



# Week 1 Study Sheet

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## The Blessed Life

- Consider** If you had one message to preach, what would it be about? Early in his ministry, Jesus, went up on a mountainside with his disciples and began to teach as crowds gathered around him. We call this teaching, recorded in Matthew 5-7, The Sermon on the Mount. Jesus used this teaching to introduce the future to the present. His words detail a new kingdom, and new king. The magnitude of this moment is pregnant with themes as Jesus stands like a Mosaic example of the Kingdom of God. In this iconic sermon, he used repeatable words, common items, and everyday circumstances to help his teaching become rooted within the hearts of his followers.
- Pray** Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.
- Read** [Matthew 5:1-12](#)
- Observe**
- Where does Jesus' sermon take place? Why would he use this location?
  - Who is present at Jesus' sermon? Who is his teaching directed to?
  - What words or phrases repeat? What are the contrasting thoughts in this passage?
- Interpret**
- What did Jesus mean by "blessed?"
  - Why did Jesus use repetition at the beginning of his sermon?
  - What themes are emphasized in these passages? Why?
  - What is the significance of the teaching for the original audience?
- Apply**
- How does Jesus' definition of being blessed compare to today's cultural understanding of being blessed?
  - How can we apply the beatitudes in everyday life as a follower of Jesus?
  - How can we encourage others with the beatitudes?
- Practice** Spend this week memorizing the following beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3 NIV)



# Week 2 Study Sheet

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## The Righteous Life

### Consider

Salt and light are everyday household items for much of the modern world. Open your pantry or look on your dining room table and you will find salt. Flick a switch and you will have light. When Jesus uses these examples in The Sermon on the Mount, he is speaking to a crowd who work many hours of hard labor just to have small access to both. Salt was used during this time to preserve food. Salt was also used in wood stoves to prolong the life of a fire for cooking. Most families would have gathered around a single flame candle at night, ships would have been guided by large caldrons of fire in light houses, and the light of day was vital to grow crops. Jesus used salt and light as examples to stress the importance of Torah Law and the Prophets. The Old Testament served as the salt and the light pointing toward the fulfilling work of Jesus in the New Testament. It preserved the message of God and illuminated his salvific work to be accomplished through Jesus.

### Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

### Read

[Matthew 5:13-20](#)

### Observe

- What examples and metaphors did Jesus use in this passage? What items are listed?
- Who does Jesus speak about in this passage?
- What themes are presented? Are the themes connected?

### Interpret

- Why would Jesus use the example of salt and light? How do these items build his sermon?
- What does the term “the Law and the Prophets” mean?
- What does Jesus mean when he says he has not come to abolish the Law or Prophets? (v. 17)
- How does Jesus feel about the Law and Prophets?
- Why would Jesus talk about being salt and light in context of the Law and Prophets?

### Apply

- In what regard are the Law and the Prophets still relevant today?
- How can we do better than the Pharisees in right living?
- How can we focus on living a life of righteousness?

### Practice

Spend this week memorizing the following beatitude: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4 NIV)



# Week 3 Study Sheet

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## The Obedient Life

- Consider** God is serious about his relationship with his creation. He is also invested in seeing relationships grow into healthy communities. To murder someone is a high crime in most societies. The consequence for the act usually comes close to matching the act itself. Adultery and divorce tend to have lasting effects on all parties involved. Jesus, building off the importance of the Law and Prophets focuses on the Mosaic covenant law found within the 10 commandments. “Do not murder” and “do not commit adultery” are numbers six and seven on that list. The next few sections of Jesus’ sermon start with the phrase, “you have heard it said” in reference to the Old Testament law and teachings of the prophets. Jesus uses this covenantal law and does something groundbreaking in his sermon. He focuses on the heart of the matter. God desires obedience over sacrifice.
- Pray** Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.
- Read** [Matthew 5:21-32](#)
- Observe**
- What is Jesus quoting in this passage?
  - What situations are being addressed in this passage?
  - What phrases or themes capture your attention?
- Interpret**
- Why would Jesus preach on these topics?
  - How does Jesus define the acts of murder, adultery, and divorce?
  - Why does Jesus think these are important teachings for his disciples?
- Apply**
- What challenges do we face from the words of Jesus in this passage?
  - How can these passages, and the words of Jesus, help us navigate conflicts in daily life?
  - How can we prevent sin from affecting our relationships with others?
- Practice** Spend this week memorizing the following beatitude: “Blessed are meek, for they will inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5 NIV)



# Week 4 Study Sheet

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## The Integrated Life

- Consider** We often speak about the changes in today's culture as comparisons to the past. Phrases like, "back in my day..." or "that would never have happened back when..." help us contextualize a changing norm. As Jesus continued to preach to the crowd gathered around him on the mountainside, his next set of "you have heard it said" examples were intended to flip the script on accepted practices. Building again from the 10 commandments, (Exodus 20:16-17) Jesus introduces a new way of kingdom living, and helps his audience understand the deep call to discipleship. Jesus reinforces his teaching with a practical example: it is easy to show love to those you already love, but love finds depth in the heart of those who are willing to love the unlovable people around them.
- Pray** Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.
- Read** [Matthew 5:33-48](#)
- Observe**
- What are the main themes of this passage?
  - What word or phrases repeat in the passage?
  - What figures are mentioned and what actions are taking place within the passage?
- Interpret**
- What does Jesus teach about making promises?
  - What should we do when someone offends us?
  - How should we treat our neighbors and enemies?
- Apply**
- How can we ensure that our "yes" is "yes" and our "no" is "no?"
  - What actions can we take when provoked?
  - In what ways can we love those who persecute us?
- Practice** Spend this week memorizing the following beatitude: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Matthew 5:6 NIV)



# Week 5 Study Sheet

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## The Prayerful Life

### Consider

The fundamentals are vital. Every builder understands the importance of a foundation, every coach knows the value of a skill drill, and every musician appreciates the repetitious practice of a scale. As Jesus continued to preach, he began to institute fundamental disciplines (spiritual practices) that would equip followers to stay connected to the righteousness of God's grace in everyday actions. These fundamental practices stood in contrast to what had become hypocritical religious acts of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes. Jesus specifically focused on the spiritual practices of alms giving, prayer, and fasting – disciplines that reorient our selfish desires and wants. Andrew Murray, a South African minister, writer, and revivalist, helps us understand the pitfalls of pursuing disciplines in our own strength and for our own purpose, stating, “how easily we are inclined to rest in prayer (fasting) as religious work without an answer.”<sup>1</sup> The fundamentals of discipleship that Jesus taught in this passage empower us with the tools to righteously pursue him in every area of our life. Pursuit not for our glory, but for his, on earth as it is in heaven.

### Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

### Read

[Matthew 6:1-18](#)

### Observe

- What are the big themes in this passage?
- What contrasting phrases and examples stand out?
- Who is Jesus speaking to and what is the message to that audience?

### Interpret

- What underlining motives is Jesus addressing?
- What non-hypocritical postures does Jesus give as examples of giving, praying, and fasting.
- What other Scripture passages portray righteous examples of giving, praying, and fasting.

### Apply

- What modern day pitfalls – or hypocritical postures - of giving, praying, and fasting should we be aware of and avoid?
- How can you practice giving this week?
- How can you practice prayer modeled like Jesus this week?
- How can you righteously pursue God through the practice of fasting this week?

### Practice

Spend this week memorizing the following beatitude: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” (Matthew 5:7 NIV)

<sup>1</sup> Murray, Andrew. *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, (Hendrickson Publishing, Peabody, Mass. 2007), pg. 30.



# Week 6 Study Sheet

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## The Generous Life

### Consider

Living paycheck to paycheck. Just making ends meet. Worrying about where the next meal will come from. Men and women feeling overworked and under paid. Families carrying concerns about the future of their nation and their leaders. Disease, food insecurity, and homelessness knocking at the door. Fear and necessity spurning families to hoard, store, and stress. The threat of worry and its companion anxiety come to the forefront. We share a lot of similarities with that crowd on the mountaintop. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), 40 million adults, almost 20% of our current population, struggle with anxiety disorders.<sup>2</sup> The words of Jesus to the crowd on the mountain are the same words to his followers today. He asks us to trade our self-reliance and offers us dependence upon a reliable heavenly Father. He does not preach toward a self-made man, rather he speaks of a trustworthy God who will steward our trust and discipleship in such a way as to meet every need that we will ever have.

### Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

### Read

[Matthew 6:19-34](#)

### Observe

- Who is Jesus speaking to and what major theme is he addressing?
- What repeating words and phrases stand out, and why?
- What contrasting thoughts are present within the text?

### Interpret

- What practical issues does Jesus address?
- What instruction does he give to those facing these issues?
- What connection can be made with storing our treasures on earth and anxiety?

### Apply

- What spiritual practices from the previous passage can help us from becoming fixated on our earthly treasure?
- What spiritual practices from the previous passage can help us with worry/anxiety?
- What practical steps can we take today to give God our trust and devotion.

### Practice

Spend this week memorizing the following beatitude: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” (Matthew 5:8 NIV)

<sup>2</sup> [adaa.org](http://adaa.org)



# Week 7 Study Sheet

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## The Merciful Life

### Consider

The antithesis to the righteous pursuit of Jesus is hypocrisy. When hypocrisy, or the pretense of moral standard, replaces truth with suggestion, it culminates in a judging heart. We're returned to the garden, to The Fall of Man, the moment when the knowledge of good and evil was first distorted as a means to judge others. The hypocritical behavior is a critical one; we are deceived, masked, and blinded. Jesus wants us to see clearly, to remove the plank of judgement that distracts and distorts our vision. Only then are we able to clearly pursue - ask, seek, and knock - the righteous gifts of God. Gifts that are not self-serving, but life-giving. Gifts Jesus uses to bring his loving community of disciples together. Jesus has come to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. This theme has been present throughout his sermon, but he lays it out clearly now: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12 NIV)

### Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

### Read

[Matthew 7:1-14](#)

### Observe

- What themes are present in this passage?
- What examples and metaphors did Jesus use in this passage? What items are listed?
- What words or phrases are repeated from previous passages?

### Interpret

- What makes Jesus' example of judging others so radical?
- Why would Jesus preach on judgementalism before ask, seek, and knock?
- Why would Jesus present God as a father?
- How would you define the "narrow gate?"

### Apply

- How can you prevent yourself from judging others?
- How can you ensure your motives for asking God for something are pure?
- How do you know when you have entered or are journeying on the narrow path?

### Practice

Spend this week memorizing the following beatitudes: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:9-10 NIV)



# Week 8 Study Sheet

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## The Storm Proof Life

### Consider

Jesus concludes his sermon by illustrating the outcome of kingdom living. New Testament scholar R.T. France reminds us, “this sermon is not meant to be admired but to be obeyed.”<sup>3</sup> John’s Gospel reminds us that a shepherd knows his sheep (John 10:14). Those who are the disciples of Jesus build their lives on his teachings, which focus on fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, in order that false teachings will not extinguish his house of disciples. Pastor and hymn writer Edward Mote pulls it together in melody when in 1834 he pens, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name. On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand.”<sup>4</sup>

### Pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear what God wants to share with you from his Word. Ask God to provide you with grace, understanding, and resolve to put into practice the things you learn.

### Read

[Matthew 7:15-29](#)

### Observe

- Where and when does this passage take place?
- What themes are present?
- What are the contrasting thoughts?

### Interpret

- How can we recognize false teaching?
- What are good fruits verses bad fruits according to Jesus?
- What is the foundation of Jesus that we build our life on and how do we do it every day?

### Apply

- What steps can you take this week to build on the foundation of Jesus?
- What false teachings or influences are in your life that Jesus would not count as righteous?
- How has memorizing the beatitudes helped you build your life on the foundation of Jesus?

### Practice

Spend this week memorizing the following beatitudes: “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:11-12 NIV)

<sup>3</sup> France, R.T. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Matthew* (IVP Academic, Downers Grove, Ill. 1985), pg. 150.

<sup>4</sup> [christianmusicandhymns.com](http://christianmusicandhymns.com)