

I Can't, but He Can

Chapter 3

Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 3



Objective: To understand the first beatitude and what it means to be “poor in spirit.”
(Text: Matthew 5:1-3)



“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

—Matthew 5:3

Jesus begins by teaching His disciples eight attitudes—called, the “beatitudes,” or “blessed attitudes,” because each one is introduced by the word “blessed.” Jesus is promising to bless the disciple who has each of these attitudes. This word “blessed” can actually mean “happy,” “spiritually prosperous,” or “in a state of grace.” Each attitude also includes a promise that describes the form in which this blessing will come into the life of that disciple.

These eight blessed attitudes profile the mind-set or way of thinking that affects the behavior of a disciple of Jesus. The context in which He teaches these attitudes makes the statement that this outlook on life will make His disciples part of the solution and answer of Christ to all the suffering in the world that is represented by the multitude at the bottom of the mountain.

The first beatitude relates to that question the religious leaders asked John the Baptist: “What do you say about yourself?” (John 1:22). Without the correct attitude toward ourselves we will never be one of our Lord’s solutions. Scholars tell us the words “poor in spirit” can also be translated as “broken in spirit.” That means this attitude is describing brokenness – which is something we see in the lives of those God calls and equips for special ministry.

1. The first beatitude is “Blessed are the ____ in _____ for theirs is the _____ of _____.”
2. True or false? Jesus is trying to teach his disciples to sell what they have and become poor.
3. True or false? The promise of this beatitude is the same promise we have for accepting Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

4. Which of the following attitudes are examples of being “poor in spirit”? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. Trying to please God by showing Him how good we are
 - b. Seeking higher positions in church
 - c. Confessing sins to God and others
 - d. Choosing positions of service instead of status
 - e. Holding others’ sins against them

5. Name a biblical character who is a good example of being “poor in spirit.”

6. According to Philippians 2:5-11, our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Read the passage below and then underline the attitudes in the list that describe Jesus.

Success oriented	Self-centered
Servant-like	Strong-willed
Proud	Obedient
Humble	Ambitious
Aggressive	

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

—Philippians 2:5-11

7. Being “poor in spirit” is described in one word as humility. Read the following scriptures and choose the one correct answer in each question:

1 Peter 5:5-7— To whom does God give grace?

- a. The proud
- b. The hard-working
- c. The sincere
- d. The humble

Romans 12:3—How should we think of ourselves?

- a. Highly
- b. Soberly
- c. Accusingly
- d. We shouldn't think of ourselves at all

5 All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

—1 Peter 5:5-7

By the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

—Romans 12:3



Is there some area of your life that does not reflect being poor in spirit? What is that area? Describe how you can become “poor in spirit” in this area.



Thank God for sending Jesus to us in the form of a servant. Confess that you can't be that kind of servant on your own, but He can help you. Ask Him to help you have Jesus' humility in your heart and to give you opportunities to serve others.



Going Deeper

1. What is meant by “poor in spirit”? Is that the same as being poor? _____

2. How did Moses acquire the first “beautiful attitude – poor in spirit”? _____

3. How did Peter acquire the first “beautiful attitude – poor in spirit”? _____

4. How did the Apostle Paul acquire the first “beautiful attitude – poor in spirit”? _____

5. Is there some area of your life that does not reflect being poor in spirit? Describe that area and how you can become “poor in spirit” in that area. _____

6. Explain how the first beatitude illustrates Pastor Woodward’s first Spiritual Secret, “*I can’t but He can, and I am in Him and He is in me.*” _____

7. Have you come to experience this reality in your life? How? _____
