

Relationship 101 – Lesson One: Poor in Spirit

1. What have you thought previously about the purpose of the Beatitudes? Why do you think they have such a prominent place in the Sermon on the Mount?
2. Read Matthew 5:1-12. To whom was Jesus teaching? What is the meaning of “blessed are you?” How does Jeff translate the first beatitude for relationships? How would you translate it?
3. Why is it so important to begin by acknowledging our need for God? What happens if we begin by thinking we don’t need God?
4. Read Genesis 3:1-7. How did Satan tempt Eve with the thought that she didn’t need God? How did that impact her relationships?
5. In what ways can communicate to those around me that I need them? What keeps you from being open and vulnerable about that fact?

Relationship 101 – Lesson Two: Those who Mourn

1. Would you agree that our society seeks to avoid mourning at all costs? What do you know about the way other cultures approach mourning?
2. Read Matthew 2:3-4. How would you translate “mourning?” Jeff talks about the ability to say “I’m sorry.” Why is this important?
3. The first two beatitudes can be seen as emptying us of self-sufficiency and shame. How does confession of wrong empty me of shame? Wouldn’t it make me even more shamed if I confess my sin?
4. What is the connection between the first two beatitudes? How does saying “I need you” help me to get to “I’m sorry?”
5. Read Psalm 32:1-5. How did David feel confession had impacted him? Have you experienced this? What do you think keeps Christians from embracing the power of confession? What can we do to promote an atmosphere that anticipates and affirms confession?

Relationship 101 – Lesson Three: The Meek

1. Read the first three beatitudes out loud. Review the blessings that Jesus promises to those who live them out. How should these motivate us?
2. Meek means “strength held in reserve.” How does this help us understand what Christ is calling us to is not a weakness? What is Jeff’s translation of “blessed are the meek.” Why is this important in relationships?
3. Some would say that we are a culture of entitlement. Would you agree that we have high expectations of what life “owes us”? How does this compare with the life view that Jesus offers in the Sermon on the Mount?
4. Read Philippians 2:3-4. How does Paul’s commands compliment the words of Christ? What happens in our relationships when we put this into practice?
5. How can you live out the call to surrender your rights in the most significant relationships in your world? What will be the greatest obstacle in doing so?

Relationship 101 – Lesson Four: Hunger and thirsting for Righteousness

1. Review the first four beatitudes from memory. How have they impacted you over the last three weeks? In what ways is the fourth beatitude different from the first three?
2. Define the word “righteousness”. Is this something that we can accomplish without Christ? Is Jesus talking about being perfect? How would you translate the phrase for today’s audience?
3. What does Jesus mean when he says “Hunger and thirst”? How does that image help you hear what he is calling you to? How do the first three beatitudes help us get ready to obey the fourth?
4. Read Philippians 3:18-20. Describe the attitude of the people Paul is criticizing. Contrast having “your stomach as your god” with hungering and thirsting for righteousness. What is Jeff’s translation of this phrase for relationships?
5. What helps you to do the right things “regardless”? How can we help one another with this commitment?

Relationship 101 – Lesson Five: The Merciful

1. Review the first four beatitudes. Why do you think that mercy comes next in Christ’s sermon? What happens to our relationships if we follow the first four beatitudes but we ignore the fifth?
2. Read Luke 6:32-37. This passage is from the Sermon on the Plain, sometimes describes as a sister sermon to the Sermon on the Mount. What does this add to our picture of being merciful? What promise is giving to those who forgive others here?
3. How does Satan try and keep Christians from being merciful? How does legalism or a prideful attitude keep us from being forgiving as Jesus was to us? When you see someone in sin, what is the first thought you have towards them?
4. When is it hardest for you to forgive others? What about forgiving those who don’t ask to be forgiven? What example did Jesus set in regards to this? (Luke 23:34.)
5. How can our small group build a culture of mercy? How can our church build a culture of mercy without losing a culture of “hungering for righteousness”?

Relationship 101 – Lesson Six: Blessed are the Pure in Heart

1. Can your group repeat all 5 beatitudes we have studied so far from memory? How have these built a path towards healthy relationships so far? What does the 6th beatitude add to the mix?
2. Jeff uses two words to illustrate purity: Transparency and Integrity. How would you define each of these? Which is toughest for you to maintain week to week? Why?
3. Read Colossians 3:8-10. How does Paul address both of the issues that Jeff raised? How are they connected? How does a lack of integrity impact a marriage or friendship? How does following the previous beatitudes make following this one easier?
4. Read Colossians 3:1-3. What does Paul suggest we do with our hearts? Contrast putting our minds on one thing with getting them off another? How does focusing on “things above” help in the purity battle?
5. *“We live in a culture that no longer values moral purity.”* Would you agree with this? What can we do to help our young people live “in the world but not of the world”? What can we do to help one another maintain a pure heart?

Relationship 101 – Lesson Seven: The Peace-makers

1. See if your group can recite all 6 beatitudes we have studied so far with the translations we have used. Which have been the hardest to follow over these weeks? How has this view impacted your thinking about the beatitudes?
2. Read Matthew 5:9. What is the promise made to this group? Where do we see Jesus in this promise? How was he a “peacemaker?” In what way do peacemakers walk in his footsteps?
3. What is the opposite of peacemaking? What prompts us to choose the option of fighting with others? Read James 3:17-4:2. What does this text teach us about the fight we end up in?
4. What are the ingredients of the recipe for peacemaking that Jeff described? Which of those ingredients is the most “expensive” to get and keep?
5. How would you react to this statement: *“You can’t make peace with someone who is determined to stand against you. It takes two to make peace.”*

Relationships 101 – Lesson Eight: Persecution

1. Review the 7 beatitudes we have studied. How have they impacted your relationships this last week? Read Matthew 5:10-12. Based on this scripture how might you reshape your expectations of the world? Should we expect to be treated badly?
2. Why have you responded bitterly to persecution? OR why have you chosen to allow God’s transformation through persecution to make you better...more like Jesus?
3. Respond to this statement “Hurting people hurt people.” How does this truth help us deal with times when we are mistreated?
4. How do you look to Jesus when facing persecution? What’s Christ’s central example when facing persecution? How has persecution helped you draw closer to God?
5. How do the previous beatitudes shape your ability to faithfully respond to persecution? Pray together asking God to help you continue to live out these principles.