

BLESSED TRANSGRESSIONS™



THE ONLINE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

#1 Reader's Choice:

**Lessons from the Beatitudes:
What Jesus Desires**

PLUS:

**Spiritual Warfare
101 Printable**



APRIL 1ST, 2017 | ISSUE NINE

Lessons from the Beatitudes: What Jesus Desires



By Michele Morin
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Preparing to teach the Beatitudes, I am trying to live my way into their truth by carrying them around on 3×5 cards and struggling to understand a Kingdom in which:

You're blessed if you are poor in spirit.

You're blessed if you are mourning over your sin.

You're blessed if you are meek or "content with just who you are."

You're blessed if you are hungering for righteousness.

The last four Beatitudes in the list are so much more inspiring. After all, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted might just make...

it into the evening news or be offered a book deal. But those first four . . . I kind of like to keep my moments of spiritual bankruptcy to myself, thanks; and I'd really rather be seen as someone who has her identify issues and her sin all under control.

This image of weakness — of need and hungering — is offensive to me, but then, that's what got Jesus betrayed by one of His disciples and hung on a cross. Although the Twelve squandered precious moments of their last days with Jesus squabbling over who would get the corner office, Jesus demonstrated no interest in the trappings of power.

A God who valued power over all else would not choose to identify Himself with a tiny nation of tent-dwellers. He would not take on the space-and-time limitations of a body and then show up in the midst of an era of oppression, taxation, and poverty.

He would not "see the crowds," then "sit down and open his mouth," with the kind of power-bashing, establishment-alienating statements that we read in His Sermon on the Mount.

In fact, just reading the Beatitudes can be hazardous, because I'm looking at the Christians I know. Most of all,

I'm looking in the mirror and I'm realizing that all of us love power and everything that goes with it more than we love dealing with our sin or hungering for more of God. I hold in my heart a set of hellish Beatitudes that have nothing to do with Christ's kingdom:

Blessed are you if your voice is heard in committee meetings, for then you shall have the last word.

Blessed are you if your ideas are recognized and see the light of day, for then you shall receive the credit.

Blessed are you if you are able to make meaningful choices, and if people respect your time, your boundaries, and your position, for then you shall experience no inconvenience in this life, and your heart may remain private and small.

Blessed are you if you are known, if you are read, if you are heard, and above all, if you are appreciated, for then you shall point to your resume and feel validated. Jesus let go of all this.

His servant, the Apostle Paul, was also cautious about the trappings of power. In his letter to the Gentile believers in Thessalonica, he reminisced about his days with them. No glory-seeking, no cushy expense account, no

apostolic privileges. He worked with his hands to earn a living, and then ministered the gospel among them, “just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.” Now, there’s a metaphor for self-emptying service.

The currency that Paul valued, and that he spent with all his heart, was the power of godly influence, of building up a body of believers who could persevere in their faith through hard times.

Plowing into my fifties, this is the power that I need to fuel my actions as well, for though I pack my days full, the question always hangs in the air:

Can I prove, at the end of a day, that I have value, that I have not become obsolete?


We have a pretty way of measuring “relevance” in our culture, and a pretty way of disregarding those we deem “irrelevant.” With the “key demo” for media advertising spanning the ages 18-49, can I find courage to ignore the relevance clock and fill my life with people who don’t make that cut? I want to be reminded every day of the power of wisdom that resides within a graying head. I need to hear the truth that Jesus’ kingdom-demo is set up to be kid-friendly.

Pondering that kingdom with the help of my 3×5 cards, I

am absorbing a value system that edges me toward a different world. As I read and write, as I make lists and perform the duties of “the keeper at home,” some days I wonder: How did my hands, my brain, and my calendar get so full? Wistfully, I speculate:

Is there something here that I can I let go of? Jesus let go of power to gain freedom and life for the world.

Do I let go of freedom and life in order to gain power?

God, form my priorities and values around Truth. Teach me the precious power of vulnerability, of need, and of the still heart that has learned to say “enough.” 

Discover What Makes Your Soul Sing



By Theresa Boedeker
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Have you ever read Proverbs 31 and realized that this talented woman has her hands in a lot of different things? Buying and selling. Clothing her household. Land ownership and management. Gathering and distributing supplies to her household, the poor, the needy, and others.

She is using her mind, her soul, her hands and body to bless her household and those around her. Ladies, we can do the same.

We are called to use our talents and gifts and make our household, our town, our world a better place. So, what are you good at? What talents are you developing? What makes your soul sing?

Don't be afraid to start small. To change direction. To start anew.

I was in my mid-twenties when I began to discover that I like to be creative. I would eventually learn that this desire to create was as necessary as breathing. If I didn't have an outlet for my creativity, if I had no way to be creative, or if I was not creative for a while, I got crabby and irritated.

Now I didn't learn this fact about myself all at once, but slowly over the years, because life is like that and has a sense of humor.

Growing up I took piano lessons. I found that I enjoyed the lessons, but even more I enjoyed just sitting and playing the piano. Especially as a teen when I was full of emotions and angst. I would go play a loud, angry and melodramatic song in a minor key. Pound. Pound. Pound. After half an hour or so, I felt much better and was now playing happy and flowing songs.

Half way through my teens I told my first funny story to a group of girl friends at cheer camp. Hearing them laugh exhilarated me. It would take years, though, before I was good at telling funny stories. And years before I realized I enjoyed telling funny stories.

I married and suddenly had no piano. I felt lost, like a part of me was missing. Then my creativity took another turn. I started writing. Cooking and drawing were also turned into creative projects.

Now if someone had asked if I was creative way back then, I probably would have said no. But now I look back and see a pattern. So many things I enjoy, that I do as a hobby or when I have free time, are all creative endeavors.

Designing and sewing curtains for the house. Writing. Reading. Planning trips. Cooking. Painting the house or furniture. Cross stitch. Making jewelry. Taking pictures. Telling funny stories, which I turned into a podcast, Life as it Comes. The list goes on and on.

I have this desire to be creative, to use my God given traits and abilities to create and change things, to make the world a better place. Being creative feeds my soul. Nourishes me and others. Brings joy.

What feeds your soul? Nourishes you? Makes your heart beat a little faster? What trait do you have that blesses others and the world?

Look at what you like to do, your hobbies, your gifts.

Do you like to sky dive, paint china, teach, decorate, cook, design, travel, write, color, make maps, or sing. Make a list.

Now write down things you would like to do if you had the time, money, or had lessons.

Do you see a pattern? Do you like to invent things? Make things pretty? Organize things? Discover things? Create things? Discover the why behind something? Learn and grow in knowledge? Do you like to do these things alone, with another, or in groups?


Discover what makes your soul sing. Use it. Nurture it. Share it with others. Bless and inspire others. Multiply your talents.

So where does my desire to create, and your desire to bring forth order come from? God is creative. He designs things. He manages and organizes things. He brings forth beauty. He invents and places laws in effect. We are just imitating God when we do these things. He placed these desires in our heart to better serve and love those around us.

Life is about attitude, so use it to your advantage. Use it for big things and small things. Use it to make boring...

and not so fun tasks more enjoyable. I dislike cleaning bathrooms, but love the end result.

One day I decided to think of ways I could make cleaning the bathrooms more creative. I can listen to a podcast or music. This brings out my creative side and stimulates future creative ideas while I am swirling a brush in the porcelain bowl. Sometimes I talk aloud and pretend I am giving a speech or telling a funny story to people.

There are all sorts of ideas and ways to do things. Harness what excites you and see if you can use it in other areas of your life. Come on. I know you can do it. 

You Are Blessed and Highly Favored



By Sharine Jones-Weaver
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Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.
Psalm 103:2

Cinderella is hands down one of my favorite fairytales. I've watched this enchanting Disney fairytale too many times to count, read the story dozens of times, and watched various movie versions but never quite thought of God in or having anything to do with the story.

One day I watched the latest Cinderella big screen movie (excellent by the way) and I thought profoundly of this fairytale and how I could see God ALL. UP. IN. IT.

Once I recognized God in this story it was just another beautiful revelation to me about how amazing He is and how much bigger He is than our problems.

Let's think about Cinderella on a deep level. Not just on the level of: she lives happily after but let's focus on her real testimony. Cinderella's childhood started out lovely, she was blessed with both parents who adored and loved her deeply. This adoration from her parents created a beautiful happy girl inside and out. But like most of us Cinderella suffered a devastating loss, her mother passed away.

Thank God, she still had her father but it wasn't long after that he remarried to provide a balanced home. After a few years of marriage, tragedy revealed its face again—her father had died.

It seemed like Cinderella just couldn't get a break. She suffered two huge losses and no other family to turn to but her cold and cruel step-mother and step-sisters.

Besides having no one to console or comfort her through these difficult times, she was commanded to give up her room, live in the attic and forced to be a servant in her own home. Cinderella was abused and neglected. She was ridiculed and overworked.

But Cinderella was also strong and possessed the right attitude.

Every day she handled her business and completed her chores; she took care of her responsibilities. She kept doing what she was supposed to despite the unfairness of it all. She was kind when no one was kind to her. She was patient when no one was patient with her. She was forgiving when it was difficult to forgive.

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:9

In the end Cinderella was blessed beyond measure, not only did she find true love, she found love with the King of her Kingdom. Cinderella would now be a Queen going to live in her palace, with her handsome King, where she will be served and catered to.

Once the movie ended, I thought, Wow, look at God. Look how He blessed Cinderella. After all the pain, hurt, and loss she endured she kept a positive attitude: always singing, always smiling, always patient, always kind, compassionate, and sweet.

And look at how He saved her.

Look at how He thrust her to a new level in her life. God is Good! All the time!

**But if we hope for what we do not see,
we wait for it with patience.**

Romans 8:25

That's what God wants to do for us. I realize Cinderella is only a fairytale but how many of us can relate to her testimony? How many of us have felt or feel like Cinderella in our daily lives? And how many of us are patient enough to let God do His will in our lives? Trust Him.

My point in using this fairytale is: no matter how big your problem seems, what you're going through, how long it takes... God is bigger than all of it.

God works behind the scenes. We have no idea what He's doing on our behalf—right now. He can turn a situation around in an instant. Do you think Cinderella was expecting a Royal Ball and Fairy Godmother? Um, No. She wasn't. But those were blessings that furthered her along into her destiny. It's the same with our lives.

These problems we face are nothing in comparison to what He can do for us and through us. God is bigger than our problems.

Trust and believe that.

Every day we should wake up feeling blessed and highly favored. And every day we should wait expectantly on the Lord. You never know what he's going to do. You never know when that day will be your day. Keep the right attitude. Trust Him. Stay in faith. Keep doing and being your best despite the circumstances.

In this life we have to be resilient, we have to keep striving forward even when we don't see anything moving; we have to keep running the race. We cannot allow people, circumstances, and situations to dictate our feelings, mind, or life. Never give up. Remain strong in Him. He is our salvation.

**Oh, magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together!**
Psalm 34:3

Things may be impossible with man but not with God. 

Spiritual Warfare 101

BIBLE VERSES TO RESIST THE DEVIL

These bible verses have been summarised and personalised so they can be spoken over your life.

If you are after the correct wording of the verse, please look it up in your bible.

HOW TO USE:

1. Whatever area in life you are struggling with, find the topic below.
 2. Pick one (or more) of the verses and speak them out over your situation.
Every time a thought comes up, something happens, or fears arise ... speak the verse out.
 3. I find it helpful to have the verse written down on a piece of paper to carry it with me. That way I can remember the correct wording of the verse until I get used to it and it becomes second nature.
 4. Be consistent in speaking these verses out over your life and watch things change!
- * If there's a topic you are struggling with which is not included, do some searching and find some verses of your very own. I prefer to use google ... "*bible verses about _____*".

These are the words of God. Because He lives in you, your words possess every bit of His power.

*If God created the universe by the words of His mouth,
don't you also think the words you speak hold power to change things as well?*

Please send me an email if you have any further questions or want to share some exciting news!

(samanthavaartjes@hotmail.com)

I can't wait to hear what happens in your very own life!

BODY IMAGE

Psalm 139:14 NIV

I am fearfully and *wonderfully* made, God's works are wonderful, I know that full well!

Song of Solomon 4:7 NIV

I am altogether beautiful. There is no flaw in me.

1 Samuel 16:7 NIV

The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

1 Peter 3:3-4 NIV

My beauty doesn't come from my outward appearance, but is found within. God loves my gentle and quiet spirit. **Genesis 1:26, 31 MSG**

I am made in the image of God, reflecting His nature. When God made me He said I was **good, so very good!**

Matthew 6:25 NIV

I will not worry about my body ... life is more than food, and the body is more than clothes.

VALUE & WORTH

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV

My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who I have received from God. I am not my own, I was bought at a price. Because of this, *I will honour God* with my body.

Luke 12:6-7 MSG

God never overlooks even a single canary. But He pays greater attention to me, down to the last detail, and even numbers the hairs on my head ... I am worth more than a million canaries.

Ephesians 2:10 NIV

I am God's *handiwork*, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God has prepared in advance for me to do.

Romans 8:16 NIV

God's Spirit joins with my spirit, to affirm I am a child of God!

THE FUTURE

John 10:28 NIV

God gives me eternal life and I shall never perish. No one will snatch me out of His hand!

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

I will trust in the Lord *with all my heart* and lean not on my own understanding. In all my ways I will acknowledge Him and He will make my paths straight.

Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

God has plans to *prosper* me, not to harm me. Plans to give me *hope* and a *future*.

FEAR

2 Timothy 1:7 NIV

I have not been given a spirit of fear or timidity, but of **power, love, and a sound mind.**

Isaiah 41:10 NIV

I will not fear for God is with me. He will **strengthen** and *uphold me* with His righteous right hand.

Joshua 1:9 NIV

I will be strong and courageous, for my God is with me *wherever* I go.

WORRY

Philippians 4:6-7 NIV

I will not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving I will bring my requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will *guard my heart and mind* in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 6:25, 33 NLT

I will not worry about my life. I will seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and God will give me *everything* I need.

Philippians 4:8 NIV

Whatever is *true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable* - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, I will think about such things.

VALUE AS A WIFE

Proverbs 31:10 NIV

I am a wife of noble character. I am worth *far more* than rubies!

Proverbs 31:12 NIV

I bring my husband **good**, not harm all the days of my life.

Proverbs 31:25 NIV

I am clothed with *strength and dignity.*

Colossians 3:18 MSG

I understand and support my husband, by submitting to him in ways that *honour God.*

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Thank you for reading!

