

**INTRODUCTION**

According to Alexander Maclaren (an English minister in the 1800's), the Beatitudes are not "simply a collection of unrelated sayings....There is a vital connection and progress in them." Each statement Jesus makes builds upon the next. His first statement, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*", extols spiritual bankruptcy, the idea that you can bring absolutely nothing to God (Isaiah 64:6). "*Poor in spirit*" acts as a foundation for the rest of the Beatitudes. So what does "*mourning*" have to do with being "*poor in spirit*"?

**GROUP QUESTIONS**

1. What is one thing that brings you happiness?
  
2. Read Matthew 5:4. Why would those who are "*poor in spirit*" feel the need to "*mourn*"?
  
3. Discuss the meaning of the word "*mourn*". Read the following verses. Do they add to your understanding of "mourning"?
  - Joel 2:12-13
  - 2 Corinthians 7:9-11
  - James 4:7-10
  
4. According to 2 Corinthians 7:9-11, how does true mourning differ from the feeling of sadness?
  
5. In Romans 7, Paul wrestles with his own sinfulness. What does he conclude is the only solution to his self-declared wretchedness (Romans 7:24-25)?

**APPLICATION**

On a scale of 1-10, how conscious are you of your sin? How intensely do you mourn when you break relationship with God?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Ask the Spirit to show you areas in your life where you have ignored or downplayed sin. Ask Him to give you a biblical view of sin, and ask for His forgiveness.

~~~for further study~~~

**FOR FURTHER STUDY**

1. How can you balance mourning over sin versus being overburdened by the guilt of sin?
2. “*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*” What is the comfort that comes after mourning? (See Isaiah 25:8, Romans 8:1-2, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 1 John 1:9.)
3. When do you think this comfort comes – right after the mourning (Luke 15:17-24), or sometime in the future (Revelation 21:1-5)?
4. How have you been comforted by God when you have mourned over your sin?
5. 2 Samuel 11 tells the story of David, the King of Israel, and Bathsheba. David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and she became pregnant. He tried to cover up his sin by bringing Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, home from war. However, Uriah was so loyal that he would not visit his wife, but stayed near the palace. David then had Uriah return to the battle, and instructed Joab to put Uriah on the frontline, where he was killed. In 2 Samuel 12, Nathan the prophet confronts David about his sin and David repents. Psalm 51 is David’s earnest plea to God for forgiveness. Read through this passage slowly, listening for God’s “still, small voice”. Reflect on the passage as it applies to your life – are there areas of sin in your life that you have ignored? Downplayed? Been completely blind to? Open your heart to God, confess any sin, and ask for His forgiveness.

**SCRIPTURE**

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.* Matthew 5:4