

tara beth leach

KINGDOM CULTURE

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

facilitator's guide



BEACON HILL PRESS
OF KANSAS CITY

Copyright © 2017 by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City
Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City
PO Box 419527
Kansas City, MO 64141
www.beaconhillbooks.com

Printed in the
United States of America

All rights reserved. Permission to print and use for local church ministry.

Cover Design: J.R. Caines
Interior Design: Sharon Page

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked (NRSV) are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This Bible study was inspired and influenced by Scot McKnight's *The Story of God Bible Commentary: Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013). Referenced with permission of the author.

CONTENTS

Welcome	4
How to Use This Facilitator's Guide	6
Session 1: The Sermon on the Mount {Matthew 5:1–2; 7:24—8:1}	7
Session 2: The Beatitudes {Matthew 5:3–12}	9
Session 3: Salt and Light {Matthew 5:13–16}	11
Session 4: Jesus Is the Fulfillment of the Law {Matthew 5:17–32}	13
Session 5: Love Your Enemies {Matthew 5:33–48}	15
Session 6: Prayer and Fasting {Matthew 6:1–18}	17
Session 7: Judgment and Discernment {Matthew 6:19—7:12}	19
Session 8: Discipleship and the Wise & Foolish Builders {Matthew 7:13–27}	21

WELCOME

We are so excited that you and your small group have elected to study the Sermon on the Mount in the *Kingdom Culture* video series with Tara Beth Leach. Tara Beth says in the first video that the Sermon on the Mount distills into a portrait for us what life in the kingdom of God is supposed to look like. And we use this portrait to look forward to the day when we will see the kingdom of God in its fullness, but we also use it to bring the kingdom of God among us on earth today. That passion for the kingdom of God is what this study aims to grow in the lives of your group members.

Below are some helpful suggestions to get you started.

Laying the Groundwork

Whether the group going through the study has met together for years or is newly formed, we recommend setting aside a time to gather and go over goals and expectations. In order for this study to be most beneficial, group members must:

- Read the corresponding Bible passages and complete the workbook's content for the week, *prior* to each meeting.
- Attend each group meeting faithfully and consistently.
- Be willing to enter into conversation and discussion about what they have engaged in the workbook or learned from Tara Beth in the videos.
- Commit to listening for the urging of the Spirit to show them how they can grow and transform into disciples who usher in the culture of the kingdom of God on earth.

Before Each Meeting

This study is designed to cover one video each week. During Session 1, distribute the workbooks to each group member so they all have time to complete the pages for Session 2 before you meet again. (Note: For the first video, there are no workbook pages to complete. There are two pages for note-taking during the Session 1 video.) Encourage your group members to engage with the workbook as much as possible in order to help foster insightful and meaningful conversations during your gatherings. The videos will make the most sense to participants if they work to complete the corresponding session's pages before viewing the video, but they are not expected to be able to answer all the questions independent of the video viewing. The videos will help them fill in some of the gaps in their workbook pages. **Make sure your group members know that the workbook sessions were designed to be used before, during, and after viewing the videos.**

During Each Meeting

Each group has its own unique personality, so pay attention to what strikes a chord with your participants and be willing to adjust as needed. We do encourage each group to incorporate four elements into their times together, however they best fit your dynamics:

- **Social.** Set aside time for group members to share what is going on in their lives. The better people know each other and feel comfortable around each other, the easier it will be for everyone to discuss the material being studied.
- **Curriculum.** Watch the video lesson.
- **Dialogue.** Discuss the questions about the material.
- **Prayer.** Be sure to allow time for group members to share their praises or prayer requests.

After Each Meeting

After each lesson, group members are encouraged to do the following in the time leading up to your next meeting:

- Read the Bible passages and complete the corresponding workbook pages for the next session.
- Pray for the requests and offer thanks for the praises mentioned.

HOW TO USE THIS FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

This group study has eight different sessions that correspond to the videos in the *Kingdom Culture* Bible study. These sessions are designed to help facilitate meaningful discussion about the content of each video. Below is a brief description of the components you will encounter each session in this facilitator's guide.

Key Points

Summarizes the main ideas from the video. If group members have completed the appropriate workbook pages before viewing the video, the video will make more sense and will help them fill in some of the holes remaining in their workbooks.

Scriptures

The scriptures listed are those referenced in the video, in the order they are mentioned.

Video

Indicates which video session the facilitator will play for the group.

Discussion Questions

The discussion questions are often written in such a way that asks group members to respond to or expand on something Tara Beth has said in the video. They may also come from content in the workbook, especially from the "Day 4: Live the Story" sections.

Closing/Prayer

This section will offer a suggestion for the facilitator on how to close the meeting and an optional prayer of consecration to pray aloud over the group. Feel free to adapt the prayer to fit your group's dynamics more appropriately or to include the specific requests offered during the meeting.

THE BEATITUDES

Matthew 5:3–12

Key Points

- The Sermon on the Mount is bookended by Jesus ascending the mountain to teach and descending the mountain when he is finished. It calls to mind for Jesus’s listeners a picture of Moses ascending Mt. Sinai to receive the law from God and coming back down again to teach the law to his people, the Israelites.
- Today we tend to use the word *blessed* as a synonym for *fortunate*, but that isn’t the way Jesus means it when he uses it in the Beatitudes.
- Jesus’s followers are used to hearing lists of people—just not in the way Jesus lists them.
- Only the God of Israel can confer blessings.
- The blessed are linked to the future. They are blessed now—in their present condition—for a future, eternal reward.
- These blessings are not and cannot be earned by human effort or piety.
- There are four types of blessings in the Beatitudes: 1) the humility of the poor; 2) those who pursue justice; 3) those who create peace; 4) those who are persecuted for following God.

Scriptures

Matthew 4:23–25

Matthew 5:3–12

Luke 1:46–48

Luke 2:36–38

Video

Session 2 // The Beatitudes

Discussion Questions

- If the Sermon on the Mount “emerges from the story of Israel,” as Tara Beth asserts, how does that idea apply to the Beatitudes? Why might these descendants of the Israelites need to hear the Beatitudes? (Hint: oppression by the Roman government; perversion of the law of Moses by the Pharisees, etc.)
- Put the Beatitudes in modern-day language. What specific people groups might Jesus include in this list today?

- What are some words we can use instead of *blessed* when talking about the things in our lives that are going well?
- How does Tara Beth’s distinction between the present condition of being blessed and the future reward change how you see the Beatitudes? How does this idea change your view of what it means to be blessed?
- Merriam-Webster defines *bless* as follows: “to consecrate by religious rite or word; to praise or glorify.” How does this definition change your perspective of the word *bless* or *blessing*?
- What does it mean for Abraham—the Syrian refugee whose story Tara Beth tells near the end of the video—to be blessed?
- If anyone went on a prayer walk this week like the workbook suggested on Day 4 of Session 2, please share about your experience.

Closing/Prayer

Close your group meeting by encouraging participants to work through the workbook pages for Session 3: Salt and Light in preparation for your next meeting. If you wish, pray this prayer of consecration over your group:

Lord, thank you for the opportunity to gather together and study your Word. As we go about our routines this week, remind us that blessings and happiness, or fortune, are not synonyms. Enlarge our hearts and our vision so that we would see the blessed and the oppressed in the world around us and be good to them. Your kingdom come, and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.