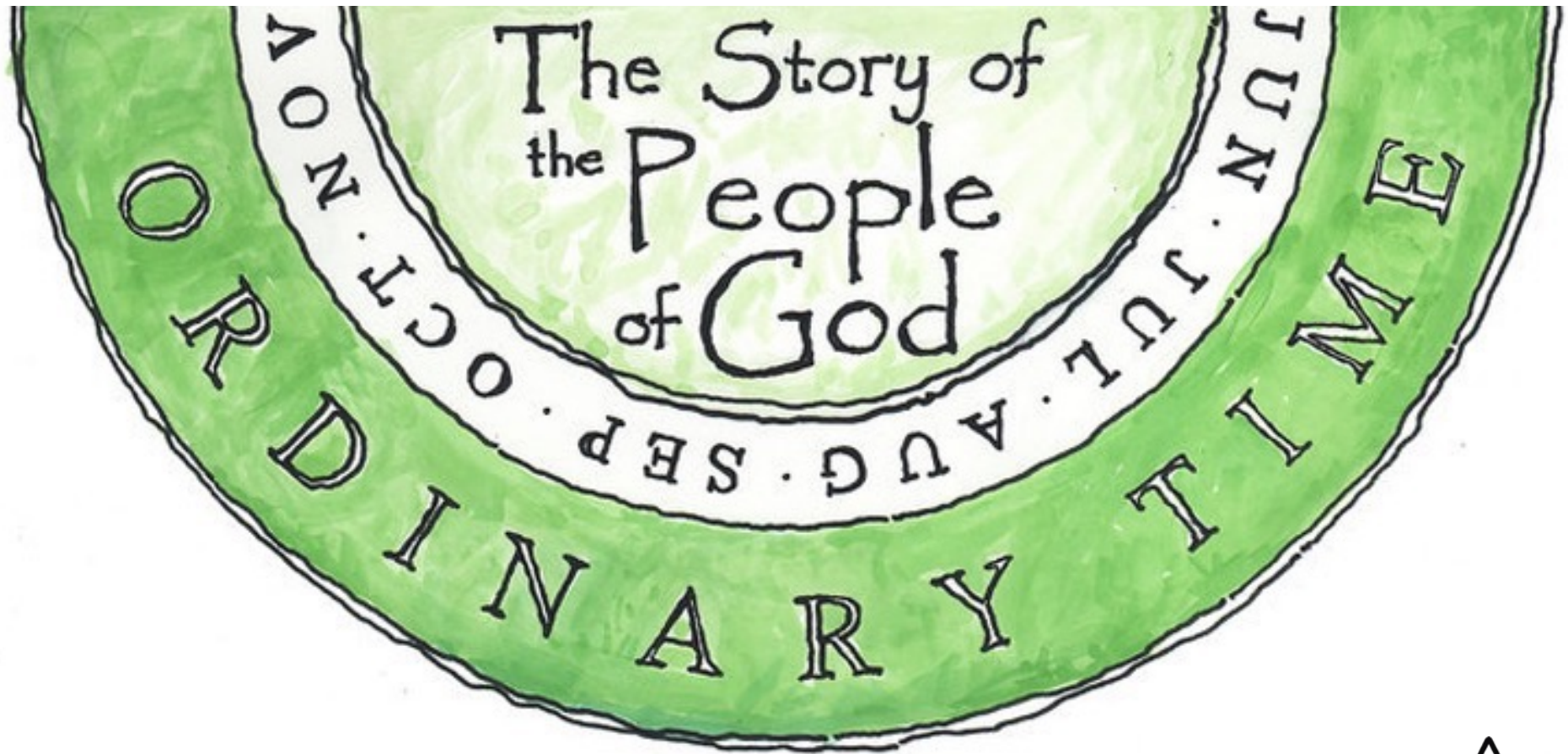


God of strength and courage,
in Jesus Christ, you set us free from sin and death,
and call us to the risk of faith and service.
Give us grace to follow him
who gave himself for others,
that, by our service, we may find
the life he came to bring.
Amen.

Opening Prayer

A decorative banner at the bottom of the page. It features a dark background with several hands of different colors (red, blue, green, purple) reaching out and holding each other. There are also colorful circles (red, blue, green, purple) scattered around the hands. The banner is set against a light gray background.



Two ripe peaches with a mix of red and yellow-orange skin are shown against a white background. One peach is in the foreground, slightly to the right, and another is behind it to the left. Two green leaves are attached to the bottom of the peaches.

**THE GOOD and
BEAUTIFUL GOD**





**THE GOOD and
BEAUTIFUL LIFE**



LEARNING TO LIVE LIKE JESUS

Learning to live w/out **ANGER**

Learning to live w/out **LUST**

Learning to live w/out **LYING**

Learning to live w/out **VENGEANCE**

Learning to live w/out **VANITY**

Learning to live w/out **AVARICE**

Learning to live w/out **WORRY**

Learning to live w/out **JUDGMENT**



James Bryan Smith

The Good and Beautiful

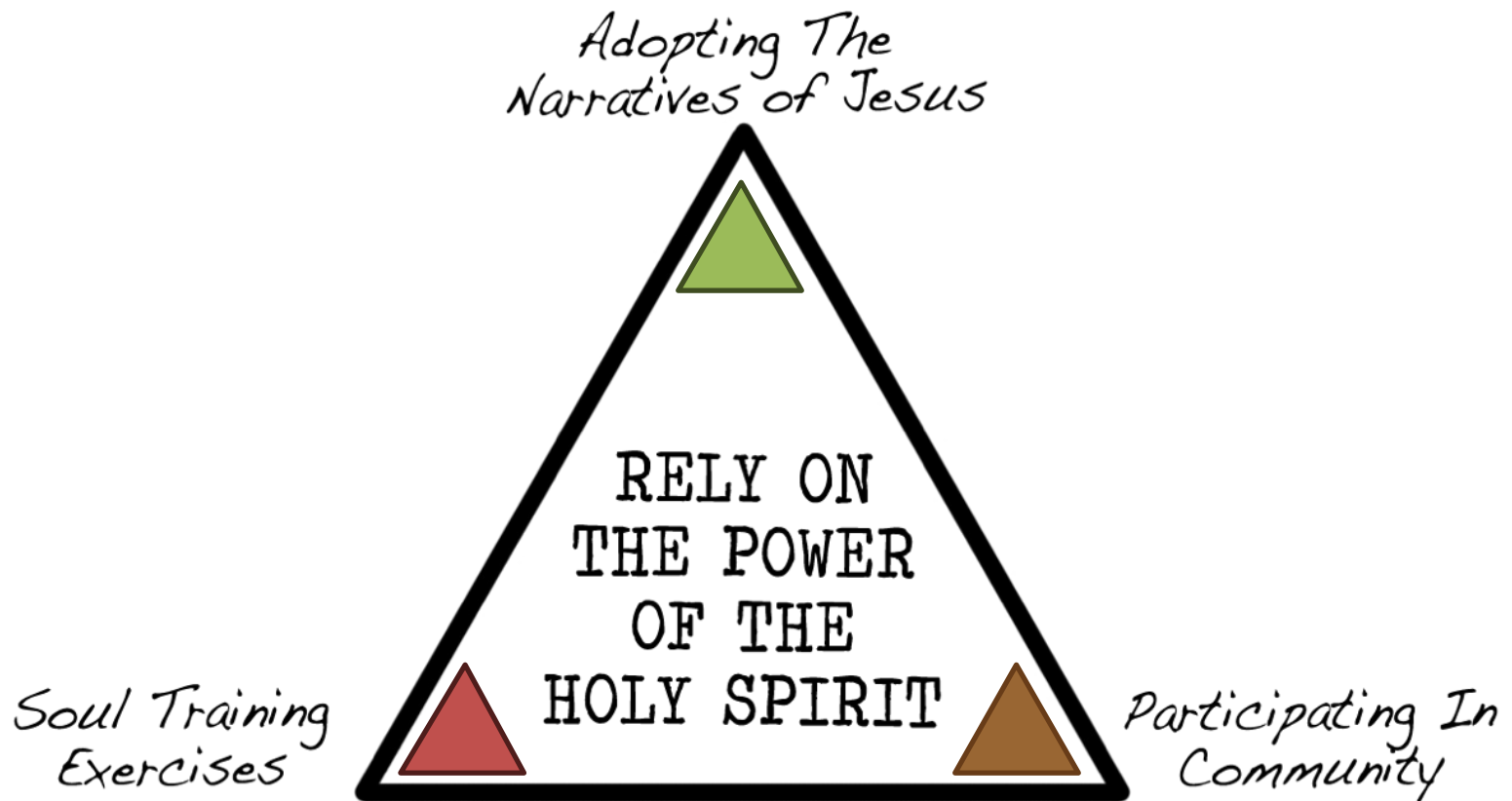
LIFE

PUTTING ON THE
CHARACTER OF CHRIST

"The best practice I have seen in Christian spiritual formation."

—DALLAS WILLARD

HOW SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION HAPPENS



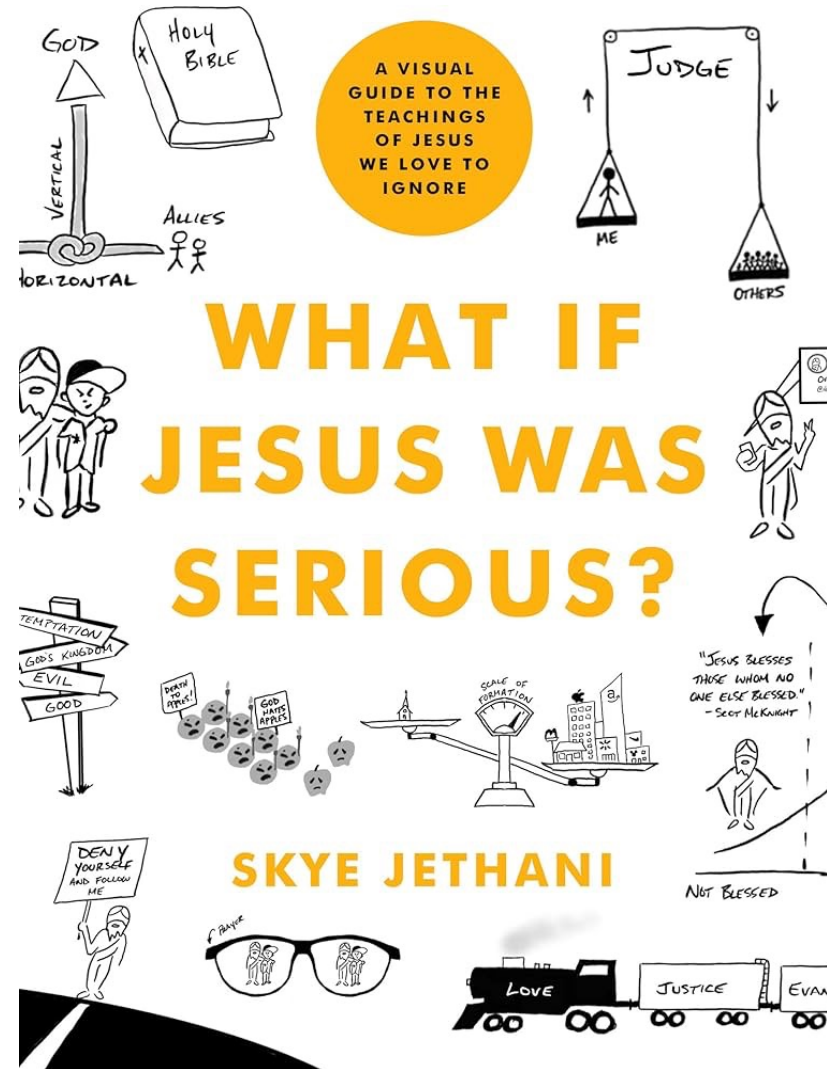
In 1985, Gallup asked Americans how they'd rate pastors on honesty and ethics. **67%** said high or very high. Making pastors one of the most trusted positions in America. Gallup just asked the same question again. The answer? **27%**. A **40-point** collapse in trust over four decades. And it gets worse...



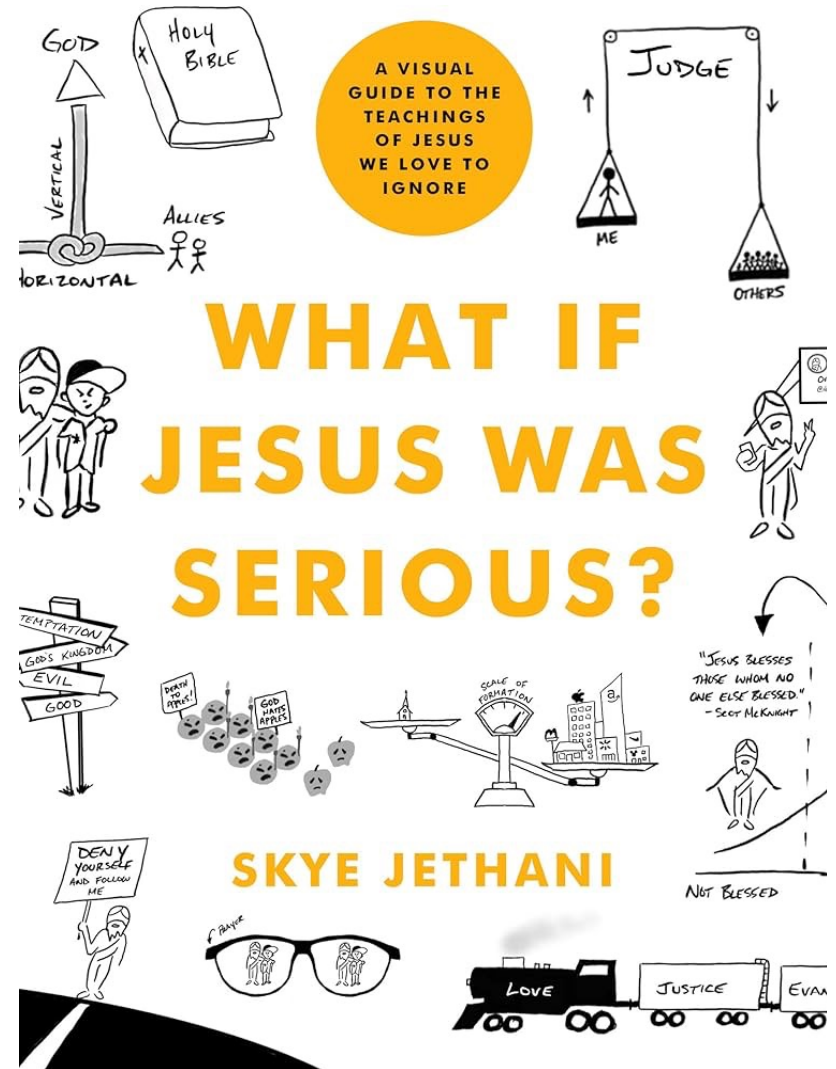
Among Americans under 35,
that number is only **17%**.
It's so bad that trust in pastors
has fallen more than any other
profession Gallup tracks.
More than *politicians*.
More than *lawyers*.
More than *used car salesmen*.



Christian researcher George Barna (commented), “American Christianity has largely failed since the middle of the 20th century because Jesus’ modern-day disciples do not act like Jesus.”



Data compiled by numerous researchers have found, “Evangelical Christians are as likely to embrace lifestyles every bit as hedonistic, materialistic, self-centered, and sexually immoral as the world in general.”



FALSE NARRATIVE #1

HAPPINESS comes from following the principles of **THIS** world; specifically, the acquisition of:

- Money
- Sex
- Power



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MAPS and LIGHTHOUSES

NARRATIVES are like **MAPS**
or **LIGHTHOUSES**:

- The closer a **map** is to reality, the better it is; and some maps are just plain wrong
- A **lighthouse** isn't worth much if you refuse its warning



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We should read the Sermon on the Mount this way...Jesus is not demanding we live his way in order to get his blessing or get into heaven when we die; he is simply telling the truth about reality... *(he is offering a map that shows things how they really are, and a lighthouse offering warnings of danger and a safe welcome home)*



JAMES BRYAN

SMITH

(and me...)

FALSE NARRATIVE #1

HAPPINESS comes from following the principles of **THIS** world

TRUE NARRATIVE #1

The **GOOD** a **BEAUTIFUL** life is created by **DOING** the things Jesus taught and commanded, not as a list of laws/rules, but as a new way of **LIFE**



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*Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine **and puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.*

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

7:24-25

*But everyone who hears these words of mine **and does not** put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.*

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

7:26-27

FALSE NARRATIVE #2

The **KINGDOM** of **GOD** is **FUTURE**



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FALSE NARRATIVE #2

The **KINGDOM** of **GOD** is **FUTURE**

TRUE NARRATIVE #2

The **KINGDOM** of **GOD**
is about getting **HEAVEN**
into us (and the world) **NOW**



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The kingdom of God is
a present reality that will be fully
consummated in the future...
Yes, one day it will be the governing
power over the entire universe,
but for now, it is intended
to be the governing power
over you and me.



JAMES BRYAN
SMITH

HOW WE PARTICIPATE NOW

1. We work on our inner life, developing a character beyond just following the rules *Matt 5:20*

“...unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”



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HOW WE PARTICIPATE NOW

1. We work on our inner life, developing a character beyond just following the rules *Matt 5:20*
2. We embrace the trusting disposition of a child *Mark 10:15*

“...anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”



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HOW WE PARTICIPATE NOW

3. We enter the waters of baptism, a sacrament symbolizing our new birth *John 3:5*

...no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.



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BAPTISM *and potluck*

SUN, 6.28 // 2829 Missouri St // 5 – 7pm

Bring a dessert/side dish to share

Interested in baptism? Let Deacon know!

We enter the kingdom through surrender, humility, trust, and the willingness to begin working on our hearts in order to become the kind of person God created and desires us to be.



JAMES BRYAN
SMITH

FALSE NARRATIVE #3

The **BEATITUDES** = **PRESCRIPTIONS**
for **BLESSEDNESS**



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PUTTING ON THE
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Blessed are the poor in spirit...
Blessed are those who mourn...
Blessed are the meek...
*Blessed are those who hunger
and thirst for righteousness...*
Blessed are the merciful...
Blessed are the pure in heart...
Blessed are the peacemakers...
*Blessed are those who are persecuted
because of righteousness...*

HOLY
BIBLE

MATT

5:3-10

FALSE NARRATIVE #3

The **BEATITUDES** = **PRESCRIPTIONS**
for **BLESSEDNESS**

TRUE NARRATIVE #3

The **BEATITUDES** are **INVITATIONS** of **INCLUSION**



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PRESUMED REQUIREMENTS for ENTERING GOD'S KINGDOM (1st Cen)

- Ethnically **JEWISH**
- Biologically **MALE**
- Religiously **PURE**
- Physically **WHOLE**
- Financially **WEALTHY**



5:3



5:4



5:5



• THE BEATITUDES •

5:6



5:7



5:8



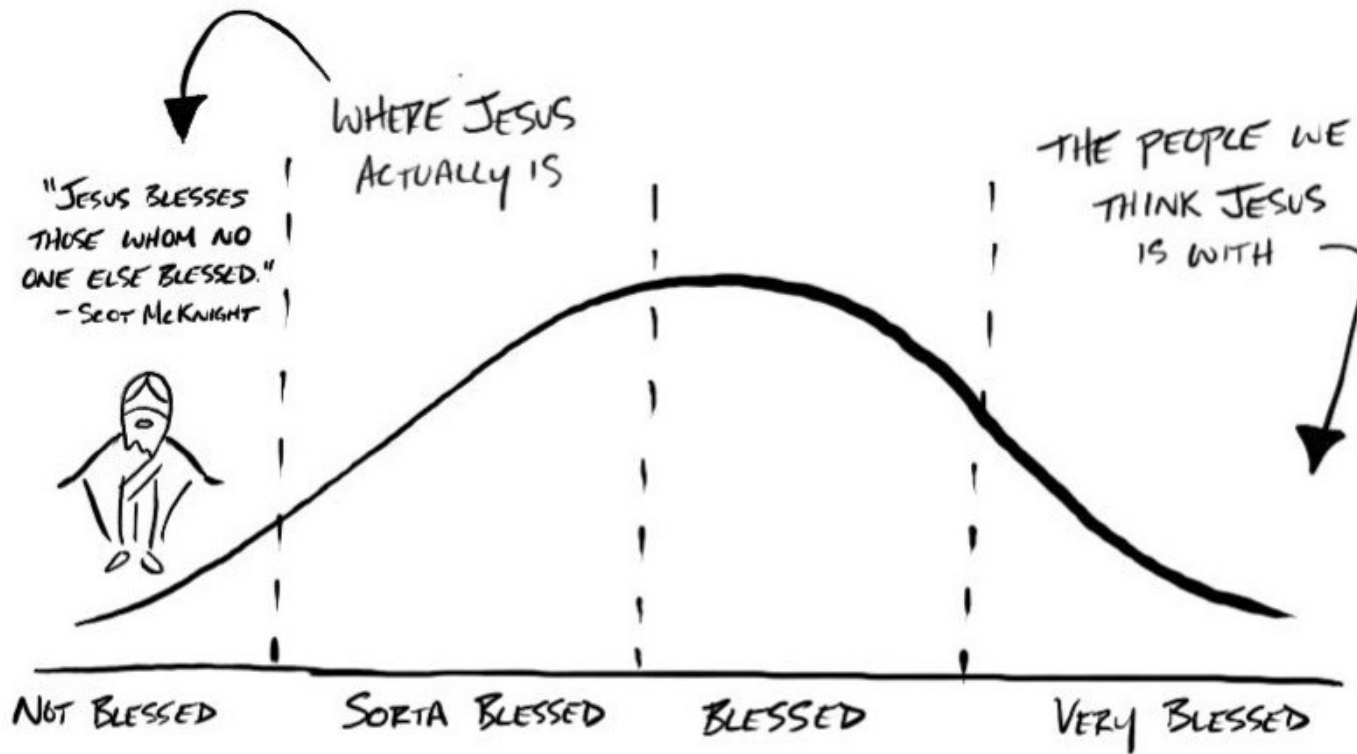
5:9



5:10



THE BELL CURVE OF BLESSING



**WHAT IF
JESUS WAS
SERIOUS?**

WHO IS REALLY BLESSED ACCORDING TO...

...THE KINGDOMS
OF THE WORLD



THE POWERFUL
THE RICH
THE INFLUENTIAL
THE POPULAR
THE STRONG



THE OVERLOOKED
THE PEACEFUL
THE PURE
THE MEEK
THE SAD
THE POOR

...THE KINGDOM
OF HEAVEN



How Does the Church Answer?

**WHAT IF
JESUS WAS
SERIOUS?**

The Beatitudes are basically the exact opposite of what we are told in 10,000 commercials. The Beatitudes are so counter-intuitive and so contrary to our concept of what constitutes a happy life that it would be easy to dismiss them as nothing more than naïve sentiment.



BRIAN
ZAHND

The Beatitudes are not only counterintuitive; they are also subversive. Part of what the Beatitudes accomplish is to undermine the whole system of basing happiness on lust and pride—the mad pursuit of money, sex, and power. The Beatitudes challenge the basic value system of the fallen world order.



As such the principalities
and powers will always view
the Beatitudes as a subversive
threat to their rule—
because they are!



SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE

Option #1: Write a letter to God...

- “Dear God, the life I want most for myself is...”
- Try to describe, in the rest of your letter, what a good and beautiful life looks like for you
- This can be just for you, or you can share it w/someone you know/trust for support



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE

Option #2: Go play!

- Play is a way to experience joy
- Play is an act of self-abandonment, where we stop taking ourselves too seriously
- Have kids or grandkids?
Do what they do!
- Play a sport/game you've enjoyed in the past



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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE

Option #3: Get baptized next week

- Make the conscious choice to formally become a citizen of God's kingdom
- Make the public declaration of your decision to follow the way of Jesus



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God of power, uphold us in struggle
and strengthen us to live faithfully to Jesus.
As you have delivered us from death,
now, send us forth to proclaim creation's
glorious redemption through the victorious
resurrection of your son, so that all
may claim the freedom of forgiveness
and new life in you.
Amen.

Closing Prayer

A decorative banner at the bottom of the page. It features a dark background with several hands of different colors (red, blue, green, purple) reaching out and holding each other. There are also colorful circles (red, green, blue, purple) scattered throughout the design.