

**STUDY  
GUIDE**

# **THE BLESSED LIFE**

*that no one really wants*

**TROY  
DOBBS**

# CHAPTER 1

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

—MATTHEW 5:3

**DIG IN** What one or two things did God highlight for you as you studied this beatitude?

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**DIGEST** Read these two passages and jot down how they inform or enrich your understanding of this beatitude.

**Isaiah 66:2** *All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.*

**Psalms 34:18** *The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.*

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In what ways have you been tempted by the prosperity gospel? How have you experienced some of the negative implications of the American Dream? (Refer to pages 9–10)

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What are a couple of situations in your life in which God used suffering for your good, despite the pain you experienced? (Refer to page 15)

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**GO DEEPER** What is the kingdom of heaven? What is the connection between being poor in spirit and the kingdom of heaven?

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**DO IT**

1. What are two or three areas of weakness or neediness that you need to surrender to God? Take 2 minutes to surrender them to the Lord. Confess your spiritual poverty and ask God to further reveal his abounding grace for you. (Refer to pages 19, 22)

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2. “Pride pushes God away, while humility becomes a lightning rod for more of God’s grace.” (Refer to page 19) What is one area of pride in your life right now that you need to confess to the Lord? How will you choose to walk in humility in that area this week?

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3. “The Bible is clear: Rely on yourself and miss the kingdom. Rely on God and gain the kingdom.” (Refer to page 17) Are you convicted of specific areas of self-reliance? If so, confess them to the Lord and ask for strength so you can depend on his strength, not your own.

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# CHAPTER TWO

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

—MATTHEW 5:4

**DIG IN** What one or two things did God highlight for you as you studied this beatitude?

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**DIGEST** Read these two passages and jot down how they inform or enrich your understanding of this beatitude.

**2 Corinthians 7:9–10** *As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.*

**Isaiah 61:1–3** *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.*

“The idea behind this beatitude is that we’d grieve over our own sins in the same way we grieve over the death of a love one.” (Refer to page 26) Up to this point, how have you grieved over your sins?

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How do you confess your sins to God? Do you present them as a big lump and dump it before him? Or do you confess your sins individually and in detail as someone really broken by each sin? (Refer to page 30)

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**GO DEEPER** Can you find an example or two in the Bible of people who mourned their sin because they got caught rather than because of how offensive their sin was to God?

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**DO IT**

1. Take a few moments to specifically confess to the Lord the sins you have committed this week or today. Come clean and ask Jesus to forgive you. (Refer to page 30)

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2. “As you mourn over your sins, Christ himself comes alongside you to bless and forgive and strengthen you. *He, himself, gives comfort.*” Take a few minutes to lean into Jesus and experience His comfort. (Refer to page 32)

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3. “Sin is a big deal because it requires the shedding of the blood to secure forgiveness.” Jesus shed his blood for your forgiveness. Take a few minutes to thank him for His sacrificial love and forgiveness. (Refer to page 32)

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# CHAPTER THREE

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

—MATTHEW 5:5, NIV

**DIG IN** What one or two things did God highlight for you as you studied this beatitude?

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**DIGEST** Read these two passages and jot down how they inform or enrich your understanding of this beatitude.

**Psalm 37:8–9** *Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.*

**Matt 11:28-30** *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

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How has your understanding of Biblical meekness changed as you read this chapter? (Refer to page 36)

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Based on this beatitude, write down what you think it means “to inherit the earth.” (Refer to page 44)

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**GO DEEPER**

Read the account of Sampson in Judges 13 through 16. In what ways do you see God molding Sampson from a man of unbridled strength into a man of bridled meekness?

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**DO IT**

1. “A meek person then, is not a weak person, but rather one who demonstrates power under control and submission to God.” What is God saying to you about the talents, gifts and/or strengths in your life that might not be submitted to him? If the Holy Spirit is convicting you in a few specific areas, take 3 minutes to confess your lack of surrender. Receive his forgiveness and ask him to transform these areas in your life into bridled meekness. (Refer to page 38)

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2. Think of individuals in your life who demonstrate biblical meekness. Write down the ways that you see them living meekly. Connect with them this week to learn more about their journey toward meekness and ask them to pray with you.

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3. What is one practical way that you can model and demonstrate meekness this week? It could be with your family or friends, your neighbors, your co-workers, or classmates.

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# CHAPTER FOUR

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

—MATTHEW 5:6, NIV

**DIG IN** What one or two things did God highlight for you as you studied this beatitude?

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**DIGEST** Read these two passages and jot down how they inform or enrich your understanding of this beatitude.

**Isaiah 55:1–2** *Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.*

**John 7:37–38** *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”*

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“Righteousness is a lifestyle that not only sets us apart as true Christians, but also invites subsequent opposition from the world.” Are you experiencing any opposition from the world? If so, how? If not, why not? (Refer to page 50)

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“Can you truthfully say, ‘I long to know Christ’s righteousness as a starving man longs for food and water?’” How would you assess the level of your own longing on a scale of 1 to 5? \_\_\_\_\_ (1=no longing at all, 5=intense longing) (Refer to page 55)



**GOING DEEPER** One way to get in touch with the intensity of hunger is fasting. If you are healthy enough to do so, try fasting for 24 hours this week. Keep a journal of how you feel and what deep cravings you have. As you fast, ask Jesus to implant in you those same intense desires for him.

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**DO IT**

1. The biggest question for all of humanity is this: “How do I know whether or not I really know Jesus Christ?” How do you answer that question? If you can say, “I know that I know Jesus,” then take a moment to thank him again. If your answer is, “I really don’t know Jesus,” then please reach out to [www.peacewithgod.net](http://www.peacewithgod.net). This is a trusted site. You’ll be able to connect with someone there about how you can know Jesus. (Refer to page 47)

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2. What are your desires currently revealing about your passions and allegiances? What or who receives your best effort and energy? Be honest with yourself. Is it Jesus, or is it something or someone else? If you realize that some of your desires have drifted from Christ, take 3 minutes now to confess that to him and ask for a renewed passion for him. (Refer to pages 53–54)

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3. What will you do this week to cultivate a deeper hunger and thirst for Jesus? Who will you ask to help you on this journey?

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# CHAPTER FIVE

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

—MATTHEW 5:7, NIV

**DIG IN** What one or two things did God highlight for you as you studied this beatitude?

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**DIGEST** Read these two passages and jot down how they inform or enrich your understanding of this beatitude.

**Luke 6:35–36** *But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.*

**Hebrews 2:17–18** *Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

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“Mercy changes people.” How has God’s mercy changed you? How has God’s mercy demonstrated through another person changed you? (Refer to page 67)

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Have you checked out on someone or written someone off? If so, who? Why? (Refer to page 59)

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**GOING DEEPER**

Read the eight short passages on pages 62 and 63 that reference mercy, and write down what stands out to you.

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**DO IT**

1. If you have written someone off, take 3 minutes to seek the Lord about how he might be asking you to give that person a second chance. If you need wisdom about what to do, God will provide it—seek him (James 1:5). You can also reach out to a godly friend or family member to ask for counsel.

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2. “Mercy known should translate to mercy shown.” Sometimes those closest to us can get under our skin—family members, co-workers, classmates, bosses, teachers, neighbors, etc. To whom will you show mercy to this week? Be specific and write down a few names, then pray and ask Jesus to show his mercy through you. (Refer to page 63)

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3. Take 3 minutes to think of 1 or 2 people who have shown mercy to you over the past few months. Reach out to them to thank them and share with them how God has used their demonstration of mercy to change you.

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# CHAPTER SIX

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

—MATTHEW 5:8

**DIG IN** What one or two things did God highlight for you as you studied this beatitude?

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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**DIGEST** Read these two passages and jot down how they inform or enrich your understanding of this beatitude.

**Hebrews 12:14** *Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

**1 John 3:2–3** *Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

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On page 73, the biblical definition of the word *pure* is explained, along with several examples. Based on this definition, what other examples or images come to mind when you think of purity? (Refer to page 73)

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“Today we see lots of people . . . striving for moral reformation.” Have you struggled with this? If so, write down a few specific ways that you strive for moral reformation instead of Christ’s transformation in your life. (Refer to page 74)

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**GO DEEPER**

Read the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32). List 3 to 5 ways that you see the older brother strive for moral reformation. How did this affect his relationship with his younger brother? With his Father?

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**DO IT**

1. “Jesus is not talking about cleaning up your act or reforming yourself to become the best version of you. He is talking about a *heart* transformation.” Are there ways that you have been trying to clean up your act in your own strength or through strong-willed personal discipline? If so, how? Take 3 minutes to confess the ways that you have done this and ask Jesus to help you fully surrender to his work of heart transformation. (Refer to page 77)

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2. “An ungodly, immoral lifestyle impedes spiritual vision.” Take 3 minutes to be quiet before the Lord. Ask him to reveal any ungodliness or immorality that is diminishing your vision of him. If he brings things to mind, confess them, ask for forgiveness, and choose to repent. (Refer to page 80)

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3. “The pure in heart will see God *for themselves*. This is the promise we can claim!” Take 3 minutes to ask the Lord to increase your desire to know, see, and experience him in deeper ways. (Refer to page 81)

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# CHAPTER SEVEN

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

—MATTHEW 5:9, NIV

**DIG IN** What one or two things did God highlight for you as you studied this beatitude?

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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**DIGEST**

Read these two passages and jot down how they inform or enrich your understanding of this beatitude.

**Psalm 34:12–14** *What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*

**Romans 12:17–18** *Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*

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“If you don’t have God’s peace within you, you cannot bring God’s peace to others.” Take 3 minutes to pause and assess: How much of God’s peace am I experiencing today? This week? In general? (Refer to page 92)

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“To call someone a son was to say that there was a likeness, usually reflected in behavior . . . Peacemakers have a family resemblance to their brother Jesus Christ.” Write down a few ways that this biblical definition has impacted or changed your understanding of this beatitude. (Refer to page 95)

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**GO DEEPER** On pages 88–89, seven statements of biblical peace are noted. Reread each one and write down what stands out to you. Consider how you are—or are not—living in God’s peace.

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**DO IT**

1. “A peacemaker is one who leans into the situation, confronts it head-on, and is in turn blessed by God!” Is there someone in your life with whom you need to make peace right now? If so, take a few minutes to seek the Lord and get some wise counsel from a trusted friend or family member. Then, humbly seek out this person to make peace.

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2. “Being a peacemaker also means that we intervene by bringing the peace of God where there is conflict between people—especially God’s people.” (Refer to page 94) All Christ-followers are called to bring God’s peace and to be peacemakers. Are you aware of any relationships where a conflict needs to be resolved? If so, how might you step up and step in to help bring God’s peace into the relationship? How will you be a peacemaker? (Refer to page 90)

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3. “The Bible is clear that God’s peace plan is the gospel.” Take 3 minutes to think about 1 or 2 people who are close to you now but do not know the Lord—friends, family, co-workers, classmates, neighbors, etc. Begin to pray for them today; look for ways to care for them, and ask God for an open door to share the gospel with them. We call this the *Prayer, Care, Share Lifestyle*. (Refer to page 93)

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# CHAPTER EIGHT

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

—MATTHEW 5:10, NIV

**DIG IN** What one or two things did God highlight for you as you studied this beatitude?

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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## **DIGEST**

Read these two passages and jot down how they inform or enrich your understanding of this beatitude.

**1 Peter 3:13–17** *Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.*

**2 Timothy 3:12–13** *Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

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“Please take this to heart: If you are in Christ, persecution is normal.” Has this been your experience? If so, how? If not, why might that be? (Refer to page 101)

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“We can’t develop character unless something tests our character.” How has your character been tested recently? How does this statement reframe how you think about trials and difficulties (persecution)? (Refer to page 103)

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**GOING DEEPER** Read Hebrews Chapter 11. Make a list outlining how many of these “heroes of the faith” suffered or were persecuted because they lived rightly before the Lord. How does their example encourage you to endure suffering or persecution?

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**DO IT**

1. “Christians are not a *little* different from the world—they are *altogether* different!” In what ways are you altogether different? Are you content with the differences that came to your mind? If so, take a moment to praise the Lord. If not, what will you do differently this week to appropriately and lovingly stand out? (Refer to page 102)

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2. For parents: “Mom and Dad, are you raising politically correct Christians or radically focused disciples?” This is a hard-hitting question. Take 3 minutes to assess your approach to parenting in light of our culture. What are 1 or 2 concrete adjustments that you might need to make in your parenting? (Refer to page 104)

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3. “If your passion is for Jesus Christ, nothing the world offers will even come close [to satisfying].” In light of our culture and our American values, how does this statement land on you? How does this truth challenge your priorities? How does this statement challenge how you spend your time? Your financial spending and stewardship? What changes can you make this week to re-align your focus around Jesus? (Refer to page 107)

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