



The Pursuit
of Happiness

UPSIDE DOWN BLESSINGS

An eight—week study through the Beattitudes

What is the Sermon on the Mount?

In Matthew 5-7, the disciple Matthew records Jesus' longest and most famous sermon, commonly known as The Sermon on the Mount.

In this sermon, Jesus establishes foundational moral and spiritual truths for the life of a Christian. What's difficult about the Sermon on the Mount is that it confronts and challenges the world's way of living, which often feels more comfortable and natural to us. In this sermon, Jesus turns the values of the world on its head, showing us that the Kingdom of God does not operate like the world does. The Christian life is life in an upside-down Kingdom. We are called to live with a character and posture that is opposite of our sinful nature: selfless, grace-filled, concerned for the poor and oppressed, humble, generous, honest, wise, and prioritizing peace and unity over our comfort.

In the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus powerfully begins this upending of the world's values with the famous Beatitudes. The word beatitude comes from the Latin word *beatus*, which means "happy" and "blessed." In the Beatitudes, Jesus lists qualities of people who the world would deem weak or unfortunate—and he instead calls them "blessed," promises them a great reward in God's Kingdom, and encourages us to foster their qualities in our own lives.

The Beatitudes

- Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
- Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
- Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and
thirst for righteousness, for they will
be filled.
- Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
- Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
- Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children
of God.
- Matthew 5:10-12 Blessed are those who are persecuted
because of righteousness, for theirs is
the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you
when people insult you, persecute you
and falsely say all kinds of evil against
you because of me. Rejoice and be glad,
because great is your reward in heaven,
for in the same way they persecuted the
prophets who were before you.

How to S.O.A.P.

Over the next nine weeks, we will be studying the Beatitudes as a church. This journal is designed to help you dig into kingdom values and truly begin to embody them day to day. One of the most impactful ways we can do this is by studying additional verses from scripture that will help us develop these counter-cultural qualities in our lives. To help us with this practically, we will be using the S.O.A.P. method of Bible study for various verses each week.

S — Scripture Write out the scripture and read it two or three times slowly.

O — Observation Write down what stands out to you in the scripture.

A — Application Write down the implications of the scripture for your life and how you can apply it.

P — Prayer Ask God to help you implement truth from his Word into your life.

Let's Get Started!

*Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 5:3 NIV

Week One



The Poor in Spirit — Old Testament Anticipation:

For this is what the high and exalted One says—He who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the One who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

Isaiah 57:15 NIV

Opposing Worldly Values:

Pride

Personal independence

God’s Reward:

The kingdom of heaven

How to Develop This Quality:

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.

James 4:7-10 NIV

Additional Scripture for S.O.A.P.

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Proverbs 11:2 NIV

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

Humility is the fear of the Lord; its wages are riches and honor and life.

Proverbs 22:4 NIV

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.

Psalms 23:1-3 NIV

SCRIPTURE

Which verse or verses stand out to me?

OBSERVATION

What do I feel God is showing me in this passage?

APPLICATION

What will I do? What do these verses ask me to do or change?

PRAYER

Thank God. Ask for understanding and strength/courage to apply these truths.



*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.*

Matthew 5:4 NIV

Week Two



Those Who Mourn — Old Testament Anticipation:

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.

Isaiah 61:1-2 NIV

Opposing Worldly Values:

Avoiding/

Not addressing pain

God's Reward:

Comfort

How to Develop This Quality:

God, listen! Listen to my prayer, listen to the pain in my cries. Don't turn your back on me just when I need you so desperately. Pay attention! This is a cry for help! And hurry—this can't wait!

Psalm 102:1-2 MSG

Additional Scripture for S.O.A.P.

O my people, trust in him at all times. Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge.

Psalm 62:8 NLT

“Abba, Father,” he cried out, “everything is possible for You. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

Mark 14:36 NLT

Have compassion on me, Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony. I am sick at heart. How long, O Lord, until You restore me?

Return, O Lord, and rescue me. Save me because of Your unfailing love.

Psalm 6:2-4 NLT

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV

SCRIPTURE

Which verse or verses stand out to me?

OBSERVATION

What do I feel God is showing me in this passage?

APPLICATION

What will I do? What do these verses ask me to do or change?

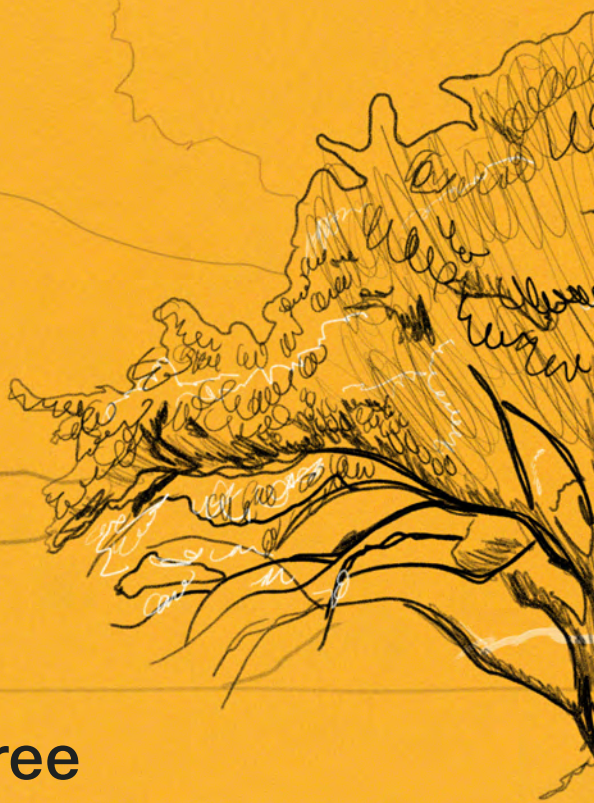
PRAYER

Thank God. Ask for understanding and strength/courage to apply these truths.

*Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.*

Matthew 5:5 NIV

Week Three



The Meek—Old Testament Anticipation:

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil. For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land. A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found. But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity.

Psalm 37:5-11 NIV

Opposing Worldly Values:

Power

God's Reward:

Inheriting the earth

How to Develop This Quality:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30 NIV

Additional Scripture for S.O.A.P.

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

Mark 9:35 NIV

But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him.

1 Corinthians 1:27-29 NIV

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves.

Philippians 2:3 NIV

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you.

1 Peter 5:6 ESV

SCRIPTURE

Which verse or verses stand out to me?

OBSERVATION

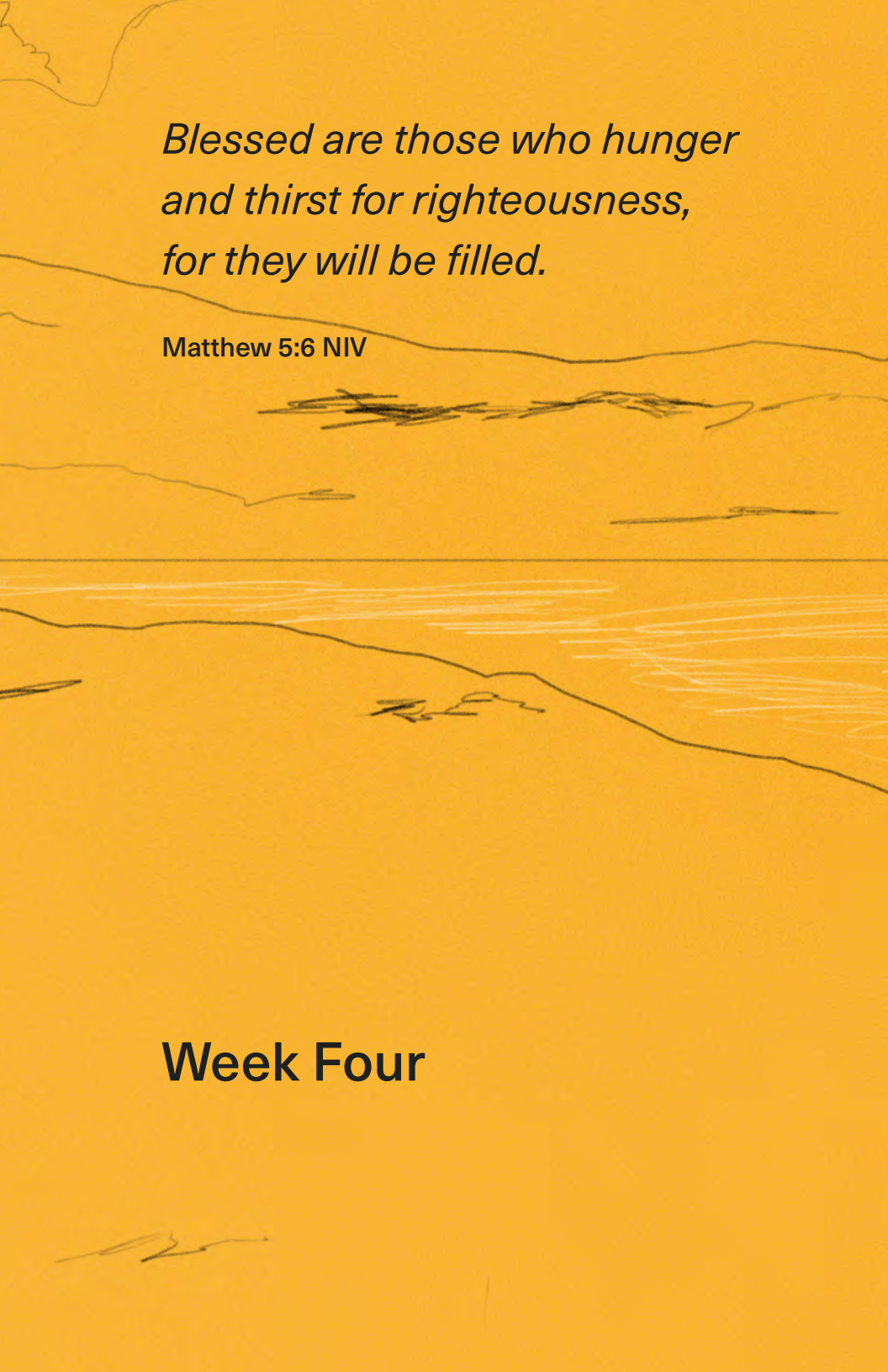
What do I feel God is showing me in this passage?

APPLICATION

What will I do? What do these verses ask me to do or change?

PRAYER

Thank God. Ask for understanding and strength/courage to apply these truths.



*Blessed are those who hunger
and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.*

Matthew 5:6 NIV

Week Four

Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness—Old Testament Anticipation:
Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity, and honor.
Proverbs 21:21 NIV

Opposing Worldly Values:	God's Reward:
Pursuing pleasure & our own desires	Satisfaction

How to Develop This Quality:

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

Philippians 3:7-9 NIV

Additional Scripture for S.O.A.P.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age.

Titus 2:11-12 NIV

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

1 Timothy 6:10-11 NIV

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12:11 NIV

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalms 139:23-24 NIV

SCRIPTURE

Which verse or verses stand out to me?

OBSERVATION

What do I feel God is showing me
in this passage?

APPLICATION

What will I do? What do these verses
ask me to do or change?

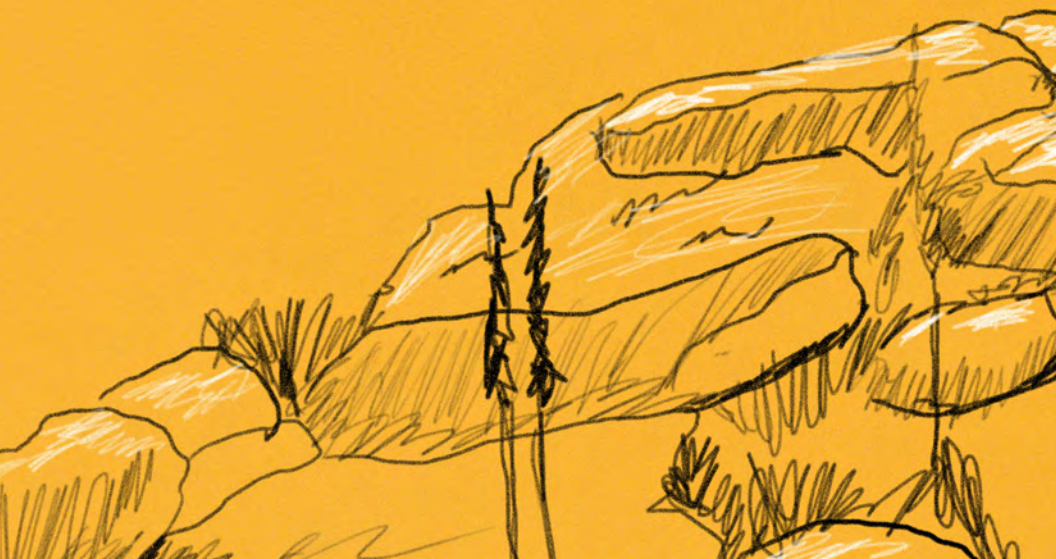
PRAYER

Thank God. Ask for understanding and strength/courage to apply these truths.

*Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

Matthew 5:7 NIV

Week Five



The Merciful—Old Testament Anticipation:

Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the Lord delivers them in times of trouble.

Psalm 41:1 NIV

Opposing Worldly Values:

Self-centeredness

Lack of compassion

God's Reward:

Being shown mercy

How to Develop This Quality:

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:1-2 ESV

Additional Scripture for S.O.A.P.

Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

Proverbs 14:31 NIV

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8 NIV

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 7:12 NIV

“‘For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or needing clothes and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and go to visit You?’ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

Matthew 25:35-40 NIV

SCRIPTURE

Which verse or verses stand out to me?

OBSERVATION

What do I feel God is showing me in this passage?

APPLICATION

What will I do? What do these verses ask me to do or change?

PRAYER

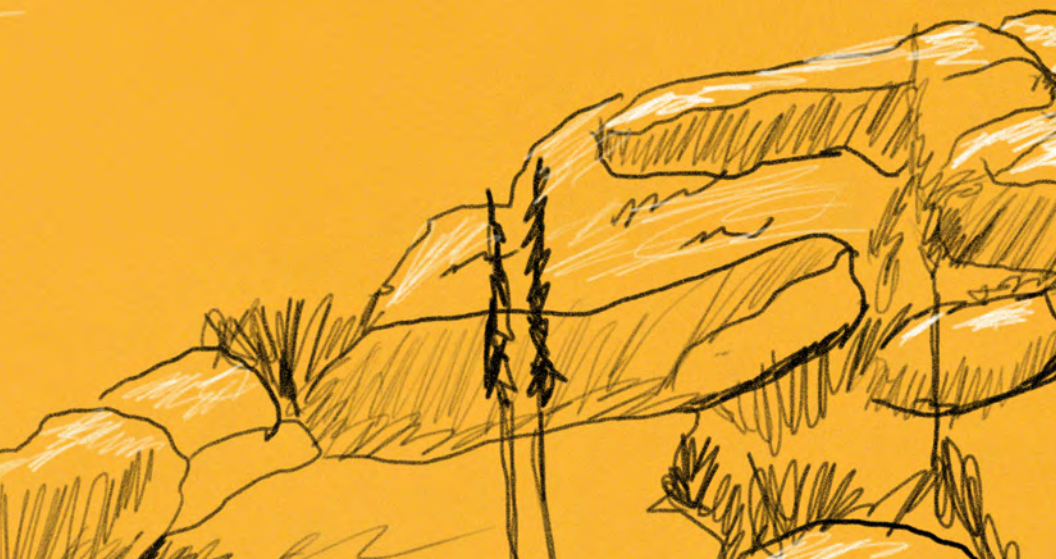
Thank God. Ask for understanding and strength/courage to apply these truths.



*Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

Matthew 5:8 NIV

Week Six



The Pure in Heart —Old Testament Anticipation:

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear deceitfully.

Psalm 24:3-4 BSB

Opposing Worldly Values:

Deception is acceptable
Dishonesty

God's Reward:

Seeing God

How to Develop This Quality:

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Colossians 3:5 NIV

Additional Scripture for S.O.A.P.

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Hebrews 12:14-15 NIV

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

1 John 3:1-3 NIV

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Philippians 4:8 NIV

One who loves a pure heart and who speaks with grace will have the king for a friend.

Proverbs 22:11 NIV

SCRIPTURE

Which verse or verses stand out to me?

OBSERVATION

What do I feel God is showing me in this passage?

APPLICATION

What will I do? What do these verses ask me to do or change?

PRAYER

Thank God. Ask for understanding and strength/courage to apply these truths.

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.*

Matthew 5:9 NIV

Week Seven



The Peacemakers— Old Testament Anticipation:

Deceit is in the hearts of those who plot evil, but those who promote peace have joy.

Proverbs 12:20 NIV

Opposing Worldly Values:

Elevating personal cause over people
Pursuing our own peace without concern for the world's injustice and chaos

God's Reward:

Being called sons and daughters of God

How to Develop This Quality:

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:11 NIV

Additional Scripture for S.O.A.P.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:9-10 NIV

Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Romans 12:13-14 NIV

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Romans 12:15-16 NIV

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:17-21 NIV

SCRIPTURE

Which verse or verses stand out to me?

OBSERVATION

What do I feel God is showing me in this passage?

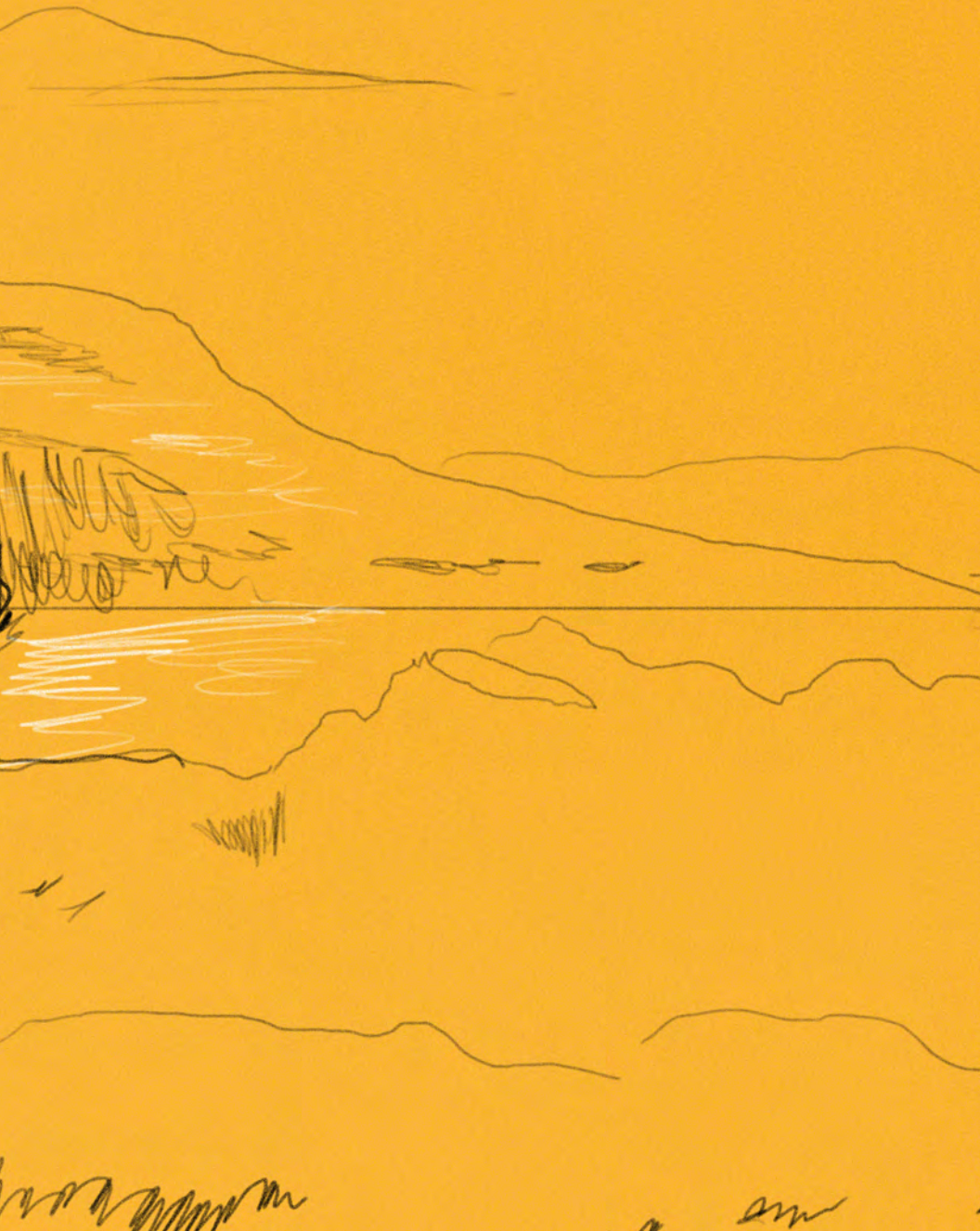
APPLICATION

What will I do? What do these verses ask me to do or change?

PRAYER

Thank God. Ask for understanding and strength/courage to apply these truths.

Week Eight



*Blessed are those who are
persecuted because of
righteousness, for theirs is the
kingdom of Heaven.*

*Blessed are you when people
insult you, persecute you and
falsely say all kinds of evil
against you because of me.
Rejoice and be glad, because
great is your reward in heaven,
for in the same way they
persecuted the prophets who
were before you.*

Matthew 5:10-12 NIV

Persecuted Because of Righteousness —Old Testament Anticipation:

After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong.

Isaiah 53:11-12 NIV

Opposing Worldly Values:

Self-preservation

God's Reward:

Inheriting the Kingdom of God

How to Develop This Quality:

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NIV

Additional Scripture for S.O.A.P.

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:12-17 NIV

When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

1 Peter 2:23 ESV

But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened."

1 Peter 3:14 NIV

That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:10 NIV