

Session 1 | January 6, 2026

**Once Upon a Mountaintop:
The Blessedness of Living as Kingdom Citizens**

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY with PATTY STUMP

The following pages contain information provided
by our speaker for your study and enrichment.

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Week 1: Session Guide

The Ten Commandments were intended to bring about: heart change. However, though difficult, these commandments could be “carried out” without any heart change.

In Matthew 4, three key themes emerge: 1. **The Authority of God's Word ("it is written")**, 2. **Heart Condition: Repentance**, 3. **Decision: Follow Him** (Also John the Baptist's main message).

The Sermon on the Mount, considered to be Jesus' greatest message, is found in **Matthew 5-7**.

The first portion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is known as: **the Beatitudes**.

Makarios (Greek) means: “Blessed, Fortunate, or Happy”

It has been said that the Beatitudes are the “Be Attitudes” of a true follower of Christ—a state of blessedness or happiness that is not impacted by life circumstances.

One thing is essential if one is to experience “*Makarios*” (blessedness): a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Unlike spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Romans 12:6-8), where no one has them all, the blessedness of the Beatitudes is for all believers, as these are to be the characteristics of Kingdom citizens both now and then.

Key Takeaways:

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” – Proverbs 4:23, NIV

Week 1: Growth Opportunity

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” – Proverbs 4:23, NIV

As we begin this year’s study—and Growth Opportunities—resist rushing through lessons, even if passages are familiar to you. God imparts fresh insights to our hearts through time in His Word, prayer, and the work of His Holy Spirit.

Day 1: In Session 1, we touched upon the difference between the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:4-21), and the Sermon on the Mount. The Ten Commandments, while intended to impact one’s heart, could be responded to without any real heart investment. In contrast, Jesus’ message in the Sermon on the Mount, particularly the Beatitudes, start with the condition of the heart. This week’s Growth Opportunity will focus on “heart work.” Resist distractions and tune into the stirrings of the Holy Spirit. May God reveal anything that hinders your heart from being more fully His!

In order to “get right” with God, we must first understand what is wrong. What does **Psalm 14:3** state?

And **Isaiah 53:6**? _____

What do we ALL have in common? _____

In Isaiah 53:6, “LORD” refers to God’s personal name: “YAHWEH.” What loving initiative did God take regarding mankind? _____

This reality is LIFE CHANGING! Where would we be without God’s loving initiative? _____

I LOVE **Isaiah 1:18**. Carefully and prayerfully write it here: _____

Our “heart work” begins with recognizing the condition of our hearts (**Romans 3:23**—fallen), and the unwavering reality of God’s heart:

Jeremiah 31:3 _____

John 3:16 _____

Prayerfully sit with these truths afresh as you conclude your time today. You may enjoy singing these words from “Amazing Grace,” written by John Newton in 1779. God is praiseworthy indeed!

* Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.

* 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed.

* Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

* The Lord has promised good to me; His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be, as long as life endures.

* Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil, a life of joy and peace.

* The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, the sun forbear to shine,
but God, who called me here below, will be forever mine.

* When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise, than when we'd first begun.

Day 2: Settle in and prayerfully quiet your heart. Invite God to speak to you through His Word. Read **Mark 4:1-20**—The Parable of the Sower. After reading it, consider the questions noted below.

What was the first word Jesus spoke in verse 3? _____ This means to not only “hear” with ears, but to **be attentive** in response to what Jesus shares. May you “hear” His heart for you. In this parable, the Farmer represents God, the Seed is God’s Word, and the soil represents varied “heart soils.”

What are the 4 types of soil Jesus identifies?

1. _____ Condition: _____ Outcome: _____

2. _____ Condition: _____ Outcome: _____

3. _____ Condition: _____ Outcome: _____

4. _____ Condition: _____ Outcome: _____

What did Jesus say in verse 11 that is *incredibly* significant? _____

What is this “secret”? _____

Which of these “heart soils” most closely resembles your “heart soil” in relation to receiving God’s Word?

If your soil is like that of a **path**, God’s Word falls on it, but doesn’t sink in; it stays on the surface. If this represents your heart soil, I encourage you to begin to “sit” with God’s Word, asking Him to help it begin to sink into your heart.

If your soil is **shallow and rocky**, what steps might you take to cultivate, deepen your heart soil? What “rocks,” or hard areas, need to be tended to in your life?

If your heart soil is **thorny**, what is choking out God’s Word in your life? Fear? Unforgiveness? Lusts? Busyness? Discontent? Slander? Other:

Thorns typically have stubborn roots that must be intentionally, persistently ripped up. Spiritually, this involves confession, repentance, and standing firm in Truth. What steps do you personally need to take if you have identified “thorny heart soil”?

Consider meeting with a Pastor or trusted godly friend for prayer and guidance in tending to “thorns.”

If your heart soil is “**good**,” then God’s Word is taking root as you have kept short accounts of sin by confession, repentance, and asking God, and others, for forgiveness, taking God at His Word. What are other ways you are caring for your “heart soil?”

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.” – Ephesians 1:18-19, NIV

Day 3: Tending to our “heart soil” is an ongoing, intentional spiritual pursuit that cannot be dismissed, sporadic, or handled casually. As we continue our “**heart work**,” read **Deuteronomy 6**. Note things that stand out regarding tending to our hearts and our relationship with the Lord.

Now consider our theme verse and the verses immediately following it: **Proverbs 4:23-27**. What instructions are we to take to heart? _____

From this passage, is there an area God is impressing on you to bring more fully under His Lordship? _____

The Old Testament word “heart” is used more than 800 times; more than 200 times it deals with our thoughts, emotions, and those things that shape and motivate us. The condition of our heart is intimately shaped by our thoughts. As humans, we are comprised of 3 entities: our bodies, our soul, and our spirit. Our soul is comprised of our thoughts, heart, and deeds. This is distinctly different than our spirit, which is eternal. Our thoughts lead to heart attitudes, which lead to our actions.

It has been said that, “The heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart.”

Consider the following passages:

Jeremiah 17:9 — “*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*” (NIV).

Colossians 3:5 — “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry” (NIV).

Read, and write out (once again), **Romans 12:2**:

Your “spiritual exercise” for today is putting **Philippians 4:8** into practice: “Finally, brothers and sisters, 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” (NIV).

What can you dwell upon today that embodies the exhortations of this passage?

“Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”” — Matthew 22:37, NIV

Day 4: Today, focus on one passage, **Galatians 2:20** — “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (NIV).

Grasping the significance of this passage is essential as we prepare to “hear” with our hearts Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Let’s break down the key components of this passage and consider what each one means:

“I have been crucified with Christ.” What does this mean in its purest, spiritual sense?

“And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” Thoughts? _____

“The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God.” _____

"Who loved me and gave himself for me." _____

Now consider **1 John 3:16** — *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters"* (NIV). What does this mean, to lay down your life for others?

Not easy! Write out **Philippians 4:13**. _____

Psalm 139:3 states, *"You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways"* (NIV). God is intimately acquainted with each of us. Simultaneously, He respects our choice to give Him our heart willingly or to withhold it willfully; the choice is ours moment by moment.

As you conclude today, reflect upon **Philippians 1:6**, a precious promise: "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" (NIV).

Day 5: A day for reflection. **John 3:30** states: "He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease" (NKJV). This occurs as we take on the mind of Christ—holding our thoughts (heart) captive unto Him (**2 Corinthians 10:5**)—and as we are yielded to the work of the Holy Spirit within us. In turn, we are changed more into His image: **MIRACULOUS!**

As you reflect upon this week's Growth Opportunities, be attentive to God's stirring within you regarding anything He desires for you to adjust, eliminate, concentrate on, or take more deeply to heart.

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Hebrews 4:12, NIV