

EXCERPT



A Fruitful Life

Discovering Jesus' Invitation in the Sermon on the Mount
An Eight-Week Bible Study Experience with Video Access

April 8, 2025 | \$20, 176 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0718-1

In their new eight-week Bible study *A Fruitful Life*, Ashley and Bryce Hales explore how readers can dive deep into the Sermon on the Mount to understanding how a life emulating Jesus—living and loving as he did—is a truly fruitful life.

An Invitation to Fruitfulness

After years of apartment living, an overseas move, first jobs, two small children, and nearly ten years of marriage, we bought our first house. It was perfect: huge picture windows, original wood floors, a yard for our children to play in, and a front porch where we envisioned sitting outside and chatting with neighbors as they walked by. The only challenge was that it had been a foreclosure and it needed a ton of work, especially on the outside. The yard, full of weeds and metal, wasn't quite what we envisioned our toddlers pushing trucks in or where we saw them running through the sprinklers.

In our yard, we dug out broken glass, found too-many-to-count beer-bottle caps, and uprooted years of overgrown bushes. We even let a neighborhood guy take his metal detector around to look for treasures (sadly, none were found!). Bryce recruited friends to help build a fence creating a safe space for kids to play. It took hours of labor, research, and plenty of muscle to begin making this house a home.

We loved sitting on our porch sipping a cold drink and talking with neighbors who expressed gratitude that we'd begun fixing up the house. But change took a whole lot longer than we thought, and it required intention, planning, and work. For the house and yard to become habitable, we needed the help, encouragement, and brawn of our friends to work alongside us too.

The same is true of our spiritual lives. Growth in the Christian life requires being acted on—like the ground being leveled and planted—so that something more life-giving can grow. Growth also requires others who work alongside you, and growth requires you follow a vision for what could be.

The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' vision of the good life for his disciples (then and now). Such a life is fruitful: oriented to the flourishing of individuals and communities and a visible, tactile example that the kingdom of heaven has come in Jesus. Our lives as Jesus' followers are good news; they are like juicy pieces of fruit that testify to the goodness of life in Christ!

When we talk about fruitfulness in this study, we mean "growing to look more like Jesus, living and loving as he did" (a phrase that both Dallas Willard and Steven Garber are fond of using). Toward the end of his most familiar sermon, known as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus uses this same metaphor of fruitfulness and says that it's by our fruits that people will be able to recognize us as Jesus' disciples (Matthew 7:20).

Healthy fruit comes from healthy plants (Matthew 7:17). But how does this happen? In John 15, Jesus uses this same fruit-bearing imagery: he calls himself the vine and says that his disciples (us!) are the branches. The Father is the gardener who prunes and cares for us so that we will bear fruit as we are attached to the vine, as we remain in Jesus.

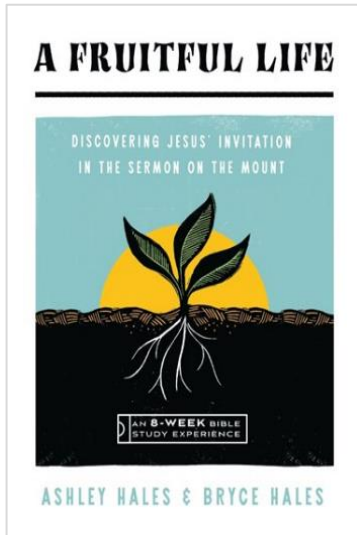


Anna Tjernstrom, print and online publicity
atjernstrom@ivpress.com or ivpress.com/media

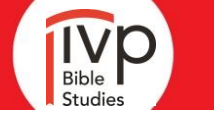
Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com



ivpress.com/media



EXCERPT



A Fruitful Life

Discovering Jesus' Invitation in the Sermon on the Mount
An Eight-Week Bible Study Experience with Video Access

April 8, 2025 | \$20, 176 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0718-1

A Fruitful Life includes:

- Daily individual sessions designed to fit into your daily life, making it easy to stay connected and reflective throughout the week.
- Access to eight weekly hour-long videos designed for group or individual use that provide profound insights and foster enriching discussions.

We are dependent on him, and we must remain connected to Jesus to grow. How do we remain in Jesus, like branches on a vine? Jesus says we do so by keeping his commands, some of which he lays out for us in the Sermon on the Mount (John 15:10). How can we do that? Through the work of the Spirit!

As we study Jesus' most famous sermon, and as we put it into practice, we expect that God's Spirit will work in our lives to grow spiritual fruit. That's Jesus' promise! Fruit bearing is evidence of being Jesus' disciple.

But this doesn't happen in an instant. Just as fruit trees take time before they produce fruit, growing to look more like Jesus takes time. Just like the transformation of our home, the cultivation of healthy spiritual fruit requires time with a vision, renewed intention, and a plan to get there. Ultimately our fruitfulness isn't just for us—it spills over so that our communities flourish too.

Fruitfulness also happens in stages. There will be seasons of fruit bearing, seasons when all you feel is God's pruning, and times of underground germination when all you can do is hope that roots are growing beneath the surface. All of this is normal. Through it all, we practice remaining connected to Jesus and his people.

Maybe you haven't cracked open a Bible in a while, or perhaps you're muscling through your Christian life but not experiencing growth. Either way, this study is for you. Dallas Willard often said that grace isn't opposed to effort, but it is opposed to earning. You'll be encouraged that Jesus fulfills all of what he's asking of you in himself, and you'll be challenged to make changes in your day-to-day life. Everything worth doing requires intention and effort. And in the Christian life, you know that the effort you put in flourishes because of the Holy Spirit who comforts, convicts, and promises to be the presence of Jesus with you.

As you begin this journey, take a moment to ask yourself what your hope is for this study. The process we're going to lead you through in this study is not magic. It won't just change you if you don't want to be transformed. Your intention is crucial. We can have initial enthusiasm when we begin something new, but then we falter. As you begin, consider, What are some areas you think you might struggle in? How can your group help support you?

A word about grace here—we will all fail. Our efforts are not about perfectionism or legalism. Jesus promises that his Word will not return void. He promises fruitful growth for healthy disciples. Imagine becoming calmer, gentler, less reactive, and more able to listen to God and others. We're going to be okay with being beginners, even if we know (or don't know!) a lot of Christian content. Let's expect that the Holy Spirit will cultivate us, working through the Word of God.

Each week as we meet together, we'll focus on the vision of the Sermon on the Mount and how Jesus tells us our highest aim and most secure self comes as we align ourselves with the kingdom of God. Here is real life, real fruit!

—Adapted from the introduction



Anna Tjernstrom, print and online publicity
atjernstrom@ivpress.com or ivpress.com/media

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com





DETAILS



IVP Bible Study Experience Bringing Scripture to Life

"This unique Bible study invites readers to not only meditate on biblical passages but also apply it to their lives in contemplative, creative ways both individually and in community. It goes beyond a traditional question-and-answer model and engages almost all your senses."

—Mabel Ninan, author of *Far from Home*

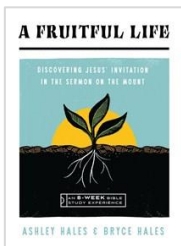
IVP Bible Study Experience

IVP Bible Study Experience volumes will help you and your small group uncover the depths of God's Word in a whole new light. Using inductive study methods through both written and video teaching, readers are given the opportunity to learn from trusted Bible teachers and engage with prayer practices, spiritual disciplines, and other tools for engaging with Scripture.

These accessible studies are designed with busy readers in mind, allowing for open-ended reflection and inviting us to discern how to apply the content to our daily lives. Formatted as beautiful workbooks, these studies include plenty of white space for individual reflection as well as inspiring full-color images and graphic elements. With free access to video curriculum included with every purchase, these refreshing and insightful studies will enrich your understanding and connection with Scripture!

Here's what you'll get from IVP Bible Study Experience volumes:

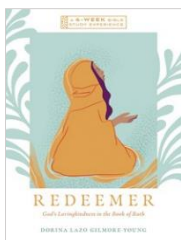
- Welcoming and accessible Scripture study for groups of any size
- Each study includes 6-8 weekly group sessions with 5 manageable days of individual reflection each week
- Free access to weekly video curriculum and a leader's guide is included with every purchase



A Fruitful Life: Discovering Jesus' Invitation in the Sermon on the Mount **An 8-Week Bible Study**

By Ashley Hales and Bryce Hales

In their new eight-week Bible study *A Fruitful Life*, Ashley and Bryce Hales explore how readers can dive deep into the Sermon on the Mount to understanding how a life emulating Jesus—living and loving as he did—is a truly fruitful life.



Redeemer: God's Lovingkindness in the Book of Ruth **A 6-Week Bible Study**

By Dorina Lazo Gilmore-Young

In this six-week Bible study, Dorina Lazo Gilmore-Young invites us to view the book of Ruth as more than a Hallmark-tinted story, one that proclaims God's heart for the vulnerable and invites us to become captivated by God's love!



Anna Tjernstrom, print and online publicity
atjernstrom@ivpress.com or ivpress.com/media

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com



ivpress.com/media



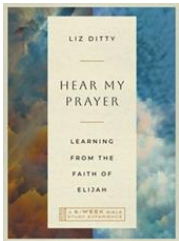
DETAILS



IVP Bible Study Experience Bringing Scripture to Life

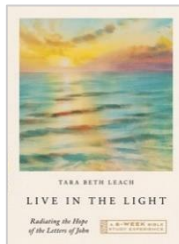
"The invitations to reflect on Scripture and personal experience, to engage in breath prayers, to check in with the Holy Spirit, and to practice family sabbath provide helpful ways to integrate this resource into a personal journey taken alongside others."

—**Maria Liu Wong**, provost of the City Seminary of New York



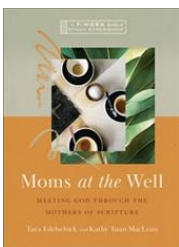
Hear My Prayer: Learning from the Faith of Elijah **A 6-Week Bible Study** By Liz Ditty

Whether you consider yourself a prayer warrior, a prayer newbie, or even a prayer skeptic, Liz Ditty, an experienced spiritual director and retreat leader, invites you to engage with the story of Elijah and his encounters with God as she guides us toward a less awkward, more authentic prayer in this six-week Bible study experience.



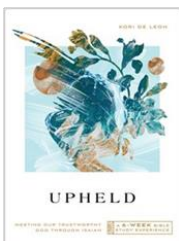
Live In the Light: Radiating the Hope of the Letters of John **A 6-Week Bible Study** By Tara Beth Leach

We are in a season of church meltdown. John, writing to churches caught in leadership failures, church splits, and a powerful leader stirring up dissent, has a message for us today. This sixweek Bible study experience invites us to become a community that brings love, hope, and healing to every darkened space.



Moms at the Well: Meeting God Through the Mothers of Scripture **A 7-Week Bible Study** By Tara Edelschick and Kathy Tuan-MacLean

Motherhood is hard. Really hard. That's why we need a well. For centuries, neighborhood wells served as gathering spaces that provided community and relationships for women. This seven-week Bible study offers a modern day "well" for mothers to gather and experience the God who invites us into a process of spiritual transformation.



Upheld: Meeting Our Trustworthy God Through Isaiah **A 6-Week Bible Study** By Kori de Leon

I am with you, I will strengthen and help you, I will uphold you. God's promises spoken through Isaiah offered reassurance and comfort during difficult days, and they're still true for us today! Join Bible teacher Kori de Leon in this six-week Bible study experience on Isaiah 40–48, pointing us to God's faithfulness and mercy.



Anna Tjernstrom, print and online publicity
atjernstrom@ivpress.com or ivpress.com/media

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com