



Thank you for your interest in Walk This Way—a ten-week study of the Beatitudes.

Please be aware that this study has also been published in book form by NavPress (1999). We have the book available and it can be purchased at the following rates:

- 1-5 copies @ \$15 per book
- 6-10 copies @ \$13 per book
- 11-20 copies @ \$11 per book
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The pages which follow include:

- An overview of this series (5 pages)
- A sample sermon/class outline (6 pages)
- A sample handout (4 pages)

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Walk This Way:

An Instruction Manual for Following Jesus

“Walk This Way” is a ten-week study of the Beatitudes. The basic premise of this series is that you and I need an instruction manual on discipleship. The Beatitudes, spoken by Jesus to his first disciples, come closer to being that than anything I know. My purpose in this series is to explore what the Beatitudes teach us about following Jesus.

These lessons are *not* the instruction manual—they simply point you toward it. Think of them as a frame, rather than the picture . . . the wrapping, not the gift. It’s the Beatitudes themselves that are of value. This series is a setting (whether of gold or some baser metal—you must judge), designed to show off the Beatitudes in all their luster and loveliness.

Who Should Hear These Lessons?

I have worked hard to make these lessons accessible to a wide range of listeners. The sermons have been heard and reviewed by seminary professors, ministers, church members, students, and even my 14-year old daughter. Although new Christians have always been in mind as I developed these lessons, older Christians (who often need a reminder of fundamentals) will benefit as well.

There are three qualifications your audience needs to make good use of this series.

First, they must be serious about discipleship—or at least curious. Those who are content with a casual Christianity, who want nothing more than to be left alone, will not find much comfort here.

Second, they need a conviction that God would not leave us without directions for becoming disciples. As we will see in the first lesson, there are many important things in our lives for which we have no manual—but discipleship is *too important* to lack directions. There must be an instruction manual somewhere. Your hearers may not have found it yet, but to get much from these lessons, they must believe it exists.

The third qualification is an openness to the notion that it’s not *understanding* the instructions which is difficult, but putting them into consistent *practice*. Your hearers will not be done with the Beatitudes when you finish this series—or, rather, the Beatitudes will not be done with them. That’s when the real work begins—the work of translating what they know into how they live.

Bibliography

- Barclay, William. *The Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer for Everyman*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers. 1975. Barclay, as always, provides helpful material for preachers and teachers. His word studies and background sketches are excellent.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. *The Sermon on the Mount*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1995. The definitive scholarly work on the Beatitudes. This monumental effort sets the Beatitudes into a history of interpretation and interacts easily with commentators from the past. Betz is not the easiest writer to read, but there are rich rewards for your efforts.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: The MacMillan Company. 1959. Most people are not aware that the second half of this famous book is a commentary on the Beatitudes. Bonhoeffer has wonderful things to say about following Jesus—and the implications of the Beatitudes for that endeavor.
- Guelich, Robert A. *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding*. Waco, TX: Word Books. 1982. Another scholarly work. Good information, although I found Betz better (just a little play on words there).
- Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*. (Vol 1). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1976. This is *the* book to have on the Beatitudes. Lloyd-Jones (like many English writers of his day) is wordy. But, if you can cut through all the verbiage, there are profound insights into the Beatitudes. This book covers the entire Sermon on the Mount, but there are 8-10 good chapters on the Beatitudes.
- Shelly, Rubel. *The Beatitudes: Jesus' Formula for Happiness*. Nashville, TN: 20th Century Christian. 1982. This small volume has many good insights. Shelly is always a tight thinker and you will enjoy both the careful thinking about text and how text applies to life.
- Stott, John R. W. *Christian Counter-Culture: The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*. In *The Bible Speaks Today Series*, J. A. Motyer and John R. W. Stott (eds.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 1978. This is another *must-have* book on the Beatitudes. Stott is always worth reading and you will not be disappointed by his comments on the Beatitudes.

Handouts and Outlines

I have included two forms of support for your preaching (or teaching) in this packet.

Handouts

The first is a weekly handout for your congregation. These handouts include:

- A summary of the main point of the sermon on the first page of the Handout. By scanning this page as they prepare for worship, your audience can prime themselves for the message you are about to bring. Just remember that if you change the thrust of the lesson on any particular week, you should make appropriate changes to the handout as well.
- A daily Bible study that will guide your members through a more careful study of the themes and ideas you cover on Sunday. As they are currently formatted, the studies *follow* your preaching—i.e., what you preach on Sunday will prepare your listeners for what they will think about during the week. Some preachers prefer to turn things around—to use the studies as preparation for what their members will hear on Sunday. Just shuffle the handout pages to serve your purposes.
- A small group study—again, hitting at the same ideas you are covering in the sermon and study guide. These small group studies can be used in Sunday or Wednesday night classes, but were designed for small groups meeting in homes. A weekly meeting with your small group leaders to go over the studies will repay you richly over time.

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Make copies of these handouts for your Sunday morning audience. This will provide your members with a preview of what you will be preaching and a tool for study and discussion during the rest of the week. Many churches mail these handouts to absentees to help traveling members keep up with the study.

Sermon Outlines

Then there are the sermon outlines themselves. Each outline is 6 pages in length—a lot of information! I tend, however, to speak quickly and for about 30 minutes. You may want to use these outlines verbatim, modify them to your own style and situation, or throw them out entirely. I hope they can at least serve as a starting point for your own preparation.

Below, I have summarized the main point of each outline and listed the corresponding handout.

Sermon Summaries

Sermon Title	Text	Page #s Outline	Page #s Handout
1. The Illustrated Disciple	Mt 5:1-2	1-6	1-4
The group of sayings we know collectively as the Beatitudes are Jesus' first words to his assembled followers. They are his instruction manual for disciples. With these eight basic directions, Jesus charts the course which all of his followers must take.			
2. Father...Can you Spare a Dime?	Mt 5:3	7-12	5-8
Jesus begins his instructions for disciples by pronouncing a blessing on the poor in spirit. "Open your eyes," says Jesus. "See yourself as you are. See yourself from a God's-eye perspective. Know that you are a pauper, a beggar, a spiritual 'have-not' in the Kingdom." Discipleship begins only when we reach the end of ourselves.			
3. Come Mourn with Us	Mt 5:4	13-18	9-12
There comes a time in the life of every disciple when knowing you're a sinner is not enough...God asks you to <i>feel</i> your sin. Mourning is bitter tears, a broken heart, a burning shame, a cutting guilt. It is the realization that failure and sin and guilt can only be addressed by treating them with the seriousness they deserve. It is—in a word—one of the greatest needs among God's people today.			
4. The Mighty Meek	Mt 5:5	19-24	13-16
We do not lose our strength and vigor and vitality when we become meek. We don't suddenly become anemic and timid. We simply become disciples. Our will is brought under his control. We are tamed to the purposes of God. We learn to say, "It's not what I want that is important. What <i>you</i> want is what matters most to me. Your will be done."			

- 5. Hungering for God** **Mt 5:6** **25-30** **17-20**
 When Jesus blesses hungering and thirsting for righteousness, he speaks of a level of Christian living where gritting is transformed into panting, where the self control can become a fire in the belly, where a hunger for the things of God grows into a consuming appetite.
- 6. Have Mercy** **Mt 5:7** **31-36** **21-24**
 According to Jesus, mercy is not something to be tacked on to the end of religious devotions. Mercy is not an option that godly people get around to when other work is done. Mercy is at the core of discipleship for Jesus. Is mercy at the core for us?
- 7. The Real Thing** **Mt 5:8** **37-42** **25-28**
 The ‘pure in heart’ are those who put away falsehood and pretense, who rid themselves of ulterior motives and divided interests, who dedicate themselves to living sincere and open lives. Jesus comments here, not on our morality and certainly not on our rituals, but on our sincerity. Are we, on the inside, what we appear to be on the outside? Are our motives pure? When people look at us, is what they see what they really get?
- 8. Give Peace a Chance** **Mt 5:9** **43-48** **29-32**
 Peacemaking is a characteristic we demonstrate when relationships are broken, when alienation threatens, when we must choose either to reject or reconcile with someone we love. Peacemaking is a matter of fighting for relationships rather than abandoning them.
- 9. To Hell for a Heavenly Cause** **Mt 5:10-12** **49-54** **33-36**
 Serious commitment to Christ cuts not just between believers and unbelievers—the church and the world—but between those who hunger to be like Christ and those for whom casual Christianity is enough. The Beatitudes are *threatening* to church members who would rather leave well-enough alone. Unfortunately, many prefer to persecute than change.
- 10. Promises, Promises** **Mt 5:3-10** **55-60** **37-40**
 Only the promises attached to the Beatitudes can persuade us to put these characteristics into action. They are God’s inducement to risk the unknown. In the end, only the promises can keep us from turning back to the familiar and, instead, impel us headlong into a brave new world.

The Illustrated Disciple

Move One: A Lesson from Golf [Note to preacher: I bought some wiffle golf balls and actually hit a couple into the audience as I talked through this first page. Keeps interest up!]

I have deliberately avoided taking up the game of golf. When people ask me about it, I tell them had I wanted to play golf, I would have become a doctor.

Recently, however (as cruel fate would have it), my sons have developed an unhealthy fondness for the game. And I—showing just how far a father will stoop for the love of his children—have taken them to driving ranges, practice greens and even the occasional golf course. In the strange syllogism of life, I no longer have the luxury of remaining indifferent to the ‘game.’ I love my sons. My sons love golf. Ergo, I must develop some understanding, even some *appreciation*, of that “good walk spoiled.”

Golf is a hideously complicated endeavor, designed by sadists who took great pleasure in tormenting people and charging them unbelievable amounts of money for “scream fees.” (“Oh, green fees!”) There are narrow fairways, bordered by trees with the gravitational pull of a black hole. There are saucer-sized greens, surrounded by oceans of water and deserts of sand. The first shot of each hole is taken from a “Tee”—from which, no doubt, the phrase “Teed Off” derived as an expression of exasperation and frustration.

I am told that anyone can learn to play the game of golf. But apart from those few accidents of nature who take to the game quite easily, most students of golf fall into one of two categories:

1. Rank novices who have never played before and have much to learn.
2. Those who have played long but poorly—and have much to unlearn.

Where do you start if you want to learn to play golf well? Where do you begin?

1. There is so much you need to know.
2. And there are so many people out there willing to give you instructions on playing the game.
3. What are the basics? What are the ABCs?

And what if you’re not starting . . . you’re starting over!

1. After years of playing the game, you’ve grown tired of playing poorly.
2. You’ve finally discovered that all the things you thought were so important to playing golf—buying the expensive clubs, wearing the right cloths, learning to drive a golf cart—don’t really matter that much.
3. How do you unlearn all your bad golf habits? How do you get in touch once again with the fundamentals of golf?

Move Two: Golf or Discipleship?

You may have guessed by now I'm not really talking about golf. I'm talking about being a Christian . . . a follower of Jesus Christ . . . someone who wants to live as Jesus did.

Like golf, discipleship is a hideously complicated endeavor. So much to learn.

1. There's **Bible** of course. Over 1200 pages in my edition. Prophets major and minor. Poetry and history and law. 2000 years of history to get your mind around.
2. There's **church**. Which one? What teachings and practices? How should you worship? What ministries should you support? Can you trust the leaders of the church?
3. There's **life-style**. How long can a disciple's hair be? How short her skirt? What about drinking, dancing and smoking? Can a Christian go to movies or wear make up or serve in the Army?
4. There's **relationship**. How do you really love people? How can you serve them? What does it mean to consider them better? How many times do I have to forgive you?

Discipleship touches so many parts of our lives. It gets complicated. It gets overwhelming.

I am told that anyone can learn to be a disciple. But apart from those few accidents of nature who apparently take to discipleship quite easily, most students of Jesus fall into one of two categories:

1. Rank novices who have never followed before and have much to learn.
2. Those who have followed long but poorly—and have much to unlearn.

Where do you start if you want to learn to be a disciple? Where do you begin?

4. There is so much you need to know.
5. And there are so many people out there willing to give you instructions on what it really means to follow Jesus.
6. What are the basics? What are the ABCs?

And what if you're not starting . . . you're starting over!

4. After years of playing religion, you've grown tired of playing poorly.
5. You've finally discovered that all the things you thought were so important to following Jesus—your stance on eschatology, Sunday night church attendance, being able to name the 12 tribes of Israel—weren't all that important after all.
6. How do you unlearn all your bad faith habits? How do you get in touch once again with the fundamentals of being a disciple?

Move Three: Let's Start at the Very Beginning (Turn to Matthew 5:1-2)

Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. . .

Matthew 5:1-2

If you close your eyes, you can imagine this scene in Matthew.

1. We haven't learned much about the disciples up to this point.
 - We've read some things about Jesus' birth and childhood and met John the Baptist.
 - We've learned that Jesus was baptized and tempted.
 - But all we know of the disciples is that Jesus has been wandering around Galilee, issuing the invitation, "Follow me."
2. Now the twelve of them gather on a mountainside to hear him speak.
 - Peter. John and James. Thomas. Andrew. Twelve of them.
 - They came from all walks of life. They brought all kinds of baggage.

And they didn't have any more clue than the rest of us.

1. These were fishermen, not theologians.
2. They were sincere, earnest Jews who went to the Synagogue on Sabbath and tried to make it to Jerusalem for the Passover.
3. But they hadn't been to seminary. They hadn't poured over biblical texts preparing themselves to be followers of the Messiah.
4. These were ordinary men with more expertise in boats and tax-tables than in the ways of God.

If you think about it, Peter had to start somewhere. John had to learn the basics somehow.

- The apostles weren't popped out of a mold—ready made and fully formed.
- Like us, they had to learn the ABC's of following Jesus.
- They needed some "first words" from Jesus in order to begin the process of discipleship.

Move Four: Jesus, the Apostles, and First Words

In Matthew's account, *the Beatitudes* are the first words Jesus addresses to his followers after the initial invitation.

1. "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," he has just told Peter and Andrew, James and John, and the others.
2. The next words we hear Jesus say to his followers are the Beatitudes.
3. These are the words which will "baptize" these spiritual novices and initiate them into Christ's inner circle.
4. They are defining words, christening words, formative words.

We call them the Beatitudes.

But Jesus would have called them a good place for disciples to begin.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus could have used his first words to introduce himself.

Hello. My name is Jesus. I'm the Son of God, the Alpha and the Omega, the bright and morning star. You may have read about me in Moses and the prophets.

He might have started by giving them his mission statement—"I have come to seek and to save the lost"—or letting them know about their mission: "You are to be my witnesses . . ."

Instead, Jesus talks to his disciples about . . . them.

1. He describes the nature of those who would follow him.
2. He lays out before them the kind of people he wants them to become.
3. He defines for them what it means to be his disciple.

And that is interesting.

- Because if these words were intended to be foundational for his first disciples, perhaps they should be foundational for us as well.
- What we have in the Beatitudes are the ABC's of being a disciple of Jesus that applies to all Christians.
- Eight basic directions for growing up in Christ.
- Eight powerful portraits of life lived as a follower of Jesus.
- The heart of Christianity in a paragraph that can be written on a postcard.

Move Five: Most Free Advice is Worth What You Pay for It.

You can miss the basics of some things and it not really matter much.

1. So what if you don't know how to make a golf ball fade or draw.
2. So what if you putt with your driver.

But there are some things where missing out on the basics is a big deal! And following Jesus is one of them! Yet Christians seem remarkably casual about teaching and learning the basics of discipleship.

1. Frequently, we are thrown into discipleship with little or no instruction about how to follow Jesus—the '*sink or swim*' school of disciple-making.
2. When we *do* receive instruction, it is often vague and unthinking—the '*ignorance is bliss*' method for disciple-making.
3. At other times, we are subjected to just the opposite. We are given instructions that are so detailed and complicated, we find ourselves tied in knots—the '*paralysis of analysis*' approach to disciple making.
4. And worst of all, much of the advice given to us is just plain wrong.

Bad advice about discipleship has never been in short supply.

1. There were people in the first century who insisted, "You must be circumcised and obey the law of Moses to be a true disciple."
 - Paul called this a "perversion of the gospel."
 - You don't become a disciple by cutting off parts of your anatomy and refusing to eat ham. Bad advice.
2. In second century Asia Minor, a fellow by the name of Montanus said, "You cannot marry . . . and you must take a vow of poverty, fast to the point of starvation, and seek martyrdom at every opportunity to be a real disciple of Jesus."
 - Amazingly, he won enough followers to split churches throughout the Mediterranean world for the next 300 years.
 - But he was wrong. Ascetics don't have a corner on the salvation market. He was handing out bad instructions about discipleship.
3. Bad advice about discipleship is still abundant today.
 - There are people who will insist that discipleship depends on what position you hold on the millennium or whether you speak in tongues or with which political party you affiliate.
 - They'll tell you the way to discipleship is secret or obscure or esoteric.
 - They will make you jump through hoops and walk on coals and embark on quests for the Holy Grail.
 - They will try to convince you that discipleship is about conformity or doctrinal correctness or moral perfection.
 - They'll ask you to focus on certain behaviors or positions or rituals.
 - They'll be very sincere . . . very earnest . . . and very wrong.

Move Six: Preview of the next few weeks

Over the next few weeks, we want to listen to Jesus as he talks to us about the fundamentals of discipleship.

1. For those of us who have just begun to follow Jesus, I hope these lessons can serve as a primer—a “how to” guide— for being a disciple. I want you to have a place to start as you grow up in Jesus.
2. And for those who have followed Jesus long but poorly, for those of you who are looking to *start again* in your Christian walk—my prayer is that these lessons can cut through some of the accumulated baggage and layers to convict you all over again about what is central to following Jesus and what is peripheral.

What I would like to ask of you during this series.

1. Memorize the Beatitudes. Lead your family/friends in memorizing the Beatitudes.
2. Make use of the support materials.
 - **Walk This Way**—the book! (\$14)
 - Handouts
 - Pg 1—sermon summary
 - Pgs 2-3—Personal Study Guide
 - Pg 4—small group study
3. Be a mentor—invite someone to coffee to talk over the Beatitudes.
4. Shape your lives by these words.

Prayer:

Dear God,

We don't know how to become the disciples you want us to be. Even the little we know we do not put into practice as we should. Forgive us, Lord.

Long ago, your Son spoke the Beatitudes to initiate his followers. Today, we listen to them afresh, asking you to initiate us into your ways. Help us write these words on our hearts. Give us an understanding of what these words mean. And, most of all Father, grant us the grace to become the kind of people described here. We believe you when you say:

The poor in spirit are blessed.
Those who mourn will find comfort.
The meek will conquer.
The hungry will be filled.
The merciful will find mercy.
The pure in heart will see you.
The peacemakers will be like you.
The persecuted will receive the kingdom.

Thank you for these transforming words. Let them have their way in our lives. Amen.



The Illustrated Disciple



We call them the Beatitudes. Eight succinct sentences. Ninety six simple words. Nothing you have to look up in a dictionary. Nothing that requires a seminary education to understand. These lines are lean, spare, elegant. There is no fat, no surplus here. They flow like poetry. They cut like a knife.

I wonder how much planning Jesus put into these words? We think words came easily to Jesus—spontaneously, effortlessly, always the right word for the right occasion. But he must have imagined this first meeting with his disciples for years. And he must have considered carefully what words they should hear.

Perhaps Jesus rehearsed his words while still in the carpentry shop—“Peter, John, guys . . . I have something to tell you.” Maybe he honed this speech while sharpening his saws and his chisels. But I don’t think these words were made up on the spot. Jesus knew exactly what he wanted to tell these men long before he called them together and had them gather round.

You might expect him to start off by introducing himself.

Hello. My name is Jesus. I’m the Son of God, the Alpha and the Omega, the bright and morning star. You may have read about me in Moses and the prophets.

He might have begun with his mission statement—“I have come to seek and to save the lost”—or their mission statement: “You are to be my witnesses . . .” He could have told them stories about the kingdom or previewed what the next three years would be like.

Instead, Jesus talks not about himself or the mission or the kingdom—he talks about . . . them. His first words describe the characteristics he is looking for in those who would follow him. He lays out before them the kind of people he wants them to become. He defines for them what it means to be his disciple.

And that is interesting. Because if these words were intended to be foundational for his first disciples, perhaps they should be foundational for us as well. If they defined the follower of Jesus in the first century, maybe they should do the same in the twenty-first century.



*Now when he saw the crowds,
he went up on a mountainside
and sat down. His disciples
came to him, and he began to
teach them . . .*

Matthew 5:1-2



**S E R M O N
S Y N O P S I S**

Guide

Wednesday

Review the study you did yesterday. Keeping those passages in mind, think about the following. (It will help if you write out your thoughts.)

- The following list identifies traits which are often found in instructions. How are these characteristics seen in the instructions you read through yesterday?
 1. You can easily write a 'purpose statement' for good instructions. They always add up to 'one thing.'
 2. Instructions are given *by* people who know what they are talking about.
 3. They are given *to* people who have a need to know.
 4. Instructions don't come out of the blue. They are called for by the circumstances in which people find themselves.
 5. Instructions are often given in lists. Sometimes they are sequenced.
- Now think about the Beatitudes. How do the above ideas apply to this group of sayings? Who gives, who receives these instructions? What were the circumstances under which the Beatitudes were given? What was their purpose?

Thursday

Not everything people tell you about being a disciple is helpful . . . or even right! Read the following passages and write out the bad advice you find there. How is that advice countered?

- Acts 15:5
- Romans 3:7-8
- 1 Corinthians 1:12
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-14, 32
- 2 Corinthians 10:10
- Galatians 6:12-13
- Colossians 2:21
- 1 Timothy 4:1-3
- Jude 4

Friday

Each of the Beatitudes begins with the word "Blessed . . ." (In fact, 'Beatitude' comes from the Latin word for "Blessed.") Some writers are convinced this word means "happy." And, in a certain sense, it does. But the "'blessedness' Jesus speaks of here goes deeper than a good giggle or an emotional high. Read the following passages (in which "blessed" appears), and think about what this word means.

- Genesis 1:22; 9:1; 24:35-36; 35:9-12
- Exodus 20:11
- Deuteronomy 7:12-15
- Job 5:17
- Psalm 1:1-3
- Matthew 11:2-6; 13:14-17; 16:15-19
- John 20:29
- Ephesians 1:3

What is the most important lesson you learned this week through your study?

PERSONAL
STUDY 

Talking It Over

Warm-up:

Are you one of those people who actually *reads* instruction manuals or would you rather “figure it out” as you go? (Go around the group and everyone ‘fess up.) Have one or two people share their worst experience as a result of *not* reading the directions.

Whether we like them or not, *God* seems to be fond of instruction manuals. The most famous set of instructions in the Bible has to be the Ten Commandments—found in Exodus 20. Would one of you volunteer to read verses 1-17?

Discussion:

1. First, some general questions for you to answer: Who is speaking here? Who is the intended “audience”? Why is this list given . . . what is its purpose? What are the circumstances? (Read Exodus 19:3-6 for a hint.)
2. *Reading* instructions and *following* them are two different things. The Israelites knew how God wanted them to behave. They just had problems following God’s directions. Match up the following people with the particular commandment they ignored. (You can read the indicated passages if you need a hint.)

Bible Character

Commandment

A man gathering wood (Num 15:32-36)	No other gods
Some of Paul’s enemies (Rom 3:8)	No idols
David (2 Sam 11:1-4)	Don’t lie in God’s name
Ahab (1 Ki 21:1-4)	Remember the Sabbath
Judas (Jn 12:6)	Honor father and mother
Israel’s favorite sin (2 Ki 17:12-17)	No murder
Saul (1 Sam 19:6, 10)	No adultery
Cain’s transgression (Gen 4:8)	No stealing
Solomon (1 Ki 11:4-5)	No false testimony
Absalom (2 Sam 16:21-22)	No coveting

3. Talk about some of the similarities you see between the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes: setting, purpose, speaker, listeners, effect (or lack of it!).
4. Does Matthew want us to think about Jesus as “another Moses,” delivering a new “law” from the mountain? If so, what importance does this give to the Beatitudes?



Cool Down:

Having instructions doesn’t do anyone any good if there is not the commitment to read and follow them. Can you make a commitment, to the other members of the group, to read the Beatitudes each day this week and try to put them into practice?

Application:

1. In your walk with Jesus, have you discovered any ‘instructions’ to guide you? Or are you ‘figuring it out’ as you go? Most of us don’t get much specific direction for being disciples. Have you found that frustrating?
2. Have you ever thought about the Beatitudes as an ‘instruction manual’ for disciples of Jesus? Has this study changed the way you look at the Beatitudes?
3. Like the Israelites, we are *familiar* with God’s directions . . . we just don’t *follow* them very well. Would it make any difference in your life if you began each day with the commitment to live by the Beatitudes?
4. Which of the Beatitudes is your undoing? Which one do you have the hardest time with?

