



WEEK 1

READ

Scripture: [Matthew 5:2-12](#)

Social media users are all too familiar with the hashtag #blessed. People have been using this label for years to celebrate free coffees, open parking spots, and personal accomplishments. But in today's passage, Jesus upends our ideas about blessing. Who is truly blessed? The mourners and the meek. The poor in spirit. The persecuted. This is so opposite to social media "blessedness" that it sounds impossible, but Jesus is pointing us to eternal, spiritual blessings. Hardships, loneliness, and pain may batter and bruise us, but they will not break us—in fact, Jesus says they will draw us closer to God in both this life and the one to come.

REFLECT

List all the ways that the meek, mourners, etc. are blessed.

How have you experienced the types of hardship and blessing in this passage?

Who has invested in your life—not just your earthly life, but your eternal one?

RESPOND

In this weekend's sermon, we were challenged to write a letter to thank someone who has invested in our eternal future. If you haven't taken this step yet, do it now.

READ

Scripture: [Matthew 5:13-16](#)

Jesus was a master of metaphor. Here he compares each one of us to light and salt, two things that are only useful when carrying out their intended purposes. In Jesus' time, if salt couldn't preserve or flavor food, it was useless. A light that was covered by a basket served no purpose whatsoever. But what purpose is he urging us to embrace? For our lives to cause others to glorify God! To do this—to be flavorful salt or a light on a lampstand—we may need to unlearn what our culture has taught us about the nature of faith. While it's very personal, it was never meant to be private. Private faith sounds a lot like a lamp under a basket.

REFLECT

In what ways are you tempted to keep your faith hidden from other people?

How has God created and gifted you to uniquely be salt and light to the people in your life?

RESPOND

Think of one practical step of faith you can take to invest in another person's spiritual journey. Share that step with someone else who will pray for you this week.

READ

Scripture: [2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#)

The apostle Paul, like Jesus, often asks us to unlearn what we always thought we knew. We are taught early in life to place incredible value on material things: money, houses, cars, promotions, shoes... the list could go on. But today's passage asks us to do something that not only violates our materialism, it sounds physically impossible; we're told to "fix our eyes" on "what is unseen." *Look at that invisible thing over there!* Since we can't look at invisible objects with our physical eyes, Paul must be referring to mental, emotional, and spiritual "eyes." Where do we focus our thoughts? Or our desires, energy, prayers, and time?

REFLECT

Make a list of the unseen, eternal things Paul is likely referring to in this passage.

In what ways can you focus more thought and energy toward these things?

RESPOND

Write down everything you spend time on in a typical week. List the amount of time you spend on each activity. Discuss this list with someone close to you and brainstorm how you might reprioritize some of your focus.