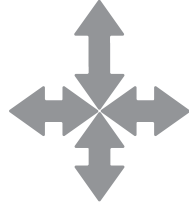




## GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY: the week of January 26th

This study is designed to help your community group grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. There are three dimensions to following Jesus.



**UP:** growing in relationship with God

**IN:** growing in relationship with other followers of Jesus

**OUT:** growing in relationship with the world around us as we join God in God's mission.

### Get Started:

As you were growing up, who were some of your heroes (*people you wanted to be like when you got older*)? What about them inspired you? How did they deal with adversity?



**UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word**

Read aloud the passage for the week: Matthew 5:3-16. Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note any words or phrases that seem meaningful.

1. The beatitudes are not a description of how the world currently functions, but a "summons to live in the present in the way that will make sense in God's promised future".<sup>1</sup> How do the statements in verses 3-11 serve as an encouragement to you? In what ways do they challenge you to adapt your thinking or behavior?
2. As you think through the statements of verses 3-11, how does the world interact with these people? How are the "meek" viewed? What place do the peacemakers have?
3. Reread verses 11-12. The contemporary church in the United States is far from experiencing the type of persecution that Christians in many parts of the world experience. That said, when have you seen examples of the Church/Christians being insulted, persecuted, or misrepresented (in daily life, the media, the marketplace, etc.)?
4. How do you think the church/we can best respond to these types of situations? What principles might guide our responses in various situations?



### **Out: Connect with the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)**

1. Reread verses 13-16. Jesus calls the people to live as salt and light in order that others would be led to praise God. Which areas of your life are the most likely to encourage others to glorify God?
2. How might this passage challenge you to reconsider how your work and faith interact?
3. As you think about the life of our church, in what ways are we doing a good job of encouraging our city to glorify God? Where do we have room to grow in this as a church? How might we surprise people with the love of Jesus?



### **IN: Connect with Each Other**

Close your time by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.