

The Beatitudes Explained: A Printable Study Guide

A gentle guide to the blessings Jesus describes in Matthew 5:3-12, with space to connect each teaching to everyday life.

The Sermon on the Mount

In Matthew's Gospel, the Beatitudes open Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Jesus teaches his disciples and the gathered crowd about life in God's kingdom, offering a vision of blessing that often turns ordinary measures of success upside down. The focus is not on earning God's love, but on the hope, mercy, and purpose found in a life shaped by God.

How to use this guide

Read the passage in your preferred Bible, then take one blessing at a time. Notice what it reveals about God's kingdom, consider the everyday meaning, and use the reflection question to begin prayer or a journal entry. You can work through the pages alone or discuss them with a group.

A note on Scripture

A note on the Scripture: the verse summaries in this guide are plain-English paraphrases, not quotations from a particular Bible translation. Read each passage in your preferred Bible for its full wording and context. Christians interpret some details of the Beatitudes in different ways. These notes offer a welcoming starting point for reflection, not the only faithful reading.

The Beatitudes | 1 to 5

Matthew 5:3-7. Each blessing pairs a way of being with a promise of God's care.

01 Poor in spirit

Matthew 5:3

Plain paraphrase: Those who know their need for God are blessed, because God's kingdom belongs to them. Everyday meaning: We do not need to pretend to have every answer. Humility can make room to receive help, grace, and wisdom.

Reflect: Where might I make more room to ask God for help?

02 Those who mourn

Matthew 5:4

Plain paraphrase: Those who grieve are blessed, because God will bring them comfort. Everyday meaning: Sorrow is not a failure of faith. God meets people in loss and pain, and we can offer one another patient, compassionate presence.

Reflect: How can I make space for grief, in myself or with someone else?

03 The meek

Matthew 5:5

Plain paraphrase: Those who are gentle and humble are blessed, because they will receive the earth as their inheritance. Everyday meaning: Meekness is not weakness. It is strength guided by humility, patience, and care rather than the need to dominate.

Reflect: Where could gentleness shape the way I use my influence?

04 Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

Matthew 5:6

Plain paraphrase: Those who deeply desire what is right are blessed, because God will satisfy that longing. Everyday meaning: Righteousness can include personal faithfulness and a longing for justice. This blessing invites us to keep seeking what is good, even when change takes time.

Reflect: What good or just change do I find myself longing for?

05 The merciful

Matthew 5:7

Plain paraphrase: Those who show mercy are blessed, because they will receive mercy. Everyday meaning: Mercy responds to another person's need with compassion. It can include forgiveness, practical help, and choosing not to reduce someone to their worst moment.

Reflect: What might mercy look like in one relationship or situation today?

The Beatitudes | 6 to 9

Matthew 5:8-12. The final saying continues the theme of hardship and faithfulness, addressing Jesus' listeners directly.

06 The pure in heart

Matthew 5:8

Plain paraphrase: Those whose hearts are sincere and turned towards God are blessed, because they will see God. Everyday meaning: A pure heart is not a claim to perfection. It points towards honesty, integrity, and a desire for our inner commitments and outward actions to belong together.

Reflect: Where would greater honesty or integrity bring my actions closer to my values?

07 The peacemakers

Matthew 5:9

Plain paraphrase: Those who work for peace are blessed, because they will be recognised as God's children. Everyday meaning: Peacemaking is active. It can mean listening, telling the truth with care, repairing harm, and seeking a fair way forward rather than simply avoiding disagreement.

Reflect: Is there a small, wise step towards peace that I can take?

08 Those persecuted for doing what is right

Matthew 5:10

Plain paraphrase: Those who face opposition because they pursue what is right are blessed, because God's kingdom is theirs. Everyday meaning: Jesus speaks of hardship connected to faithfulness and justice. This is not a reason to seek conflict or to label every disagreement persecution; it is reassurance for those who suffer while trying to do what is right.

Reflect: What helps me stay compassionate and faithful when doing what is right is difficult?

09 The expanded final blessing

Matthew 5:11-12

Plain paraphrase: Jesus tells his followers they are blessed when people insult or mistreat them because of their connection to him, and he calls them to hold on to hope. Everyday meaning: Verses 11-12 extend the previous blessing by speaking directly to Jesus' listeners and their experience. The passage offers encouragement, not a command to welcome harm or remain in danger. Seek wise, safe support when you need it.

Reflect: What gives me hope and support when my faith is misunderstood?

A closing thought: Which blessing would you like to carry into the coming week? Write one small action, prayer, or conversation that could help you live it out.