

This session covers the basic meaning and structure of the Beatitudes.

- Usually thoughtful Christians are rightly cautious of anything new when it comes to our understanding of the Bible. In view of this natural tendency, was there anything in the video or study guide that was particularly challenging or unexpected? Have you ever experienced something difficult that later turned out to be a blessing? Briefly explain that experience.
- This Bible study by Colin Smith attempts to address the challenge of making progress in spiritual growth. He uses an analogy that pictures a series of seven rings, each suspended on a rope from a high ceiling. At either end of these rings there is a high platform, and your goal is to get from one platform to the other by swinging from ring to ring. The good news is that the first ring is within your reach. If you pull it back and swing on it, your *momentum* will bring you within reach of the second ring, and swinging on the second will bring you within reach of the third. To move from one ring to the next, you must grasp each ring in order.
- Colin's RING analogy is an attempt to give us good news. He says, "When you examine yourself in the light of the Beatitudes you will be challenged, which is good, but you may also feel overwhelmed, which would be bad." But the good news is that the first ring is within our reach. Have you ever experienced this tension between standing in grace and striving for growth? What did Colin say that gave you hope and encouragement?
- After reviewing this first video, what there anything Colin said that you found particularly helpful? If so why?

## Page 2

- Colin explains that the beatitudes do more than describe what a blessed life looks like, it gives us a roadmap for making progress in the Christian life. But the starting point is not found in the places where we normally look. It starts with an acknowledgment of our spiritual need, which comes by being aware of how far you fall short of the life to which God has called you.
- Colin used the Apostle Peter as an example of how the presence of Jesus drove him to an awareness of his sinfulness (See Luke 5:1-10). In what ways is a healthy awareness of our sin helpful? How does this awareness make our spiritual lives more difficult? What encouragement are we given to reach out for the first ring? How would the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14) be an example of this?

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### Other Resources:

#### Quote by Myron S. Augsburger

This is really a deeper life sermon. Here Jesus is probing the inner being, raising the question of motive. And motive is the source from which our acts issue.

The Greek word which is translated “blessed,” is difficult to translate into English. It incorporates the meaning of wholeness, of joy, of well-being, of holistic peace expressed by the Hebrew word *shalom*.

Therefore, beloved, since you already know these things, be on your guard so that you will not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure standing. **18But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.**

(2 Peter 3:17-18