

# BEATITUDES

## LEADER'S NOTES: LESSON EIGHT

## **Matthew 5:10-12 (Persecuted)**

**1. In the video lesson, Brian made the statement, "It really should be no surprise to any Christian who is following Jesus closely, that we are going to suffer some sort of persecution as we are living as Jesus called us to live." What causes you to agree or disagree with his statement?**

Hey Life Group Leaders! Welcome to week 8 and the final lesson of our Be-attitudes Life Group Video Series! We hope that this series has been uplifting, challenging, and helping you to see some new perspectives of God's Kingdom!

To complete this series, once again, you have six questions coming up based on Pastor Brian's video lesson this week! Remember that these leader notes are to serve as a guide for further and deepening conversation with your Life Group, not as the answers! Enjoy this week's discussion and always remember to ask an extra question such as "Why do you believe that?" to draw out some more conversation from your group members!

To start of this lesson, this is a great opportunity for your whole group to share. It may help if you, as the leader, are transparent and willing to share. It's alright if different people agree or disagree with this statement. The question is asking for the "why," and would also be looking for substance to back up that "why." Encourage critical thinking and a look back into Scripture to see what is going on ... What is Jesus' overall goal with this teaching/sermon? Everyone will have differing answers and perspectives. Remember, no snap judgment or quick fixes.

**2. What lesson(s) did God teach you during that season? What has changed in your life because of the lesson(s) you learned?**

Again, this is a great opportunity for everyone to share. Some may not have seen a lesson in their season of conflict. Or may be unwilling to share that part of the lesson they learned was that the conflict was their fault and this is embarrassing. Whatever the case may be, continue to be encouraging of each of your group members as they share. And as always, not snap judgments or quick fixes.

**2. Read John 15:18-25, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 2:19-24, and 1 Peter 4:12-19. What similarities do you notice between these passages and Matthew 5:10-12?**

All of these passages let us know that suffering is a part of being a follower of Jesus. There is nowhere that states any of us will be exempt from suffering as we obey and follow Jesus. These passages also state that it is commendable by God for those who suffer for the sake of Christ. It is not to be a point of shame or degradation. It is to be celebrated and revered that you are so much a part of God's Kingdom, that you were found worthy to be persecuted and suffer for his name.

### **3. How might suffering for Christ strengthen your faith? How does it increase your desire to share the gospel?**

Life can be very difficult. But it's not all about difficulty. Jesus desires for our lives to be full of joy and thanksgiving. Often times the difficulties of life seem to weigh on us so very much, we have trouble enjoying and being thankful for life. Through difficult experiences and suffering with Christ, we can experience his goodness, mercy, peace, and comfort that makes these difficult experiences less burdensome. He gives us the strength to endure and the ability to withstand even through the nastiest of events. The Spirit works in us to produce a fruit of patience, forbearance and longsuffering (Galatians 5:22). As he does this, our faith in him grows and gives us the confidence in Jesus to withstand anything that the world comes up with. It is through Christ, his gifts, and his transforming power in our lives that make all this possible (Philippians 4:13).

### **4. How would your life be better and spiritually stronger if you were able to better endure seasons of difficulty and suffering?**

This is another opportunity for everyone in the group to share their thoughts. Even if they have not thought about this situation very long, based on the sermon from this past weekend and the lesson from the video, encourage everyone to share how their life might improve as they endure through suffering.

Some answers may include dealing with illness or injury with yourself or a family member with more hope and encouragement. It may also include handling conflict with relationships at work, at home, at school with more grace and tact. There are many situations and circumstances that come up in which knowing and actually practicing forbearance and longsuffering in a way that Jesus would to help improve life for yourself and others around you.

### **5. Jesus refers to persecution for the sake of righteousness as a blessing. How do you think His original listeners felt about His statement? Now,**

**how do you personally feel about this statement? What makes it challenging for Christians—even mature Christians—to truly accept this beatitude?**

It is very probable that the original listeners were scared of persecution because they were living it and witnessing it all around them. It was a very real thing to them. But they would have to be encouraged to know that they were being ushered into the Kingdom of Heaven because of their experienced persecution! This hope of new life is what helps pull them through the storms of life.

The thought of true persecution is very scary. Many of us have never felt or witnessed it ... but some of us have. Again, even the thought is scary! Encourage everyone to share their feeling about this. Does it bring hope or fear? Why? This is one of those very personal and introspective questions. Be encouraging and caring as people share. And remember, no quick fixes or snap judgments!

**6. Jesus's overall message in the Beatitudes is that His kingdom has an "open door policy"—anyone and everyone may come to Him. How can you best explain this message to unbelievers in your circles of influence?**

God created all men and all women with the intention of being in a loving relationship with them regardless of what corner of the globe they were born and raised. All men and women are made in the image and likeness of God. God so loved all men and all women, that he gave his one and only Son (John 3:16) ... His message at the beginning of his ministry is that the Kingdom of Heaven has come near. All are called and welcomed to be a part of it. Jesus has made a way for all to believe in him and have eternal life in him.

**Take a few minutes to:**

- **Write down one personal takeaway from this lesson.**
- **Now, write about how this takeaway could be applied to your life.**
- **Finally, if you're comfortable doing so, share your takeaway and life application with the group.**

If you have a chance to give the group time to do this exercise, it would be good ... but don't feel pressure to rush through the other questions (if you're having healthy discussion) to do this exercise. If you run out of time but still want to take part in this exercise one idea is for group members to do this on their own time during the week and share what they've written with other group members via email or text.