

## Session 3: Matthew 5:5

### SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

**Main Idea:** With Jesus as our example, we can see that meekness is not a weakness, but a controlled strength rooted in our trust and delight in God.

**Head Change:** To know that meekness is not passive, but actively waiting on God and trusting in his strength.

**Heart Change:** To feel confident that we can practice meekness because God is trustworthy.

**Life Change:** To mimic the meekness of Jesus by never returning evil for evil or violence for violence.

### OPEN

**When you think of the word “meekness,” what comes to mind? What people, past or present, exemplify what it means to be meek?**

The virtue of meekness has fallen on hard times. Not only is it widely misunderstood, but even when rightly defined our culture doesn’t see meekness as something worth practicing. We prefer flamboyant displays of power and bravado to humility and quiet strength.

But, in the Beatitudes, Jesus shows us how our logic is upside-down, the inverse of his kingdom. In this session, Matt will explore how meekness is an essential quality for Christians and at the heart of what it means to be a faithful disciple of Jesus.

## **READ**

Read Matthew 5:1–12. Keep working to memorize this passage with your small group.

## **WATCH**

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Matt’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

**What phrase does Matt use to define meekness?**

**What four things does Matt list that help us understand meekness?**

**How does the exercise of meekness break the cycle of evil and violence?**

Show Session 3: *Matthew 5:5* (10 minutes).

## DISCUSS

Matthew 5:5 is an iconic passage, but the word “meek” can be a source of confusion for us. Does it mean passive? Risk-averse? To us, it may sound like Jesus is calling us to be pushovers. **Would you want to be described as meek? Why, or why not?**

*[Note: For further study on the phrase, “they will inherit the earth” in verse 5, see **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this session.]*

Moses and Jesus are both described as being meek, but neither was weak or passive. They were powerful leaders who were serious about justice and righteousness. In some moments, they were even “fierce,” as Matt suggested. **Why do we sometimes consider meekness to be incompatible with leadership?**

**Do you think it would be beneficial for our church, business, and political leaders to be meek? In what ways would meek leadership be different from the kind of leadership we often see today?**

When Jesus was being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter attacked one of the High Priest’s servants. In this scene, Peter is portrayed as the antithesis of Jesus and his meekness. Read John 18:1–11. **What would you do in this situation? Would you behave more like Peter or Jesus?**

**How do Peter’s actions show the absence of meekness (strength under control)? How do Jesus’s actions show us meekness in action?**

In the video, Matt pointed us to Psalm 37, identifying four things that will help us understand and practice meekness.

Read Psalm 37:1–11.

*[Note: For a guide on praying through Psalm 37 see **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this session.]*

To exercise meekness, we must first “trust God and do good” (v. 3). Of course, trusting God isn’t always easy and it often is easier to choose our own path instead of God’s. **Why do you think it can be so difficult to trust God when**

**we are under pressure? What would it look like for you to trust God with your current struggles?**

When we trust God, we will often be required to wait on his timing. Even when everything in us wants to react, waiting on God will require us to be patient and, sometimes, inactive. **How good are you at waiting on God before trying to fix your problems? Before making a consequential decision? What can make it difficult for you to wait?**

Again, meekness is not a character defect, a weakness, or extreme passivity. Meekness is, as Matt defined it, “strength under control.” Being meek often involves waiting but requires us to be ready and willing to act when God calls. **What’s an example of a time when you failed to wait on God before acting or making a significant decision?**

**When have you waited on God’s timing, acting only after God called on you to do so? How was the outcome different than if you had acted when you wanted?**

Matt called meekness the most powerful response to evil and injustice. Meekness breaks the cycle of evil and violence by refusing to participate in it. This doesn’t only apply to egregious examples of violence and injustice but to our office arguments, trouble in our relationships, social media interactions—any time we are in conflict with someone else. **How could meekness diffuse an argument? What are some specific examples and opportunities (at work, in a church small group, with a friend) where you can practice meekness?**

## **LAST WORD**

Meekness is not weakness. Rather, it is strength under control—the practice of holy restraint. Jesus is our perfect example of meekness, using his strength to serve others and restraining his power according to the will of the Father. Now, “all authority in heaven and earth” belongs to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is living proof that the meek will inherit the earth.

So, as you go about your normal, day-to-day life, strive to imitate the meekness of Jesus, whose strength was displayed most vividly in the act of laying his life down for his friends.

## GO DEEPER

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where the following segment could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use this section as a short devotional to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider reading this section to deepen your study of the Beatitudes.

### 1. *The Meek Will Inherit the Earth*

From beginning to end, the Bible is clear that God's people are meant to rule the earth (Genesis 1:26; Revelation 5:10). We are meant to exercise God-given authority and leadership in the world. But the way we rule is meant to mimic the way God rules. **What words describe God's way of ruling?**

Since sin corrupted all of creation, humankind has proven itself incapable of faithfully exercising the authority God entrusted us with. Now, only a certain kind of people—the meek, the disciples of Jesus—will receive God's blessing to inherit, or rule, the earth.

Read Matthew 20:25–28. **When you examine the way Jesus leads—the way he rules—what stands out to you?**

In this passage, Jesus gives his followers a vision of a different kind of rule. Whereas the world's vision of ruling is unjust, power-hungry, and sometimes tyrannical, Jesus commands us to rule differently. **In what ways is Jesus's vision of ruling different from how our culture views it? How do meekness and humility foster the servant leadership that Jesus endorses and models for us?**

According to Jesus's words in Matthew 5:5, one of the central character traits that he works into us in this life is meekness. May we be those who receive Jesus's pronouncement of blessing, and who follow the example he set for us in his life and ministry. And in doing so, may we prove ourselves ready to inherit the earth. **If inheriting the earth means that one day you will exercise rule over the earth alongside Jesus, what can you be doing now**

to “practice” the authority that Jesus will one day grant you?

## 2. *Praying Psalm 37*

In this session, Matt made a connection between Matthew 5:5 and Psalm 37 and suggested that Jesus may have been referencing David’s Psalm in this Beatitude. When we read through Psalm 37, we get a clear picture of what it looks like to practice meekness.

Read Psalm 37:1–11. **What characteristics does this Psalm encourage us to cultivate?**

In verse 3, David commands us to trust in the Lord do what is right and maintain our integrity. **In what areas of your life do you need help trusting God? When can it be difficult to maintain your integrity?**

In verse 7, we are encouraged to be patient—silent before the Lord, waiting expectantly for him. **In what situations do you find it most difficult to be quiet before God? To what extent do you practice the discipline of silence?**

In verse 8, David instructs us to refrain from anger. **Is there any anger in you that God is calling you to refrain from? Any rage that he’s calling you to give up?**

In verse 11, David tells us what results from our meekness—we “inherit the land.” **How could you turn this verse into a prayer of hope?**

Psalm 37 is a song, a prayer, commanding us to be more trusting, more patient, more self-controlled, and more hopeful. When we pray this Psalm, God will develop these qualities in us and give us opportunities to practice them. In short, he will make us more meek. **Read through Psalm 37:1–11 again, personalizing David's prayer, making his praise and requests your own. Let this divinely inspired song become your personal prayer for meekness.**

**What could it look like to pray Psalm 37 throughout your week? Where in your life could you more intentionally practice meekness?**