
- Why is it such a struggle to maintain Christ-centered thoughts and a pure heart?
- In some parts of the world today, Christ-followers face the threat of imprisonment, torture, and even death—all because of their faith. So why are most of us scared by ridicule, rejection, or mockery—the kind of “persecution” we're most likely to face?

Have an amazing week!



THE BEATITUDES

Lesson 2:
Living Differently

2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

You'll need paper and pens or pencils for the opening activity.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and ask students to form groups of three or four. Distribute paper and pens or pencils, and then SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

You have been given the responsibility of persuading people to think differently about a specific topic. In your groups, come up with a list of five topics—specific sports teams, favorite foods, important political issues, and so on. For each topic, create a surprising or unexpected statement that might force people to think about that topic from a new perspective. You'll have about five minutes for this activity.

After about five minutes, go around the room and ask groups to share some of the topics they selected and the statements they created.

ASK:

- *Was this activity difficult or easy? Why?*
- *Why do surprising or unexpected statements sometimes force us to reconsider or re-examine our perspectives on certain issues or topics?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *The passage known as the Beatitudes takes things we think of as “normal” and turns them upside-down. Jesus preached the Beatitudes to challenge the popular thinking about some important issues. While we had fun listening to each other share our surprising or unexpected statements, you probably didn't anger anyone—but not everyone was pleased when Jesus spoke the Beatitudes, especially the religious leaders, because Jesus was calling people to live differently.*



TEACHING GUIDE



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) Demonstrate mercy to others, (2) Produce purity from the inside out, (3) Wherever possible, practice peace, and (4) Prepare for criticism and rejection.



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 5:7-12 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so everyone has a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's pick up where we left off last week and look at the rest of the Beatitudes to discover how God's truths can radically change our lives.*

1. Demonstrate mercy to others

ASK:

- *Think of a time someone showed you mercy—how did that experience affect you?*
- *Look at verse 7. How does being merciful reflect God's character and reveal God's heart to the world around you?*
- *What are some specific ways God has shown you mercy?*
- *When do you find it most difficult to be merciful, and why?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Our culture promotes a me-centric attitude, but God calls us to think of others and to demonstrate mercy, even if we've been wronged. When we care for others we are blessed, and God wants us to care for the people he puts in our lives. Jesus himself set the standard by loving and forgiving people who didn't deserve it, so when we are merciful, we're showing the world what it means to live like Jesus.*



2. Produce purity from the inside out

ASK:

- *Look at verse 8. What does it mean to have a pure heart? Why does purity matter so much to God?*
- *How can living a pure life help you see what God wants for your life?*
- *How does living a pure life challenge what our society promotes? Give some specific examples.*
- *Why is it such a struggle to maintain Christ-centered thoughts and a pure heart?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *When we lead pure lives, we are doing our part to make sure that there are no obstacles in our lives that prevent us from fully being used by God. Jesus' call definitely goes countercultural to what our society says. But it's important to remember that true purity flows from the heart—it starts inside of us and then is seen in our actions.*

3. Wherever possible, practice peace

ASK:

- *Look at verse 9. What do you think it means to be a peacemaker?*
- *When you have attempted to be a peacemaker, what has been the most difficult part? Why?*
- *Does being a peacemaker mean you have to get along with everyone all of the time? Does it mean that you should allow people to walk over you and not stand up for yourself? Explain.*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus calls us to make peace—and if you have brothers or sisters, you know that isn't always easy! In fact, the idea of being a peacemaker flies in the face of many things we hear in our culture. Being peacemakers means talking to people who are different from us, looking for ways to reach appropriate compromises, and being kind and respectful to others. True peace isn't just the absence of conflict—it's the presence of God's Spirit as we interact with people.*



4. Prepare for criticism and rejection

ASK:

- *When have you faced ridicule for being different?*
- *Look at verses 10-12. In some parts of the world today, Christ-followers face the threat of imprisonment, torture, and even death—all because of their faith. So why are most of us scared by ridicule, rejection, or mockery—the kind of “persecution” we’re most likely to face?*
- *What are some ways that Christians are called to live their lives differently from people who follow the world’s standards?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *When we lead lives that are different from what our culture expects or accepts, we will stick out. When we model the lifestyle to our friends, family, and classmates, it may make them uncomfortable—and many people ridicule or poke fun of things that they don’t understand or that make them uncomfortable. But Scripture reminds us that even in those moments, Jesus has faced true persecution—and he walks alongside us when we face rejection or mockery.*

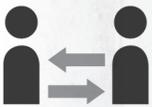
ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

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

ASK:

- *Reread the entire passage we’ve studied in this series—Matthew 5:1-12—and choose two Beatitudes: one that represents an area where you have seen growth in your life, and one that represents an area where you want to grow. Explain to your partner what each of your selected Beatitudes represents in your spiritual journey.*
- *Read Matthew 25:31-46. How does this passage address the importance of demonstrating Christ-like mercy? What are some ways you could display this kind of mercy to the specific groups of people mentioned in these verses?*

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



PAIR SHARE



APPLICATION

ASK:

- *What are some of the biggest obstacles for leading the kind of lifestyle Jesus teaches in the Beatitudes?*
- *What are some specific ways you can help other people in our group live out this lifestyle Jesus taught and demonstrated for us?*

SUMMARY



LEADER
TIP

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.



LEADER
TIP

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

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

*“God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God”
(Matthew 5:9).*

