

# THE JESUS PLAYBOOK

a study and introduction to the Beatitudes

# **The Playbook of Jesus to Take Us Deeper with Him**

Jesus invites us to be rooted in faith and journey toward a deeper relationship with him that is radically different from the way of the world.

Jesus begins his greatest teaching on this deeper faith, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7), with eight “Beatitudes” (Matthew 5:3-12), as they are commonly called.

These eight profound statements guide us to what living as a citizen in the kingdom of God looks like. They are a path that helps us be formed like Jesus. The Beatitudes are a playbook to help us live a radical life as a follower of Jesus.

But the life Jesus calls us to is shocking. He shows us that following him as a citizen of the kingdom of God is upside down or inverted from the ways and values of the world. To become like Jesus requires we take a different journey, and that path is spelled out in the Beatitudes. The path leads us to become more like Jesus. These Beatitudes become the playbook Jesus wants us to follow to press deeper into our relationship with him.

# XXXXX The Eight OOOOO Beatitudes

Right now, take some time to read the eight Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) on the next page. Read them slowly. Read them prayerfully. As you read, ask yourself two questions:

**1) God, what are you saying to me?**

**2) What am I going to do about it?**



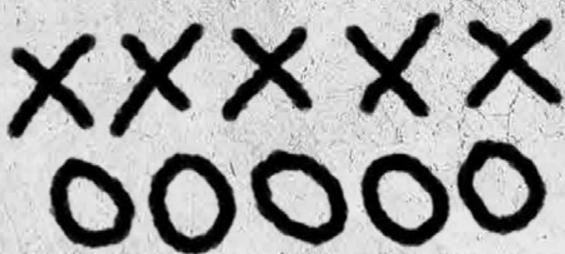
- 3** Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4** Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.
- 5** Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.
- 6** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for  
righteousness, for they will be filled.
- 7** Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.
- 8** Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.
- 9** Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.
- 10** Blessed are those who are persecuted  
because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
  
- 11** Blessed are you when people insult you,  
persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil  
against you because of me. **12** Rejoice and be  
glad, because great is your reward in heaven,  
for in the same way they persecuted the prophets  
who were before you.

# The Path to Blessing

Each of the eight beatitudes starts with this: Blessed are... or Happy are... The word in the original language is *makarios*. It describes the highest level of well-being possible for humans. It means a deep joy based on one's relationship with God. The eight qualities are the only path to true and lasting happiness. If you want to experience a blessed life - this is the only path.

## The Formula

There's a blessing and reward in each Beatitude. In each of these beatitudes, it's like God is saying to you: "Congratulations! Because you are \_\_\_\_\_, you'll receive \_\_\_\_\_."



# **Ironic Blessings**

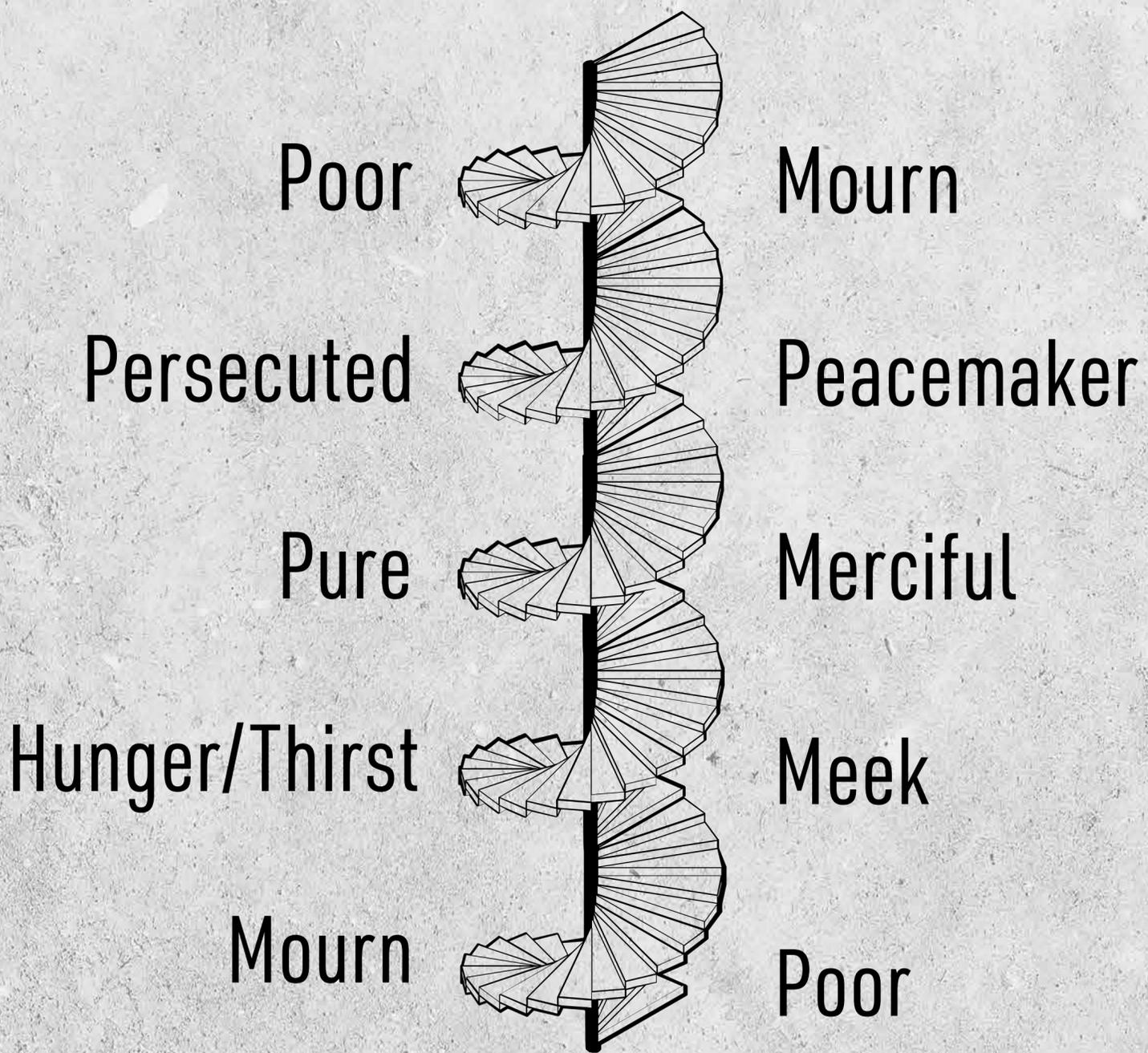
Each beatitude has an irony to it. They are a kind of “strange blessing.” Jesus says blessed are the poor, the sad, the meek, the hungry and thirsty, the persecuted, and so on. That’s upside down! Jesus is describing the inverted world of being a citizen of the kingdom. What Jesus calls us to is entirely opposite of what the world says will make us happy. The path to happiness and blessing is different from the ways of the world. Jesus’ playbook leads us on a journey that’s not easy, but it is so good!

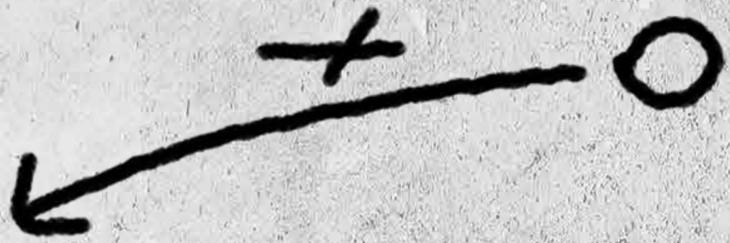
## **Being and Doing**

Notice that the Beatitudes are not primarily about what we are to do. They are more about who we are, which of course, will result in behaviors that reflect Jesus. Look at the first Beatitude in Matthew 4:3 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit.* We are to be poor or humble. Jesus focuses on who we are first, which will result in how we live that out.

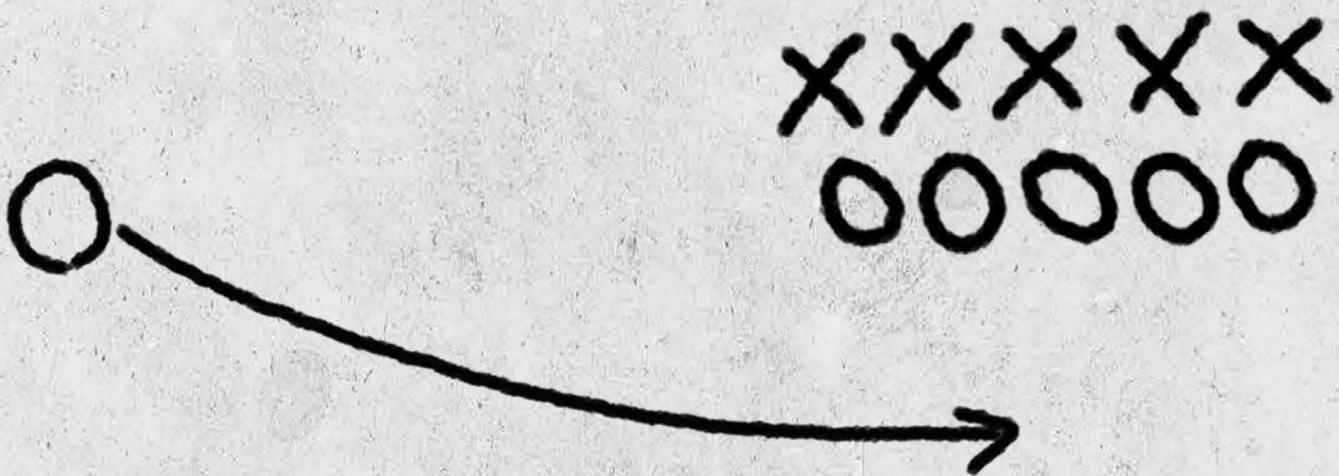
# Endless Steps Toward Being Like Jesus

All eight Beatitudes work together like an endless circular staircase. Each Beatitude builds on the previous. We start at “poor in spirit,” go through the next six virtues and arrive at “persecuted.”





As we mature through the eight steps, we find we come back to “poor in spirit” again - but this time, we are at a higher spiritual level; a more mature level than the previous time. When we’ve passed through all eight Beatitudes, we discover we need to start over, but at a much different level as we move closer to being like Jesus. We go through the steps again, and again, all through our life. Our whole life is a process of continually coming back to these basics of what it means to be like Jesus and follow Jesus. And where does the staircase lead? Being rooted in Jesus. Deeper into the kingdom of God.



# **Summary of the Beatitudes**

## **1. Poor In Spirit - Humility.**

Being spiritually bankrupt, knowing we are entirely dependent on God for all that's good; being nothing before God so that he can be everything.

**2. Mourn - Godly sorrow that leads to repentance.** Seeing the depth of our sin and brokenness causes us deep sorrow, sadness, and grief as we mourn for our sins and rebellion. In repentance, we dramatically and intentionally change our mind, heart, behaviors, attitudes, and lifestyle that leaves the old way behind and embraces the way of Jesus.

**3. Meek - Submit and surrender.** Meek means that we give our power over to Jesus.

**4. Hunger and Thirst - Craving for God.** Only God can truly satisfy all our longings and desires. Our passion is to know and experience God above all.



## **5. Merciful - Compassion.**

Having received mercy, we give mercy to alleviate the pain, misery, distress, and suffering of others.

## **6. Pure in Heart - Pure motives.**

Godly motives in our hearts are what control and lead to a pure and godly life.

## **7. Peacemakers - Making peace.**

Peacemakers actively make peace, work for reconciliation, build bridges, and attempt to create harmony among people and between God and people.

## **8. Persecuted - Associated with**

**Jesus.** This is the pinnacle of our spiritual journey. We are so much more like Jesus at this point that we'll be treated like Jesus was and have the maturity to endure it.

# Reflection

**1. Blessed are...**

**What does it mean to be blessed?**

**2. What does the pursuit of blessedness or happiness look like for you right now?**

**What do you or have you believed will make you happy?**

**3. Why will seeking blessing and happiness on the world's terms always disappoint us? What is Jesus' path to blessing and happiness?**

**4. How do you see Jesus being and living out these eight Beatitudes?**

**5. Read the Beatitudes again. What surprises you?**

**6. Which of the eight Beatitudes do you most desire to become right now? Why?**

**7. Which of the eight Beatitudes seem the hardest to become and why?**

**8.** Can you see how each of the eight build on each other? What happens if you skip a Beatitude? Test it out. Can you mourn your sin if you don't recognize how spiritually empty you are? Can you make peace if your heart is not pure? What Beatitude is clearly missing in your life right now?

**9.** What do you hope to gain from this teaching series on the Beatitudes? Spend some time asking God to answer this desire.

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**10.** The first and second Beatitudes (poor in spirit and mourn) require that we become aware and confess our pride and replace the pride with humility through confession and repentance. Here's a confession guide to help you admit and repent of your pride, which are the first steps to going deeper and further with Jesus. Prayerfully read this and engage God regarding the items that you struggle with the most:

→ *I'm conscious of a spirit of pride about myself because of my success, position, good training, knowledge, appearance, or natural gifts and abilities.*

→ *I want things my way.*

→ *I need human praise and want to be noticed. I draw attention to myself in conversations. I want to be in the center of things.*

→ *I'm easily stirred to anger, and I'm impatient. I'm touchy and sensitive.*

- *I'm stubborn, have strong self-will, and have a headstrong and unyielding disposition.*
- *I'm fearful of others and situations. I have a compromising spirit and will often tone down my convictions to not be offensive or avoid conflict.*
- *I'm jealous and envious of others. I find it hard to celebrate the successes of others.*
- *Sometimes I'm dishonest, deceitful, or evasive about the whole truth. I cover up my faults and try to leave a better impression than is warranted. I can exaggerate or stress a point in my favor.*
- *I struggle to trust God and surrender my all to him fully. I get angry or impatient with God when things don't go my way. I still try to control things that I need to surrender to God.*
- *I'm selfish. I love and value comfort, ease, pleasure, and money more than is good. I take care of my needs first.*



**PLAYBOOK**  
strategies for kingdom living

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