

Session 4: Matthew 5:6

SESSION GOALS

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

Main Idea: When we hunger and thirst for righteousness, God will satisfy us himself and establish order in our relationships.

Head Change: To know God wants us to be righteous, rightly related to him.

Heart Change: To feel the desire to live in a right relationship with God.

Life Change: To live in a right relationship with God and, as a result, grow into a right relationship with ourselves, with others, and with the earth.

OPEN

How do you act when you are hungry or thirsty? How does it change the way you treat others?

We all know what it's like to be hungry and thirsty. Our body's need—its inherent dissatisfaction—alerts us to the thing it needs to be satisfied with, whether food or drink. And that desire can change the way we act, for better or worse.

Just like our bodies hunger for food, Christians should hunger for righteousness, or to be rightly related to God. Jesus makes clear in Matthew 5:6, that our hunger and thirst will change us, but not for the worse. When he satisfies our longing, all our relationships will be made right.

READ

Read Matthew 5:1–12. Continue your work to commit this passage to memory.

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.

How are the Beatitudes “achieved”?

What are the four relationships the cross heals in our lives?

According to Matt, what is the pathway to satisfaction?

Show Session 4: *Matthew 5:6* (10 minutes).

DISCUSS

In the fourth Beatitude, Jesus uses the imagery of hunger and thirst to describe our yearnings for righteousness. Read Matthew 5:6. **What have you understood Jesus to be speaking about here? How have you heard this passage taught in the past?**

Matt mentioned that being hungry and thirsty for righteousness isn't a feeling we can muster up. Self-motivation comes and goes quickly, and beating ourselves up for not having a feeling won't lead us to satisfaction. **What have been the results, personally, as you've tried to manufacture a hunger and thirst for righteousness in the past?**

Matt identified the four major relationships we experience in life, each of which is affected by righteousness. If any of our relationships are going to flourish, we have to first figure out our relationship with God. This Beatitude encourages us to recognize the break in our relationship with God and to long for him to mend it. **Do you feel that you have to fix your relationship with God?**

Based on what you know about the Bible and what Matt said in the video, what has God done to mend your relationship with him? Do you feel that Jesus's sacrifice is enough to forgive you, or do you think you have to also add some of your own good works to be right with God? Why?

We tend to understand righteousness as only right behavior, but, as Matt said, moral conformity is a by-product of "right relatedness" to God. **What are some ways we get that backward, thinking right behavior produces a right relationship? In what ways do you think relating to God rightly will lead to right moral behavior?**

God also made us social creatures—we were made to relate to one another. But our social relationships are not perfect. Even our closest relationships can be unhealthy. **Why do you think even the best relationships can fall apart? In what ways do you need God's help mending relationships in your sphere of influence?**

When we are rightly related to God, we realize that we are sinful and we are forgiven. We bring our brokenness

into every relationship we are a part of and should be quick to mend relationships when our sin affects other people. We should also be quick to forgive, knowing that the person we are in conflict with is loved by God. **What makes it difficult to be quick to seek and give forgiveness? In what ways do you need God's help to be rightly related to others?**

The third relationship, our relationship with ourselves, is often the most difficult to figure out. We don't think of ourselves as overly critical or lacking self-control; our behavior, broken as it is, feels normal. **How would you describe your relationship with yourself? What can you do to relate to yourself rightly? How can pursuing a deeper relationship with God help you relate to yourself in a healthier way?**

*[Note: For further study on the way we relate to ourselves and, specifically, our bodies, see **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this session.]*

The fourth and final relationship is our relationship to the earth. This relationship can feel abstract, but Matt described it as our relationship to creation and culture. When you are rightly related to God, others, and yourself, it will change the way you relate to your workplace, your neighborhood, and society at large. Wherever God has placed us, we should seek to create a world where people flourish. **What would it look like for your small group to make your community a better place?**

Matt closed this session saying, "dissatisfaction is the pathway to satisfaction." **To what extent are you currently experiencing dissatisfaction in your relationships? How could that dissatisfaction, that yearning, be a hunger or thirst for righteousness?**

*[Note: For further study on the connection between the language of the Psalms and the fourth Beatitude, see **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this session.]*

What one thing can you begin doing to put yourself on the pathway toward satisfaction in God?

LAST WORD

There exists in each of us a deep restlessness—a hunger, as Jesus says—that won’t be calmed or satisfied until our relationship with God is made right. And as long as we try to skirt around our dissatisfaction, suppress it, or fill it with other things, our hunger and thirst will remain.

Therefore, as Matt argued, the pathway to satisfaction runs right through dissatisfaction. Only those who, by God’s grace, come awake to our need to have our relationship with God restored—those who hunger and thirst for righteousness—will be filled. Whenever you are dissatisfied, seek God and his presence. Because there, and there alone, will you be satisfied.

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 each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider reading one section a day to deepen your study of the book of the Beatitudes.

1. *How We See Ourselves*

In the session, Matt pointed out the importance of having a right relationship with ourselves. One of the ways that relationship often goes awry is through having an unhealthy perception of our bodies. We tend to view our bodies as bad, undesirable, or inherently flawed. **Why do you think a bad relationship with our bodies is so common in our culture? In what ways do you struggle to view and relate well with your own body?**

How, if at all, does a negative view of your body change affect your behavior?

Sin and its effects hang over us, impacting the way we relate to ourselves and our bodies. And, as a result, we tend to form our assumptions about our physical bodies through the broken lens of sin. But the creation account doesn't begin with sin and brokenness, it begins with God calling our bodies very good.

Read Genesis 1:31.

God called everything that he had made "very good," including our bodies. **When thinking about our bodies, why is it important to remember that God made you "very good"?**

How could verse 31 change the way we think and talk about our bodies? To what extent should God's words about us and our bodies outweigh the negative words that we tend to speak about ourselves?

Psalm 139 doubles down on the idea that God has created us and our bodies as good, and not just humanity as a whole, but each of us individually.

Read Psalm 139:13–16.

You are so loved and valued by God that he “knit you together” in your mother’s womb, intentionally creating your form. **In what ways does God’s loving creation of your body change the way you view yourself? What would it look like to change self-criticism to praise because God made you “have been remarkably and wondrously made”?**

What can you do practically to combat the tendency to view your body negatively?

When God made man and woman, he saw it was “very good” (Gen 1:31). And though the world has been fractured by sin, the Christian confession remains the same: What God has made—including our bodies—is “very good indeed.”

In what ways can you commit yourself to the proper care of your body and, by God’s grace, to viewing your body as a very good gift from God?

2. *Hunger and Thirst: The Language of the Psalms*

The Beatitudes aren’t the only place in the Bible where we read about hungering and thirsting for God. The Psalms are filled with examples of the people of God longing for the presence of God. If we want a greater understanding of what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness, the book of Psalms can help.

Psalm 42 and Matthew 5:6 are closely connected, in that they both describe a yearning for God and show how that yearning can be satisfied by God’s presence.

Read Psalm 42:1–2.

In this passage, the psalmist is writing with a desperation for God, a situation many of us can relate to. He uses the analogy of a deer longing for streams of water to describe his own longing. **When have you found yourself similarly desperate for God? Would you say that you are desperate for God now? Why, or why not?**

In verse 2, the author suggests being in God's presence is the only thing that will satisfy his longings. But he feels distant from God, outside of his presence. **How near do you feel to God? In what ways do you need his presence today?**

While God is present everywhere, there are certain "places" we can go where he has made his presence more apparent, such as when we read his Word, when we gather and worship with other Christians, and even in silence and solitude. **Where do you go when you seek to enter the presence of God?**

When we read the Bible, we encounter God's living Word. The Bible is not just a book of rules and advice, but an opportunity to encounter God himself. **How has God used Scripture to "fill" you in the past?**

Being involved in a local church is more than just going to church on a Sunday. It gives you a place to connect to fellow believers, grow under his established leadership, and worship him through praise and service. At church, we get a glimpse of his rule and reign on earth. **What opportunities do you have to involve yourself more deeply in the life of your church community?**

When Jesus was busy, he often made a point to spend time alone with the Father in a quiet place. In our busy lives, quiet time alone with God can feel hard to come by. But in silence and solitude, we relinquish control and submit ourselves to God's presence. **When could you set aside time in your schedule to be quiet and alone before God? How might God use this time to "fill" you?**

When we hunger and thirst for righteousness—for right relatedness to God—the presence of God himself is the only thing that can fill us. The psalmist knew he needed God. Jesus knew it too, and he calls us blessed when we know we need God and his presence. We can trust that when we come hungry and thirsty for him, we will be filled.

Set aside some time this week to enter God's presence in these three ways: by the regular reading of his Word, by participating in the weekly church gathering, and by spending a few moments in silence and solitude.

