

INTRODUCTION

Jesus' first sentence of His first sermon in the first book of the New Testament is "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" The idea of poverty in spirit is counter-intuitive, especially in today's culture. Why is this character quality so important to God that Jesus would talk about it first?

GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What does it take for people to walk away from a sermon saying, "That was a great sermon."? Has one particular sermon touched your life in a dramatic way?
2. Read Matthew 5:3. What does it mean to be "*poor in spirit*" (see Luke 18:9-14)?
3. Is there someone who comes to mind when you think of "*poor in spirit*" (a person you know personally, a Bible character, or someone in history/current culture)?
4. William Barclay notes in his daily study Bible that someone who is poor in spirit will 1) "become completely detached from things"; and 2) "become completely attached to God". How would you rate yourself on these two criteria?
5. The opposite of being "*poor in spirit*" is being spiritually arrogant. What can you do to mitigate self-righteousness in your life?
6. Matthew uses the word "*kingdom*" 50+ times in his Gospel. What is the kingdom? Why would the "*poor in spirit*" inherit the kingdom?

APPLICATION

Brainstorm ideas with your group on how to cultivate a "*poor in spirit*" type of heart and life. Work on incorporating those into your daily life this week.

~~~for further study~~~

**FOR FURTHER STUDY**

1. Jesus started each of the Beatitudes with the word “*blessed*”. What does that word mean to you?
2. The Greek word for *blessed* is *makários*, which Biblehub.com says “describes a believer in enviable (‘fortunate’) position from receiving God’s provisions (favor) – which (literally) extend (‘make long, large’) His grace (benefits).” There is no verb in the Beatitudes – they actually read more like, “O the blessedness of the poor in spirit.” The expression is common in the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms. Read the following passages and write the action or character trait that is considered blessed:

Job 5:17 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 1:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 32:1-2, \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 40:4 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 41:1 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 89:15 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 106:3 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 3:13-14 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 14:21 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 28:14 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 30:18 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Matthew states that Jesus said “*Blessed are the poor in spirit*” but Luke records it as “*Blessed are the poor*” (Luke 6:20). Is there a difference between these two statements?
4. Does someone become *poor in spirit* and then never have to think about it again? Or does being *poor in spirit* require a conscious effort on a daily basis?

**SCRIPTURE**

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:3*