

THE

BEATITUDES



RIGHT ATTITUDES ARE REWARDED



Devotion Guide for Coaches

OVERVIEW

The Book of Matthew records a life changing message from Jesus called the Sermon on the Mount. In chapter five, Jesus shares his heart with his disciples and gives blessings to believers. The blessings *aka* Beatitudes are eight ways we can know how fortunate we are to be in God's kingdom. The first four Beatitudes teach us how to have a right attitude toward God. The last four Beatitudes teach us how to have a right attitude toward people. Jesus wants us to know that having a right attitude toward God and people is greatly rewarded. Players will conclude the study learning how to be salt (a godly influence) and light (a beacon of truth) in the world around us.

SAY • THINK • ACT • PRAY

Engage players with a relatable story or question. Encourage them to ponder the Bible verse* and what it would look like on the court, at home, school, or anywhere in their daily life. Challenge players to take action demonstrating their faith in real ways. Use the prayer suggestion, your own prayer, or ask for a volunteer to pray to close the devotion.

**New International Reader's Version*

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TEAM SPORTS devotions

1

Huddle Up

Matthew 5:1-2, Psalm 37:4



What do players do when the coach says “huddle up”? (players gather around the coach) **Who do the players listen closely to?** (the coach or team captain) **Why do we have a team huddle?** (to hear important information) The most important team huddle to ever happen is the Bible. Jesus had a team of best friends called disciples. They went everywhere with Jesus. They watched Jesus help people in amazing ways. Crowds heard the wonderful news and came from all around. Jesus decided this was a good time to break for a team huddle to give his disciples some important information.



Jesus saw the crowds. So he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him. Then he began to teach them.

Matthew 5:1-2



If someone told you how to be really really happy, would you listen? When Jesus sat down on the mountainside, the disciples gathered around him and listened closely, like you are gathered around me right now. Jesus loved his friends and wanted to tell them how to be blessed and truly happy. In this huddle, the disciples learned some new information about what matters to God and what makes us happy. **What does it mean to “delight”?** (having a strong feeling of happiness) Like the disciples, we think delighting in ourselves and getting what we want will make us happy. We like to go first, get the most, or have the best. But the Bible tells us, *“Find your delight in the Lord. Then he will give you everything your heart really wants.”* Psalm 37:4 When we enjoy God, we discover what our hearts really want. And we discover that only God can make our hearts feel truly happy.



Do we delight in the Lord by rushing to the front of the line or by letting others go first? Do we delight in the Lord by keeping it all or sharing with people who have less? Do we delight in the Lord by ignoring others so we can be at the top or by helping others do well too? What are some more ways we can delight in the Lord?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help us delight in you more than ourselves. Give us a heart to want what you want more than what we want. Help us to huddle up and listen well to your teaching throughout this volleyball season. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Attitude Is Everything

Psalm 144:15b, Matthew 7:11



What is an attitude? (the way you think and feel about something and how it affects the way you act) **What are some right attitudes to have when you play volleyball? What are some wrong attitudes to have when you play volleyball?** Choosing to have the right attitude can lead to great rewards. **What good things can happen when you have the right attitude? What difference does our attitude make on the team?**



Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.

Psalm 144:15b



Jesus' best friends, the disciples, were listening closely to him in their team huddle. Jesus was bursting with love for his friends and wanted to bless them. He taught them to look to God for the things that would make their hearts feel full and happy. Jesus told them all of the wonderful ways they would be blessed when they have the right attitude toward God and people. We call these blessings the Beatitudes, which means *super awesome happy rewards*. These rewards will be ours when we have the right attitude. **What difference does our attitude make in our friendships with people? What difference does our attitude make in our friendship with God?**



Our heavenly Father loves us and wants to give us good things. (*Matthew 7:11*) When we become best friends with Jesus and love our heavenly Father more than anything else in the world, He rewards us in ways that are better than we can ever imagine. God promises we will have these rewards if we are willing to change our attitude. **Would you be willing to change your attitude to have better friendships with God and people? Would you be willing to change your attitude for God's promise of super awesome happy rewards?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for being our Lord. Thank you for rewarding us when we have right attitudes. As we learn about each of the Beatitudes over the next few weeks, help us recognize which of our attitudes we need to change so that we may receive all of your super awesome happy rewards. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Fortunate Are the Humble

Matthew 5:3, John 15:5

What does it mean to be a good listener? Do good listeners want to learn? (yes)



“I know what I’m doing,” Jennifer said as she proudly rejected Leslie’s offer to help her with her serve. Jennifer moved to the back of the court. As she served the ball, it either didn’t make it over the net or seemed to go right to the best player on the other team. Jennifer was never able to get control of the game. After the set was over, Jennifer walked over to her teammate Leslie. “I think I need a better serve. Can you help me?” she humbly asked. “Sure,” Leslie replied, “Let’s practice together.”



*Blessed are those who are spiritually needy.
The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.*

Matthew 5:3



Did Jennifer think she needed Leslie’s help before she served the ball? (no) Did Jennifer think she needed Leslie’s help after the set was over? (yes) What changed Jennifer’s attitude? We might think we are fortunate when we don’t need any help. We are proud to do things on our own. We like to listen to ourselves. But when we are willing to listen to God, we realize how much we need his help. God wants to help us if we will let him. God promises a super awesome happy reward to those willing to be a God-listener. God’s love is so big, it fills up an entire kingdom. God wants us to come into his kingdom and see how wonderful it is. He wants to share it all with us until our hearts are overflowing with his love. **Why is it better for us to be willing to listen to God? Why is it better for us to accept his help?**



When we are stubborn and only listen to ourselves, it’s like turning our back on God and putting our hands over our ears to block out his voice. **How do you think this makes God feel?** When we are humble and want to listen to God, it’s like putting our hands out to accept his love. **How do you think this makes God feel?** Jesus said without God we are able to do nothing. (*John 15:5*) **How can you be a God-listener? What things can you ask God to help you with?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, help us remember that we need you. Show us how we can depend on you for everything. Remind us to be humble so we can enjoy the wonders of your kingdom. Amen.


 TEAM SPORTS
 devotions

Fortunate Are the Heartsick

Matthew 5:4, Luke 15:11-24



What is some wrong behavior when playing volleyball? (cheering against players, being disrespectful to the coach, throwing equipment, thinking about yourself instead of the team, complaining, etc.) **What do you say when you do something wrong?** (I'm sorry.)



Blessed are those who are sad. They will be comforted.

Matthew 5:4



Jesus told a story about a father who had two sons. The father gave both of his sons a large amount of money. The younger son left home and wasted all his money. He had no money to buy food. He was so hungry, he would have eaten the pigs' food if he could. He felt sad and was sorry he had done the wrong thing. He missed his family and wanted to go home. While he walked the long road home, he thought about what he would say to his father. When his father saw him coming, he ran to him and gave him a big hug. He was so happy to see his son again. The son told his dad he was sorry. Because his son came back home, the father threw a big party. **Who came home and said they were sorry?** (the son) **What did the father do when he first saw his son?** (gave him a hug) **How did they celebrate their joy?** (they had a party)



In this Beatitude, when Jesus says, "*Blessed are those who are sad*" he means those who feel sorry for doing things their way instead of God's way. Doing the wrong thing hurts everyone and makes us sad. When we hurt someone, saying "I'm sorry," can help everybody feel better. God is like the father in the story. When we honestly tell him we are sorry, he comforts us. His comfort feels like a big hug. We are fortunate because God loves us, comforts us, and celebrates when we come back to him. **Why is it good to feel sad when you do the wrong thing?** **What should you do when you have done the wrong thing?** **How will God bless you when you are truly sorry for what you have done?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, when we do the wrong thing, make our hearts feel sad so that we will say we are sorry, come back to you, and be happy again. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS
 devotions

Fortunate Are the Meek

Matthew 5:5, Proverbs 16:32



Lynn felt the pressure of the match. She wanted to win this one, but the opposing team was really good. Lynn was nervous and started making a lot of mistakes. She heard a few scoffs from her teammates. As Lynn took a rest on the bench, one of her teammates smugly suggested Lynn sit out the rest of the game. **How do you think Lynn should respond?**



Blessed are those who are meek. They will be given the earth.

Matthew 5:5



In the Bible, the word “meek” means mild, gentle, and humble. It describes a person who is calm under pressure. A meek person is quietly confident God is in control. Lynn might feel angry and be tempted to say something mean to her teammate. A wise saying in the book of Proverbs tells us, *“It is better to be patient than to fight.”* 16:32 **Is a meek person strong or weak? Why? A meek person is strong and brave enough to be gentle and self-controlled under pressure.**



Imagine a situation when you feel under pressure. When embarrassed? When insulted? When humiliated? How would a meek person respond? (A meek person would not respond by embarrassing, insulting, or humiliating someone in return. A meek person would respond with grace, kindness, mercy and forgiveness.) **How can being meek, gentle, and humble make a difficult situation better?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, we want your Holy Spirit to guide us. Help us be meek, having courage and strength to show gentleness and self-control in difficult situations. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS
 devotions

Fortunate Are the Hungry

Matthew 5:6, John 6:35, 2 Corinthians 4:16



Have you ever been so hungry your stomach growls? Have you ever been so thirsty your throat is dry? What do you want to eat up or gulp down in that moment?



*Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for what is right.
 They will be filled.*



Matthew 5:6



We need Jesus everyday just like we need food and water. He gives us life. Jesus said, *“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry. And whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”* John 6:35 **Do you eat breakfast and get hungry again for lunch? Do you eat lunch and get hungry again for dinner? How do we feel when we go a long time without food and water?** (thirsty, hungry, weak, tired out) **How might we feel if we go a long time without Jesus?** (alone, afraid, sad) When we come to Jesus and believe in him, he feeds our spirit everyday with unlimited love so we do not feel weak and tired out. Jesus makes us feel better when we are alone, afraid, or sad because he is with us all the time.



The Bible says, *“our spirits are being renewed day by day”* 2 Corinthians 4:16. Spending time with Jesus everyday refreshes us. **What are some ways to spend time with Jesus?** (read what he did and said in the Bible, tell him what is on your heart, pause and listen to his voice speak to your heart)

PRAY

Heavenly Father, you are so good and satisfying that we want to spend time with you everyday. When we are weak and tired, sad and alone, you make us feel better. When we are close to you, our hearts feel full. Amen.


 TEAM SPORTS
 devotions

Fortunate Are the Merciful

Matthew 5:7, Matthew 18:21-35



Imagine your dad told you to not practice volleyball in the house. But you did anyway. And when you did, the volleyball hit the ceiling fan and broke it. **How would you feel? Would you be worried? Why?** You know that what you did was wrong and you know that you deserve to be punished for it. Instead of punishing you though, he forgives you and doesn't punish you at all. **How would you feel about that?** THAT is mercy—showing kindness and forgiveness to someone who should be punished.



Blessed are those who show mercy. They will be shown mercy.

Matthew 5:7



What if you let your friend borrow your new Pokémon 3DS game? She promises to give it back the next day, but doesn't. You wait a few days and she still doesn't have it. Finally, she says she lost it and can't find it. **How would you feel?** (angry, sad) **Would you expect your friend to replace it?** Jesus told a story about a servant who owed a lot of money to a king. The king said it was time to pay him back. If he couldn't, he and his family would have to work for free for the rest of their lives. The servant cried and begged for more time to pay back all the money. The king felt sorry for him and decided to show mercy. So, the king told the servant he didn't have to pay any of the money back and let him go. **How was the servant shown mercy?**



Jesus says that we are blessed when we show mercy because our reward is having mercy shown to us. **Now imagine you borrowed your friend's new Pokémon 3DS game and accidentally lost it. How would you feel? Would you be glad if your friend forgave you and let it go?** We need mercy. That is why we should give mercy. **What happens if we refuse to show mercy?** Jesus continued his story saying the servant went out after he left the king and found a man who owed him money. He demanded to be paid back immediately. When the man could not, the servant had him put in jail. When the king found out what happened, he asked the servant, *"Shouldn't you have mercy on him like I had on you?"* So the king took back his mercy and put the servant in jail. **We all want to be shown mercy, but why is it sometimes hard for us to show mercy?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, at times we all do things our way instead of your way. We all sin and need your mercy. When others sin against us, help us remember they need our mercy and forgiveness, just like we need your mercy and forgiveness. Help us be merciful and forgiving like you. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Fortunate Are the Holy

Matthew 5:8, Proverbs 4:23, James 1:27, Deuteronomy 6:4-6, Psalm 139:23-24, 51: 2,10



When you are hot and thirsty, would you drink the following? (yes or no?)

unopened bottled water (yes)

lake water (no)

filtered water from your refrigerator (yes)

water from a puddle on the ground (no)

Why should you not drink water from a lake or puddle? (it is dirty and contains things that can make us sick)



Blessed are those whose hearts are pure. They will see God.

Matthew 5:8



What does pure mean? (clean, not dirty, uncontaminated) Only pure, clean water is safe and good to drink. We protect our bodies by drinking pure water. In the same way, we have to guard our heart to keep it pure and clean. James, the brother of Jesus tells us, *“Keep yourselves from being polluted by the world.”* **Do these attitudes create a pure heart or polluted heart?**

selfish
(polluted)

honest
(pure)

greedy
(polluted)

forgiving
(pure)

lying
(polluted)

peaceful
(pure)

Lying or arguing to get what we want first and keeping it all to ourselves leads to a polluted heart. Jesus teaches us how to have a pure heart. Sharing what we have, giving things away to others who need it, letting others go first, and getting along with everyone leads us to God’s wonderful kingdom.



In Psalm 51:2 David wants a pure heart so he can be close to God. David asks God to, *“Wash away all the evil things I’ve done. Make me pure from my sin.”* When we believe, trust, and love Jesus, he washes us clean and gives us a pure heart. When loving God becomes the most important thing to us, there is no longer room in our hearts for anything polluted. Moses told his people, *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your strength. The commandments I give you today must be in your hearts.”* Deuteronomy 6:4-6 When we love our Heavenly Father with our whole heart we will have a pure heart. **In what ways can we love God with our whole heart?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, we ask you to check our hearts as we pray the Psalms. “God, see what is in my heart. Know what is there. Put me to the test. Know what I’m thinking. See if there’s anything in my life you don’t like. Help me live in the way that is always right. Create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you.” Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Fortunate Are the Peacemakers

Matthew 5:9, 1 Timothy 2:5-6



Do you know what a peacemaker is? (Someone who makes peace between two people.) When two people get into a fight, a peacemaker can help them stop fighting and help them be friends again. **Have you ever gotten into an argument with one of your friends, a brother or sister, or maybe even your parents?** It happens to all of us. None of us like it. **How do we make up and get to be friends with that person again?** (We could go to them and say we're sorry.) **But what if the other person started the argument? Could you still be the one to go and talk to them first and try to be friends with them again? Even before they told you that they were sorry?** Saying "I'm sorry" first, even when you didn't start the argument is hard to do, but that's what Jesus wants us to do.



Blessed are those who make peace. They will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:9



God blesses those who make peace. **How do we make peace?** Making peace means giving up what we want to make things better with someone else. It means deciding not to argue anymore. We do that by remembering that person is more important to us than what we are arguing about. **What is more important—getting what we want from our friend or getting along with our friend? Why?** Jesus chose "getting along". Jesus is our peacemaker. People ignored God and were not listening to God. They did things their way instead of God's way. God could have punished them, but instead He made peace. Even though God was right and people were wrong, God took the first step by sending Jesus to make peace between himself and all people. The Bible says that Jesus died on the cross for all our sin. He died for all the things we do our own way instead of God's way. If we believe in Jesus, we can have peace with God.



God wants to be at peace with everyone. That is why he sent his son, Jesus. When we ask God to forgive our sins and do our best to follow Jesus and trust him, we will be at peace with God. Paul told us in *1 Timothy 2:5-6*, *"There is only one God. And there is only one go-between for God and human beings. He is the man Christ Jesus. He gave himself to pay for the sins of all people."* Only Jesus can bring peace between God and people. **Have you believed in Jesus yet? Have you decided to follow him and trust him with your life? Are you ready to become a child of God and have true peace?** If you want to follow Jesus for the first time or renew your love for Him, pray with me.

PRAY

Jesus, I have done things my way instead of God's way. I'm sorry and ask you to forgive me. I believe you died for me on the cross so that I can have peace with God and be his child. Please come into my life and make me like you. I trust you to be my forever friend. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Fortunate Are the Mistreated

Matthew 5:10, 26:33-35, 1 Peter 1:3-7, 3:17



Gabriella was at the arcade with her friends. They took turns playing “Whack-a-mole”. Gabriella stepped up to take her turn as her friends watched. At the end of the game, the points showed she won ten tickets. But the machine started spitting out more than that. Before she knew it, there were 20, 30, 50, 100, 500 tickets and it kept on going. “This thing must be broken!” Gabriella called out. Her friends started grabbing up the tickets as fast as they were coming out. Gabriella looked around for a worker but didn’t see one. Her friends were thrilled that the machine continued to spit out hundreds more tickets. Finally the machine stopped after it emptied ALL its tickets. “This is about 5000 tickets! We could each get something off the top shelf,” Gabriella’s friends decided. As Gabriella followed her friends to the prize area, she felt the Holy Spirit speaking to her heart. She knew redeeming all the tickets was not the right thing to do. Gabriella also knew that if she told the truth to the worker behind the counter, her friends might be really mad at her. Gabriella had a decision to make.



***Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right.
The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.***



Matthew 5:10



What scares you about doing the right thing? Sometimes doing the right thing takes courage. Jesus wants those of us who belong to him to be brave. Peter, one of Jesus’ closest friends, knew how difficult it was to do the right thing. He promised Jesus he would be a true friend no matter what happened. Peter said, “*All the others may turn away because of you. But I never will. I will never say I don’t know you.*” Matthew 26:33, 35. But after Jesus was arrested, Peter became afraid. Three different people asked him if he was a follower of Jesus. Peter lied and said he did not know Jesus. **Have you been like Peter, too scared to do the right thing? Have you ever done the right thing and suffered because of it?**



Peter’s courage grew. Later, he was able to stand with Jesus even when he had to suffer. Peter knew many other Christians who were suffering too because they believed in Jesus and obeyed God. He wrote a letter to cheer them on, reminding them what Jesus promised. “*Suppose you suffer for doing what is right. Then you will be blessed.*” 1 Peter 3:17 We are blessed when we remain true to our faith. Our blessing is the brand-new life Jesus gives us. He wants to share everything he has in heaven with us! Peter wrote, “*Because you know this, you have great joy. You have joy even though you may have had to suffer for a little while. You may have had to suffer sadness in all kinds of trouble. Your troubles have come in order to prove that your faith is real.*” 1 Peter 1:6-7 When we choose to stand with Jesus and do the right thing, we show our faith is real. **How do you find courage to do the right thing, even when you might suffer because of it?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, give us the courage to stand with Jesus and stay strong in our faith. Remind us how good it feels to live in a way that pleases you Lord, even when others treat us badly because of our love for you. Amen.