

Matthew 5:1-12

International Bible Lesson Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further

Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The ***Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further*** below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class; then, they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible lesson. And/Or, consider giving each student the *International Bible Lesson Study Guide*, which includes the Bible verses to be studied before class and other questions.

1. Why do you think Jesus began His beatitudes by saying those who are poor in spirit are happy or blessed? How might this differ from a worldly perspective?

Jesus opens His arms to the poor in spirit, and we need to recognize that we are poor in spirit and have the need to go to Jesus for help. Jesus encourages the poor in spirit to come to Him with the promise that by doing so they will be blessed and happy. The worldly perspective encourages people to think more and more about themselves and what they can do and what they should strive to do to achieve worldly goals.

2. What is the promise in the second beatitude? How might this promise encourage a follower of Jesus?

The second beatitude is “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” When we see ourselves as sinners before God, the God who loves us and His law, the God who is concerned that we have broken His law and who does not want us to suffer the consequences, but sent Jesus to save us, we do mourn that we have abused and rebelled against such a wonderful loving God as we find revealed in the Bible. As a follower of

Jesus, we receive His forgiveness and comfort as we seek to faithfully follow Jesus. Jesus respects us as we mourn for what we have done to God and others through our sins, and Jesus will comfort us and sometimes show us how we can make amends to those we have hurt.

3. What does the world usually think of a meek person? What does Jesus think about a meek person? Why do you think there is a difference in thinking?

The world thinks of a meek person as a weak person. Jesus thinks of a meek person as a strong person who can control himself when provoked and seek to do as Jesus would do in the situation—even pray for those who are hurting them. The world thinks a person should be strong and self-assertive and concerned about their rights and how to retaliate if they are wronged.

4. What is the relationship between hungering and thirsting for righteousness and purity of heart?

Believers can hunger and thirst for righteousness within themselves as measured by their conscience and the Bible's teachings. They can hunger and thirst for righteousness in a world that has gone so terribly wrong. Those who seek purity of heart will always seek to do the will of God as revealed in the Bible and especially in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

5. Why are the followers of Jesus persecuted rather than honored by the world? Why do you think some in the church persecute those in the church who are truly seeking to follow Jesus?

The world hates Jesus. Those of this world see Jesus living in the life of the true follower of Jesus Christ. The followers of Jesus Christ also use the Bible's teachings to tell the worldly to repent and believe the good news of Jesus Christ and turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Some in the church are worldly and want to follow whatever the prevailing culture is promoting. They will try to use Jesus as a tool to achieve their worldly goals, and they do not like being told that they are wrong or not Christian.

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