

Straight Talk from the
Savior about the Things
That **Matter Most**

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**MINUTES
WITH
JESUS**

DR. ROBERT JEFFRESS

STUDY GUIDE

18 MINUTES WITH JESUS

STUDY GUIDE

Straight Talk from the **Savior** about
the Things That **Matter Most**

DR. ROBERT JEFFRESS



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When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them.

Matthew 5:1–2

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INTRODUCTION AND TIPS FOR STUDY GROUPS

Before beginning your personal or group study of *18 Minutes with Jesus: Straight Talk from the Savior about the Things That Matter Most*, please take time to read these introductory comments.

If you are working through the study on your own, you may want to adapt certain sections (for example, the icebreakers) and record your responses to the questions in this study guide or, if preferred, a separate notebook. You might find it more enriching or motivating to study with a partner with whom you can share answers or insights.

If you are leading a group, you may want to ask group members to read one chapter from the *18 Minutes with Jesus* book and work through the corresponding questions in this study guide before each meeting. This isn't always easy for busy adults, so encourage group members with occasional phone calls, emails, or texts between meetings. Help group members manage their time by pointing out that they can cover a few pages each day. Also, encourage them to identify a regular time of the day or week they can devote to the study. They, too, may write their responses to the questions in this study guide or in a separate notebook.

Each session in this study guide includes the following features:

- **Session Topic**—a brief statement summarizing the session.
- **Icebreakers**—activities to help group members get better acquainted with the session topic and/or with one another.
- **Group Discovery Questions**—questions to encourage group participation or individual discovery.
- **Personal Application Questions**—an aid to applying the knowledge gained through study to personal living. (Note: these are important questions for group members to answer for themselves, even if they do not wish to discuss their responses in the meeting.)
- **Optional Activities**—supplemental applications that will enhance the study.
- **Prayer Focus**—suggestions for turning learning into prayer.
- **Assignment**—activities or preparation to complete prior to the next session.

Here are a few tips that can help you more effectively lead small group studies:

1. *Pray for each group member during the week.* Ask the Lord to help you create an open atmosphere where everyone will feel free to share with one another.
2. *Ensure each group member has the 18 Minutes with Jesus book and study guide.* Encourage each group member to bring his or her book, study guide, a pen or pencil, and a Bible to each session. This study is based on the New American Standard Bible (1995), but it is good to have several Bible translations on hand for purposes of comparison.

Introduction and Tips for Study Groups

3. *Start and end on time.* This is especially important for the first meeting because it will set the pattern for the rest of the sessions.
4. *Begin each study session with prayer.* Ask the Holy Spirit to open hearts and minds and to give understanding so that truth will be applied.
5. *Involve everyone in the group discussion.* As learners, we retain some of what we hear and see, but we remember much more of what we hear, see, and do.
6. *Promote a relaxed environment.* If the group is meeting in person, arrange the chairs in a circle or semicircle. This allows eye contact among members and encourages dynamic discussion. Be relaxed in your attitude and manner, and be willing to share with the group.

one

Straight Talk about Your Happiness

SESSION TOPIC: Jesus began His talk by describing eight attitudes that will lead us to a joy-filled life. Matthew 5:3–12, a passage called the Beatitudes, includes some of the most familiar verses in the Bible, but they’re also some of the most misunderstood. What does it really mean to be blessed? If we want to experience true and lasting joy, then we must grasp what Jesus meant when He said, “Blessed are . . .”

Icebreakers (Choose One)

1. What are some things that make you happy?

2. If you could choose to be either wealthy or happy, which would you choose and why?

Group Discovery Questions

1. What do you think it means to be “blessed”?

2. From what you read in this chapter, what is the difference between *happiness* and *joy*?

7. The author said, “In Jesus’s day, the Pharisees focused on their external appearance, wanting people to see their best side.” Give examples of how we see this same attitude in today’s society. In contrast, what do you think it means to be “pure in heart”? What blessing did Jesus give in Matthew 5:8?

Personal Application Questions

1. Have you ever longed for God’s approval? How does it make you feel to know that the Beatitudes are the key to “God’s approval and the lasting joy that accompanies it”?

2. Think of a time when you mourned the loss of a loved one, either through death or desertion. What did that grief feel like? Have you ever been sorrowful over your sin in a similar way? If so, what changes did you make in your life as a result?

3. What images come to mind when you hear the words *mEEK* and *gentle*? What did gentleness look like in the lives of Moses (Num. 12:3) and Jesus (Matt. 11:28–29)? In what specific ways can you show gentleness toward others?

4. Have you extended mercy to someone who wronged you, or has someone extended mercy to you? Describe what happened. What effect did mercy have in that situation?

5. Why is focusing on external behavior dangerous when it comes to your spiritual life? In what ways would your life be different if you were “pure in heart”?

6. Read Hebrews 12:14 and Ephesians 4:3. What are some things you can do this week to “pursue peace” in your life and the lives of others?

7. Have you ever been persecuted in some way for your faith in Jesus Christ? If so, describe what happened. What hope does Jesus's promise in Matthew 5:10–12 give you?

Optional Activities

1. Read James 2:15–16 and 1 John 3:17. What can your group do this week to extend mercy to someone in your church or community who is hurting or in need? Make a plan and follow through.

2. Make a list of the eight character traits mentioned in the Beatitudes. Beside each one, write an example of a practical way you can apply that trait to your life this week. For example: “*Mercy*—this week, when someone cuts me off in traffic, I will choose to extend mercy.” Or “*Peacemaker*—this week, when I see a post on social media about a controversial subject, I will not spread conflict by posting a divisive comment.”

Prayer Focus

Thank Jesus for giving us the Beatitudes, which provide the key to unlocking the blessed life. Ask God to help you develop these eight character traits. Confess the areas in which you fall short, and thank God for giving His approval and lasting joy to those who follow Him with a whole heart, adopting His attitudes and actions.

Assignment

1. This week, make the Beatitudes part of your everyday life by practicing one Beatitude each day. Meditate on that trait, and ask God to help you live it out throughout the day. If desired, journal about your experience and share with the group what you learned.

2. Read chapter 2 of the *18 Minutes with Jesus* book and work through the corresponding study.