

You Don't Have to Be Angry Anymore:

# Reflections on The Beatitudes for People with Cancer

*A companion to the video series,  
designed for individual or group use.*

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**Reflections on The Beatitudes**  
**for People with Cancer**  
**COMPANION GUIDE**

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# The Beatitudes

(Matthew 5:1-11a)

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them saying:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.”

## A Word of Welcome from DVD Presenter, Ken Curtis

When faced with a life-changing illness such as cancer, our initial gut-wrenching emotions range from fear to loneliness to anger. Our lives are turned upside down and nothing is as it was. We long for life to get back to “normal,” yet we fear it never will and we are not sure where to turn. As I’ve faced my own health struggles in recent years, I’ve found my central source of strength in the words of Scripture. It is my prayer that these *Reflections on The Beatitudes* will deliver what they promise. “Blessed are they” are the familiar first words of each line, bringing with them the unmistakable promise of good things emerging from tough times!

*Reflections on The Beatitudes* is the third production in our series, created especially for those facing the difficulties of a life-altering diagnosis. As with the previous programs, *Reflections on Psalm 23* and *Reflections on The Lord’s Prayer*, *Reflections on The Beatitudes* turns to Scripture passages for a word of comfort and encouragement. These words from Matthew 5:1-11 are short, familiar, and perhaps deceptively simple. Yet as we explore them more intimately, we find rich meaning and comfort for our current struggles.

Facing a serious illness, such as cancer, evokes many kinds of responses. For some people, the most immediate need is relief from physical discomfort and pain. For others, the shock of finding they are ill brings long-buried emotional issues to the forefront. For still others, ongoing responsibilities weigh heavily as they contemplate who will help fill their role if they cannot continue to function as they are accustomed. Financial matters are an unavoidable center of anxiety for many. Some find themselves caught up in a spiritual crisis, wondering if their faith will sustain them, while others wonder if they can still seek and find the Lord they had so little time for in the past.

It is also true that it is more than individuals who get cancer. Whole families do! The entire intimate circle of loved ones is caught up in coping with the disease. Consequently, this video series and companion guides are often used by family and friends, along with the person with cancer. The material is designed for both group discussion and personal reflection. Choose or modify the material as needed.

Finally, I encourage you to take your time. Do one session per day or even better, one each week. Reflect deeply on the blessings offered through the Scripture! In all likelihood, you will experience new understandings of your own circumstances, which will make the words of Scripture even more real in your own life. May you find yourself truly blessed as you explore all that the Lord has prepared for you in these short sayings!

## A Few Practical Suggestions for Dealing with Cancer

- **Accept and value the support of others.** There will be family and friends who want to assist you. Their love and support is an important source of strength, even though you may be hesitant or embarrassed to accept at first. One friend called and gave me a much-needed admonition when she heard of my diagnosis. This lady knew I lived a busy life and was immersed in my work. She was blunt. “You are at a place now where you have to make some changes,” she said. “You need to pay a lot more attention to yourself and concentrate on getting well.” That was so helpful in bringing me to the point of giving myself permission to concentrate on dealing with my disease and allowing others to take on some of my responsibilities at work and home. I have come to view their gifts of time and energy as a tangible expression of love and care, a blessing of incomparable worth.
- **Strengthen your prayer life.** Now is the time to increase the time you spend in prayer. Begin with The Lord’s Prayer, one that you have likely prayed many times in the past. When you are ready, reach out to God in your own words. As you share openly in prayer, you will find increased comfort and strength for each new challenge. On your DVD is a special feature “An Artist’s Interpretation of the St. Teresa Prayer.” Use this as another form of prayer. For much more information on prayer, see our companion program *Reflections on The Lord’s Prayer for People with Cancer*.
- **Music can help.** Music can sooth the soul like nothing else. Select music that speaks to you and brings comfort to your spirit. I find I am especially comforted through music based on Scripture. Explore various styles of music and find what works for you. What brings comfort and peace to your spirit? Our companion program *Reflections on Psalm 23* includes two musical renditions of the song, and *Reflections on The Lord’s Prayer* features a new version of the prayer set to music. These pieces are a source of comfort for many.

## A Few Practical Suggestions For Dealing With Cancer (continued)

- **Keep a journal.** When I was first diagnosed with cancer, a close friend offered this advice: Take good notes! I did not understand at the time the wisdom of this counsel. But I have come to highly value the documentation of my journey through the thickets of the cancer world. Having a log of what has happened and how I have reacted to it has proven invaluable. Cancer can be devastating. There is no way to soften the blow. This uninvited intruder defines the rest of your life to a significant degree. Things are going to be different. You are going to change, one way or another. There is no choice about that. But to some degree, you can choose how you will change, how you will respond to the changes that you cannot control, and how you will get a grip on the changes over which you do have some discretion. It is so important for you to be able to go back and track your experience. You will find new strength in seeing how you got through the intimidating experiences and survived the frightening moments. This will give you strength for the future. So get a journal or notebook and take good notes.
- **Be good to yourself.** My diagnosis has led me to a desire to take the best possible care of my body. It wasn't easy changing habits that were developed over a lifetime, but the results have been very positive. If you haven't already, begin to learn all you can about proper nutrition and exercise for your particular condition. Then put your knowledge into practice. Your body will thank you with an increased energy level and you'll enjoy the benefits that come with doing all you can to help your immune system.

# Suggestions for Group Leaders

Make the most of this study guide with these tips!

- **Consider** the goals you have for your group and tailor your lessons around these goals. Will this be a cancer support group, with a bit of learning about The Beatitudes? If so, you may want to spend more time on personal sharing and less on discussion questions. Or is yours more of a Bible study group that has some focus on serious illness? Perhaps then you will focus more on discussing The Beatitudes and how they apply to your personal experience. Whatever the case, feel free to pick and choose the parts of this material that will work in your particular setting.
- **Pray** for the group before you begin to meet with them and then continue praying for them as you get to know them better and as you learn together. Show each one that you care by remembering their needs and inquiring specifically. Let them know you are praying for them.
- **Prepare** to lead by viewing the DVD segments ahead of time, perhaps more than once. Also review the teaching materials, select questions and activities that will fit your group, and gather any necessary items. Our material is fully reproducible for group use.
- **Expect** lively discussion, varying opinions, occasional tears, and moments of discovery. Create an open, accepting environment where all of this is expected, allowed and welcomed.
- **Review** other available resources such as The Artist's Interpretation of the St. Teresa Prayer, found on your DVD.

## Session Overview for Leaders

Each of the nine sessions consists of two pages of material. If a handout is desired, the second page of each lesson would be appropriate for group participants to take home. All material is reproducible as needed. Each session includes the following elements, in this order:

1. A brief summary of the main ideas presented in the segment.
2. An opening time to encourage participants to share their journeys and to bond together.
3. The video clip (approximately 10 minutes) introducing and exploring a particular beatitude and Ken's reflections.
4. Group discussion on the video, using the list of discussion questions as a guide.
5. Suggestions for reflection throughout the week.
6. Closing prayer and a time of blessing.



# SESSION 1: *Introduction*

## *Blessedness out of Brokenness*

### **Main Ideas**

The Beatitudes are Jesus' introduction to the Sermon on the Mount. Considered some of the most profound words ever spoken, they promise blessing through challenging circumstances. For those of us struggling with cancer or other difficulties, the Beatitudes invite us to find blessedness in the midst of our brokenness.

### **Opening Time**

- Welcome group participants and take time for introductions. Ask each person to share briefly about his or her cancer journey, as Ken will do in the DVD segment. Encourage a few to share some specific low points and some unexpected high points in their story.
- Let's share some of our own ideas of what the Beatitudes are about. When you hear "Beatitudes," what comes to mind? Can you recall any of the Beatitudes specifically?
- Today we will see the introductory segment. We will get a good idea of where this series hopes to take us and what treasures we will uncover in the Beatitudes. As you watch today's segment, look for some words or phrases that describe the Beatitudes.

### **View the Video Segment for Session 1**

**Scripture Connection:** *The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert.* Deuteronomy 2:7a

*For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.* Isaiah 44:3

## Discussion Questions for Session 1

### *Blessedness out of Brokenness*

- What descriptors stuck out to you regarding the Beatitudes? Was there anything that surprised you as you watched this segment?
- A diagnosis of cancer can bring much brokenness into our lives. Ken lists some specific negative impacts of cancer. Which of these do you personally relate to?
- Ken speaks of finding happiness and blessedness in the midst of his trial with cancer. Does this resonate with you?
- Our presenter, Ken Curtis, has found significant encouragement and blessing through the Beatitudes. What are you hoping to gain as you also spend time with these ancient words of blessing?
- The Roman Road is shown throughout this DVD segment. The road would have been very busy with travelers during Jesus' time. Many were seeking Jesus to heal the pain in their lives. Just like those who were sick or hurting 2,000 years ago, we also now come to receive a blessing from Jesus. Is your heart open and ready to find a blessing in the midst of your brokenness?

**This Week:** Read through the Beatitudes, found in Matthew 5:1-11a, on p. 3 of this guide. Let these words begin to work into your heart. Reflect on which of the eight blessings is most meaningful to you right now in your journey.

**Closing:** Lord, we come to this place with hurts so deep that only you can know their depths. We pray now that our hearts would be open and ready to receive the blessing you desire for us. And now, as it says in Ephesians 1:3, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." It is in His precious name that we pray. Amen.

## SESSION 2: *Blessed are The Poor in Spirit for Theirs Is the Kingdom of Heaven*

### **Main Ideas**

When our pride gives way to humility, we are ready to embrace the most beautiful gifts of the Kingdom.

### **Opening Time**

- Read today's Beatitude, as stated in the session title. Ask: When you hear the words "Poor in Spirit," what comes to mind?
- Ask: What is something in your life that brings a strong feeling of Pride? Perhaps a particularly meaningful accomplishment would fit the bill. Describe the feeling you get when you think of this event or accomplishment.
- Now reflect on a time when you felt spiritually and emotionally bankrupt.
- In today's segment we will visit a place on earth that many think of as a barren wasteland. At first glance, the Dead Sea is just that — a body of water that cannot support life in customary ways. But, as we will soon learn, the Dead Sea holds treasures other lakes could never offer.

### **View the Video Segment for Session 2**

**Scripture Connection:** *One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.* Proverbs 13:7

## Discussion Questions for Session 2

### *Blessed are The Poor in Spirit*

- In your own words, describe what it means to be “poor in spirit.” How have your challenges with cancer brought you to a new level of humility?
- Ken shares a feeling of disconnect and disbelief when faced with his diagnosis, especially the recommendation that he “get his affairs in order.” Do you relate to his description of feeling trapped behind a glass wall and not fully present?
- In what ways is the Dead Sea a fitting metaphor for your experience with cancer?
- Ken came to see the Dead Sea as holding many gifts and blessings that were not apparent at first. Can you relate this concept to your current situation?
- It is often from our weakest, lowest points that we are best able to see God and appreciate His greatness. Why is that?
- The promise offered to those who are poor in spirit is the Kingdom of Heaven! How can you look at your place of humility as a sort of honor or blessing that is unfolding to reveal a greater good?

**This week:** Consider ways that you have been blessed through your trials with cancer. Be specific, taking time to identify particular negative experiences and at least one blessing you can associate with them. Consider how these realities could bring you closer to the Kingdom.

**Closing:** Lord, in the midst of our trials we come to you. In so many ways we are broken and hurting, yet we ask for your blessing in the midst of our weakness. We hold to the promise that while we are weak, you are eternally strong. Lord, bless each one here today with a place in your eternal Kingdom. Amen.

## SESSION 3: *Blessed are Those Who Mourn for They Will Be Comforted*

### **Main Ideas**

The ability to mourn is a sign of our humanity and our connectedness. Through effective mourning of our losses, we open ourselves up to the possibilities of being comforted in a “new normal.”

### **Opening Time**

- Read today’s Beatitude, as stated in the session title. Say: Mourning is not something we look forward to or ask for, yet it is a very necessary step during times of loss. Why?
- Ask: Can you describe the most desolate place you’ve ever visited? Where was it and what was it like?
- As you consider your trial with cancer, talk about one experience that felt desolate and dry to you.
- Say: Today’s segment will take us to a dry and desolate place — the Mount of Temptation.

### **View the Video Segment for Session 3**

**Scripture Connection:** *... provide for those who grieve in Zion ... bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.* Isaiah 61:3

*Then maidens will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow.*  
Jeremiah 31:13

### Discussion Questions for Session 3

#### *Blessed are Those Who Mourn*

- Describe the Mount of Temptation, the site of this session's presentation. Why is this place a fitting metaphor for the process of mourning?
- Mourning is described as our response to a lack or a loss. Regarding our cancer experience, we can think specifically of a lack of health and a loss of capabilities. Ken shares how his ability to swim had been significantly diminished. Can you think of a specific physical loss that has hit you in a similar way?
- Ken describes the connection between physical, emotional, and spiritual pain. How have you experienced the very real connections between these three?
- Through genuine mourning, we can release what was and begin to accept, and even embrace, what is. It is through this process that our comfort comes. Describe a time when you've mourned deeply and felt comforted.
- In the midst of the desert, we find the refreshingly cool water flowing from the mountain. In what ways have you accepted a "new normal" and found an unexpected blessing?
- Have you personally experienced the Holy Spirit as a comforter in times of trial? Describe.

**This week:** Take time to identify specific losses you've experienced. Mourn them individually. Release them. Accept your new normal and embrace the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

**Closing:** Lord, a short time ago we could not have imagined all the difficult changes that would come into our lives, yet here we are. Help us Lord to fully and deeply mourn those losses that have impacted us. Bring your soothing comfort, Lord, and ease us into a time of acceptance and peace. Amen.

## SESSION 4: *Blessed are The Meek for They Shall Inherit the Earth*

### **Main Ideas**

Meek is not the same as weak. Jesus shows us that genuine meekness is a sign of strength, when we willingly choose the perfectly fitted yoke He has made for us.

### **Opening Time**

- What comes to mind when you hear the term “meek”? Is this a characteristic you consider as positive or negative?
- What might be the opposite of meek?
- Can you think of a time when you have felt particularly weak during your struggle with cancer? This may be a physical, emotional, or a spiritual weakness that has impacted you.
- In today’s segment, we will explore the concept of meek, as it relates to a familiar symbol: the yoke.

### **View the Video Segment for Session 4**

**Scripture Connection:** *But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.* Psalm 37:11

*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.* Matthew 11:29

## Discussion Questions for Session 4

### *Blessed are The Meek*

- How has the video session altered your perception of what it means to be meek? How is meek different than weak?
- What is a yoke and what is its purpose?
- When two animals are yoked together, they are joined for a common purpose. Ken explains that we are all carrying a yoke of some sort. It is up to us to choose which one. Can you describe what you've been yoked to in recent years or months? It may be fear, pain, anger or grief.
- Can you describe the yoke that Jesus offers to us? How is His yoke different from the ones we tend to choose?
- How does the quality of meekness relate to our willingness to be yoked with someone or something?
- When we embrace our meekness and yoke ourselves to the Lord, we find that our burdens become lighter. Yet still we hesitate. What holds us back?

**This week:** Look for those times when you feel weak or depleted. Intentionally choose to turn your weakness into meekness, a state of willing dependency on the Lord. Hold onto His promises and allow them to strengthen you, even as you take a time of needed rest.

**Closing:** Invite the group into a time of prayer and blessing. Pause for about 15 seconds following each phrase: Lord, we come to you as weak and hurting people. We silently bring our burdens to you. We embrace your promise to help us as we pick up your yoke and trust in you. Help us today and every day to share our burdens with you and to know the blessing of being fully in your family. Amen.



# SESSION 5: *Blessed are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness for They Will Be Filled*

## **Main Ideas**

As we align our heart's desire with the Lord's will, we can come to find true fulfillment in our lives.

## **Opening Time**

- For this session, bring in a treat that will fill the space with an inviting aroma. This could be popping popcorn, cinnamon buns, or freshly brewed coffee. It could even be a candle burning with an appealing 'food' scent.
- In our society, most people are not accustomed to feeling genuine hunger. We generally have enough to eat every day. The feeling we call "hunger" might be experienced as "well fed" by those in less fortunate circumstances. Ask: Can you recall a time when you felt genuine, gut-wrenching hunger? Describe this experience of feeling an intense need for sustenance.
- In today's session we will explore what it means to experience hunger for righteousness, or a heart after God's purposes. We will travel to Qumran, the site where the Dead Sea scrolls were hidden, protected in caves for nearly two thousand years in a barren dessert.

## **View the Video Segment for Session 5**

**Scripture Connection:** *If you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. Proverbs 2:3-5*

*Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Luke 6:21*

## Discussion Questions for Session 5

### *Blessed are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness*

- Ken describes a “spiritual hunger” that can feel very barren, rather like a time of intense testing. Have you felt this sort of hunger in your life? Describe this form of hunger.
- A paradox is explored in that those who THINK they are righteous, are actually far from it! Rather, it is those who recognize their own short-comings and then pursue God’s ways who are on the path toward genuine righteousness. We cannot be focused on our own self will AND genuinely pursue God’s will at the same time! How does this play out in practical terms?
- A genuine longing for God can be painful, especially if we fear He is far away. How is this intense longing a blessing in disguise? What would it look like to have your hunger for righteousness be filled, as the beatitude promises?
- Dr. Balducci speaks of each person having a unique calling. When we pursue that calling, our lives are rich with meaning, peace and legacy. Three questions emerge from Dr. Balducci’s work with advanced cancer patients:
  - What is uniquely yours to give?
  - Who is uniquely yours to touch?
  - What are you uniquely called to be?

**This week:** Consider your own unique situation. Embrace your personal hunger for the Lord. Reflect on it and seek His will. As your heart aligns with His purposes, you will find He satisfies your deepest needs for meaning and fulfillment.

**Closing:** Lord, we delight to know that our longing for more of you is right and good. Fill us with your righteousness! Show us how to fulfill the unique and beautiful calling you have for our lives and bring us to a place of peace. Amen.

# SESSION 6: *Blessed are The Merciful for They Will Be Shown Mercy*

## **Main Ideas**

When we receive and show mercy, we find ourselves strangely renewed and refreshed.

## **Opening Time**

- Open by reading aloud the familiar story of “The Good Samaritan,” found in the Gospel of Luke 10:25-37.
- Ask: As you listened to this story, with whom did you most easily identify? The hurt man, one of those who passed by, the Samaritan who stopped to help or the expert who was asking good questions about eternal life?
- Ask: Describe a time when you felt as if you were on the desolate and lonely Jericho Road.
- Say: The concept of the Good Samaritan is alive and well! There is a Good Samaritan Movement, a Good Samaritan Facebook Group, and even the movie “Pay it Forward,” which encouraged unsolicited good deeds and acts of kindness. Does anyone here have a Good Samaritan story to share before we begin?

## **View the Video Segment for Session 6**

**Scripture Connection:** *Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge.* Psalm 57:1a

*This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another.’* Zechariah 7:9

## Discussion Questions for Session 6

### *Blessed are The Merciful*

- As you think about your struggles, who are the individuals who have shown you an extra measure of mercy or caring during your times of need? How has this affected you?
- Discuss your experiences with different types of doctors. How have their care (or lack of) impacted your journey?
- Describe a time when you've been too overwhelmed with your own needs to show mercy to others. Do you relate to the paradox that as we give of ourselves, we can feel our own energy increase?
- Ken speaks of an interesting "implied threat" in this beatitude: if the merciful are blessed, what about those who are not merciful?
- Consider those who've lovingly cared for you. Have you taken the time to encourage them with the heartfelt thanks that will empower them to bless others in need?
- Ken describes how fellow patients have encouraged and inspired his journey. See the appendix on p. 30 for more on the work of these individuals. How have fellow patients been a source of mercy for you? How can you do the same?

**This week:** Think of someone specific to whom you can show mercy. Plan now to follow through with a word, a card, a good deed or some other tangible reminder of your care.

**Closing:** As it says in Hebrews 4:16, "let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Father, you have shown each one of us mercy beyond measure. Go with us now and help us to do the same in your name. Amen.

# SESSION 7: *Blessed are The Pure in Heart for They Will See God*

## **Main Ideas**

As we genuinely seek God, we sometimes catch a glimpse of Him and His greatness.

## **Opening Time**

- Invite a few volunteers to share a personal story of blessing someone with mercy this past week. Ask: How did your act of mercy impact you as the giver?
- Say: As we transition into today's topic, think about ways that you see God in your everyday life. What tangible evidence do you find for God as you go about your day?
- Ask: Are there habits or rituals that you practice regularly that help you to seek and find God? Describe.

## **View the Video Segment for Session 7**

**Scripture Connection:** *I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ... being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*  
Philippians 1:3-6.

*Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.* I Corinthians 13:12

## Discussion Questions for Session 7

### *Blessed are The Pure in Heart*

- After watching the presentation, how would you define “Pure in Heart?”
- As Ken stands on the Mount of Olives, he speaks of Jesus’ final entrance into Jerusalem. What was Jesus thinking of as he faced his final week on earth and the pain of the cross? Can you think Jesus’ tears Jesus as not just for Jerusalem, but also for all who do not turn their hearts to Him?
- Ken gives several stories of those who pray for him faithfully. How does this type of devotion relate to the promise of today’s beatitude?
- Ken urges attentive care to the immune system so it can best do its job, no matter what form of treatment is chosen. How can you better care for your immune system?
- There is a delicate balance between taking charge of our own care, yet recognizing that God is ultimately in charge. We are wise to seek Him and listen to His voice. How have you worked at this?

**This week:** Look for ways that God is visible to you, whether in the beauty of nature, the loving care of another person, or in His unmistakable leading. Take note of these “God Sightings” and rejoice in your blessing!

**Closing:** Just before going to the Mount of Olives, Jesus prayed for himself, his disciples, and all believers. Receive part of His prayer of blessing: “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” John 17: 24-26

## SESSION 8: *Blessed are The Peacemakers, For They Will Be Called Sons of God*

### **Main Ideas**

Even in the midst of a conflict-filled world, we can embrace peace of mind that will make all the difference in our lives.

### **Opening Time**

- Many worship services include a time for those in attendance to greet one another. In some traditions, this includes sharing the familiar words, “Peace be with you.” What does it mean to you to extend peace to another person?
- Ask: As you’ve faced your struggle with disease or crisis, what has been your greatest fear?
- The most frequent command given throughout Scripture is somewhat surprising! It is, “Do not be afraid,” or “Fear not!” For most of us, this is easier said than done. Let’s turn to today’s lesson for some thoughts on how to let go of fear and invite peace into our lives.

### **View the Video Segment for Session 8**

**Scripture Connection:** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:6-7

*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”* Isaiah 52:7

## Discussion Questions for Session 8

### *Blessed are The Peacemakers*

- What are some of the familiar Bible stories in which we hear the command “Do not be afraid” or “Fear not”?
- These statements are often accompanied by the assurance of the peace-giving phrase, “I am with you.” It would seem that a heart of peace is very important to the Lord! Why?
- Ken describes the transcendence of fear as the first step towards finding peace. How can this be just as important to your well-being as any medical treatment available?
- Some of the Biblical metaphors for replacing conflict with peace are very interesting. If swords and spears are unmistakable weapons of battle, what images do plows and pruning hooks bring to mind?
- We often hear battle-references related to cancer: War, Fight, Struggle, and Soldier are all words that evoke this idea of cancer being a battlefield. Ken offers a fresh outlook with new words such as Conversation, Classroom and Cooperation. Consider your own situation. How can one begin to see cancer in a new light? How might this help you to release the burden you are carrying and move forward with a new peace and confidence?

**This week:** Conflict in our world occurs at so many levels: International, interpersonal, and within each individual, just to name a few. It is easy to feel overwhelmed and helpless. Choose one area where you can consciously take energy spent on fear or conflict and shift that energy to life-giving, peace-making actions and thoughts!

**Closing:** We are each called to be “peacemakers” in our world and in our selves. Now receive this blessing from Philippians 4:7: “May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Amen.



## *SESSION 9: Blessed are Those Who are Persecuted Because of Righteousness, For Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*

### **Main Ideas**

Though our suffering may seem unjust, we can trust and rejoice that God is with us and has a bigger story in place.

### **Opening Time**

- Say: A working definition for “persecute” would be “to persistently harass with oppressive treatment, especially because of religion or race.”
- Ask: Have you ever felt that your current crisis is somewhat like being persecuted? Describe this. What do you see as the source of your crisis?
- Ask: It is natural to experience a wide range of emotions when faced with a crisis such as serious illness. Describe some of the intense emotions you have felt. Have you been honest with the Lord about your questions and feelings?

### **View the Video Segment for Session 9**

**Scripture Connection:** *In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.* John 14:2-4.

*Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.* Philippians 3:20-21.

## Discussion Questions for Session 9

### *Blessed are Those Who are Persecuted Because of Righteousness*

- Sometimes we tend to blame God, asking questions such as “Why me?” and “Am I being punished?” At other times we feel we must cover up for God’s apparent lack of response to our situation. We hide our feelings and put on a good front for others, in fear that our real thoughts might paint God in a bad light. Where do you find yourself in this challenge?
- In this segment we see the prison where Jesus may have been held as he waited to see Caiaphas, the high priest. Can you picture Jesus in this place? Consider the horrific persecution Jesus endured because of His righteousness.
- Ken reminds us of the story of Job as one who had many reasons to question God. From our vantage point of reading Job’s story we can see that God had a much bigger picture in mind. Can you see glimpses of a bigger picture unfolding in your own story?
- Justin Martyr declared to the Emperor of Rome, “You can kill us, but you cannot hurt us!” What does he mean by this? What might this mean for us?
- “The Kingdom of Heaven” is promised for those who are called to suffer persecution because of righteousness. In what ways are you already experiencing this promise?

**This week:** When you find yourself wondering “Why me?,” remember that God walks with you through this trial, and He has a bigger picture in mind and is preparing a reward beyond compare for you in Heaven!

**Closing:** Receive this blessing, personalized from 2 Timothy 4:18: *May the Lord rescue you from every evil attack and bring you safely to his heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

# SESSION 10: *Sharing the Blessing*

## **Main Ideas**

As we receive a blessing, we can do no less than go forward and extend that blessing into the world.

## **Opening Time**

- Distribute a copy of the Beatitudes, as found on p. 3 of this guide. Read them aloud slowly. Ask: As you look back over the eight Beatitudes, which of them has held a special blessing for you?
- Ask: The Beatitudes are so rich in meaning, no resource could pretend to explore them to their fullest. As you think back over the sessions we've covered relating the Beatitudes specifically to cancer and other life challenges, what sticks out to you as a main theme?
- Part of this final segment was filmed at the Beautiful Ibillim Church in Galilee. This church is known as "The Beatitudes Church." Let's return one final time to the reflections on the Beatitudes.

## **View the Video Segment for Session 10**

**Scripture Connection:** *How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.* Psalm 84:1-2.

*Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*  
Philippians 3:13b-14

## Discussion Questions for Session 10

### *Sharing the Blessing*

- Does anything strike you about the Beatitudes Church that is shown throughout this segment? Why do you think the pastor believes the Beatitudes are the key to bringing peace in our world?
- As you consider the charge to find and work towards filling a mission in life, what concerns do you have? Do you have an idea of what your mission might be in your present circumstances?
- Can you relate to St. Theresa's prayer, "What do you want from me?" Take a look at the prayer on p. 29. How do you see this prayer as a summation of the Beatitudes? Is this a prayer you can pray with sincerity?
- Discuss the quote that was shared: "Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little."

**This week:** Read through the Beatitudes each day, soaking up the unmistakable blessing the Lord has bestowed upon you. Then consider how you can extend that blessing onward.

**Closing:** Your unique story is the one thing that belongs exclusively to you! Go from this place prepared to receive and share blessing in every single chapter of your story! Now receive these words from I Thessaonians 3:12: "*May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.*" Amen.

## *“What do You Want from Me?”*

*Excerpts of a Prayer of Teresa of Avila in Spain (1515-1582)*

*I am yours, and for you I was born:  
What do you want from me?*

*I am yours because you created me, yours because you redeemed me,  
yours because you bore with me, yours because you called me to you,  
yours because you also waited for me and did not have me condemned,  
What do you want from me? ...*

*See, here is my heart, I place it in your hand,  
together with my life, my body and my soul,  
my inmost feelings and my love; ...*

*Since I have given myself to you,  
What do you want from me?*

*Give me life or death, health or sickness;  
give me honour or dishonour, conflict or sublime peace,  
weakness or full strength: I will accept it all.  
What do you want from me? ...*

*If you want me to rejoice, then out of love for you I will rejoice.  
If you lay burdens upon me, then I shall want to die bearing them.  
Tell me where, when and how, just tell me, ...  
What do you want from me? ...*

*Let me be in the midst of trouble or of joy, if you will only live in me:  
What do you want from me?*

*I am yours, and for you I was born:  
What do you want from me?*

## ***Additional Resources as Referenced in Session 6***

***The Cancer Recovery Foundation*** – Founded by Greg Anderson, The Cancer Recovery Foundation seeks to help patients find support and care with “integrative prevention and survival strategies.” In 1984 Greg was diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer and given only 30 days to live. More than 25 years later, Greg continues to help others through research, advocacy, education, and support. You can learn more about Greg and the foundation he started at [www.cancerrecovery.org](http://www.cancerrecovery.org).

***Our Journey of Hope*** – Our Journey of Hope is the culmination of a vision born in the heart of a cancer patient and those who ministered to her spiritual needs at Cancer Treatment Centers of America. The organization works to meet the spiritual needs of cancer patients and their loved ones and to strengthen and complement the spiritual support many of them may already be receiving from other sources, such as their local church. Cancer survivor Lyn Thompson is the coordinator of this ministry. Find out more at [www.ourjourneyofhope.com](http://www.ourjourneyofhope.com).

***When God and Cancer Meet*** - by Lynn Eib. As a cancer survivor, Lynn has seen God working in her own life in miraculous ways. These uplifting stories, as well as the life-changing testimonies of others have been touched by God through their cancer journey, are shared in this powerful, encouraging book. Find this and other books by Lynn Eib on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

# The Reflections Series

## For People with Cancer

This series of meditations on The Lord's Prayer, the 23rd Psalm, and the Beatitudes with Dr. Ken Curtis, founder and president of Vision Video and Christian History Institute, is based on a wholistic approach to coping with cancer. When he was diagnosed with advanced cancer and given little hope for survival, he pursued a combination of traditional and alternative medicine, undergirded by a strong spiritual dimension and prayer support team. While made particularly for people facing the crisis of cancer, the reflections are relevant for any health crisis, or for *anyone* wanting to apply these Scripture passages to their lives. These programs are co-productions of Vision Video and EO-TV Holland, UCB-TV England and Nazareth Village.

### *You Don't Have to be Afraid Anymore* **Reflections on Psalm 23 for People with Cancer**

For this video Curtis went to Israel, home of David, writer of the Psalm, to be with the shepherds, travel "through the valley of the shadow of death," and explore and enjoy the healing powers of the green pastures and still waters. The resulting 13 meditations (about eight min. each) provide a combination of candid personal experience of what it means to battle cancer and some of the spiritual resources available from this time-honored Psalm. A PDF guide can be downloaded from our website. Winner of the Freddie Award from the International Health and Medical Media Awards and the Platinum Remi Award at the WorldFest Houston International Film Festival 2008. 104 minutes (E<sup>ST</sup>).



#501093D, \$14.99

### *You Don't Have to Feel Alone Anymore* **Reflections on The Lord's Prayer for People with Cancer**

Join Ken on this journey into the world of the Lord's Prayer. Tap into the riches of its words while visiting places important in the life of Jesus. The Lord's Prayer is not just a way of praying; it's a way of "seeing." When the prayer is grasped and uttered from the heart, it can — and will — change us. We realize that we are not alone, no matter how difficult or seemingly hopeless our situation. Even in our pain, there can come a joy and a feeling of rightness about our world.

Winner of the Gold Remi award at WorldFest 2009. Ten 8-min. segments (E<sup>ST</sup>, extras).



#501260D, \$14.99

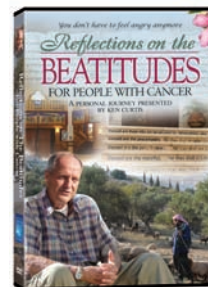
Many want to acquire quantities of the *Reflections* series to share with others going through crises. We offer quantity discounts on the **two series above** if you plan to **GIVE** them away (not for resale).

5-9 copies, \$11.99 each • 10-24 copies, \$9.99 each • 25-49 copies, \$7.99 each • 50+ copies, \$4.99 each

### *You Don't Have to Be Angry Anymore* **Reflections on the Beatitudes for People with Cancer**

*Finding blessedness out of brokenness*

*Reflections on the Beatitudes for People with Cancer* is the third installment in the *Reflections* series with Ken Curtis. For this episode, Ken visits fascinating sites in Israel, among them the location traditionally said to be where Jesus gave the Beatitudes. This brief collection of sayings about blessedness or happiness provided the opening to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Ken explores the richness and depth of the Beatitudes to challenge us to find blessedness out of our brokenness, a most difficult task for those who are confronted with cancer or any life trauma. Along the way he shares his own journey in dealing with advanced cancer, including the process of sorting through various treatment options which often went beyond the traditional methods recommended by doctors. Ten segments, eight to ten minutes each.



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**To order these DVDs or request a catalog, call Vision Video at 1-800-523-0226 or go to [www.visionvideo.com](http://www.visionvideo.com).**