

Bible study: YOU Are BLESSED

The beatitudes are good news for citizens of the kingdom of God.

This Bible study originally appeared as part of a *Discipleship Journal* special section titled “The Blessings of Beatitude Living” (Nov/Dec 2003, Issue 138).

1. Though we’re familiar with the Beatitudes, we may not be as familiar with “blessed are” as a form of speech; it’s not one we generally use. Yet it was common to Jesus’ listeners. The Bible is full of people identified as blessed. In the following passages, identify who is blessed and describe the nature of the blessing, when applicable.

Who is blessed?

What is the nature of the blessing?

Dt. 33:29 _____

Psalm 1 _____

Ps. 32:1-2 _____

Ps. 41:1-3 _____

Ps. 84:4-7 _____

Ps. 94:12-13 _____

Ps. 106:3 _____

Ps. 112:1-9 _____

Ps. 119:1-2 _____

Prov. 3:13-14 _____

Prov. 20:7 _____

Is. 30:18 _____

Is. 56:1-2 _____

2. What patterns do you notice among the people who are blessed?

3. What patterns do you notice about the blessings themselves?

4. What does it mean that these people are “blessed”? Write your own definition, and then look up “blessed” in a dictionary. You can also look up the meaning of the Hebrew or Greek word for “blessed” by using a concordance that includes a Hebrew/Greek lexicon (dictionary), or by searching a website such as www.bible.crosswalk.com or www.studylight.org. (Before you perform the search for “blessed,” make sure you click on the box to include study tools or resources.)

5. Even though we don’t go around saying “Blessed are you” to each other, we do have ideas about who is happy and favored. Write some beatitudes for your culture. Start with some of the phrases that follow, and add your own.

Blessed are the well educated, for _____

Blessed are the parents of _____, for _____

Blessed are the employees who _____, for _____

Blessed are those who lead _____, lives, for _____

Blessed are the healthy, for _____

Blessed are the _____, for _____

Blessed are the _____, for _____

Blessed are the _____, for _____

A NEW CULTURE

6. In Mt. 3:1-3, what does John the Baptist proclaim is near?

7. Read Mt. 4:17,23-25. As Jesus begins preaching, what is His message?

8. In Matthew 5, we get to hear Jesus teaching His disciples. For the first time, we glimpse how life works in the kingdom He has been preaching about. Read Mt. 5:3-12. List the people whom Jesus says are favored:

9. How do these compare with the list from the Old Testament?

10. How does Jesus' list compare to the beatitudes you wrote?

11. What do these contrasts tell you about how things work in the kingdom of God?

KINGDOM REWARDS

12. Rather than giving a list of commands, the Beatitudes explain what is valued in God's kingdom. They give us a new way of looking at life and reveal the unlikely rewards that come when we find ourselves in need. Go back to Mt. 5:3-12. What are the benefits associated with the following conditions?

The poor in spirit: _____

Those who mourn: _____

The meek: _____

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: _____

The merciful: _____

The pure in heart: _____

The peacemakers: _____

The persecuted: _____

Those insulted for Jesus: _____

13. Describe a time when you've found yourself in one of the states above. Did you experience the reward listed, or are you still waiting for it?

14. Following is the rendering of the Beatitudes in *The Message*. As you read these less-familiar words, compare them with the translation you've been using and underline or highlight any phrases that give you new insight.

You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought.

You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being "carefull," you find yourselves cared for.

You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don't like it, *I* do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble. —Mt. 5:3-12

15. Which beatitude, in particular, would you like to experience more fully?

16. Go back and reread the article that talks about that beatitude. Highlight helpful thoughts, and ask Jesus to help you understand and experience the promised blessing. [*The Nov/Dec 2003 issue of Discipleship Journal featured articles for each of the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. You can order an issue or access our online archives by visiting www.discipleshipjournal.com.*]