

Upside-Down Living
The Radical Message of the Beatitudes

The Wealth of Being Poor

Matthew 5:3

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Sept. 23, 2018

How do you know if you're poor in spirit and what does it look like?

I. You Understand that God Owns You Instead of Thinking that God Owes You

God is the Creator and we are the creatures, so that means that He owns you and you have a duty to Him.

The person who is poor in spirit says, "I owe God everything and I can give Him nothing while God owes me nothing but has given me everything."

When you're poor in spirit, you'll be delivered from the lie that God owes you something better than what you had in your past and better than what you have right now.

II. You Stop Telling God How Great You Are and Start Asking God for What You Need

People who know their desperate need have a very active prayer life. They're always asking God to do for them what they know they cannot do for themselves, like the tax collector did in **Luke 18:9-14**.

III. You Stop Feeling Like a Stranger in God's Presence

To have a keen awareness of God's presence in your life, cultivate a poverty of spirit. God draws near to the person who's poor in spirit.

Isaiah 57:15 "Thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit."

The sovereign Lord of the universe lives in two places. He's transcendent, high and lifted up in the holy place, but He also lives with the person who has a contrite and lowly spirit.

Psalms 138:6 "For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar."

IV. You Stop Trying to Use God as a Prop for Promoting Your Own Gifts

I Corinthians 4:7 "For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?"

Any gifts you have were given to you by God! If you're poor in spirit then you know that God gave you those gifts to glorify Him by serving others, not to promote your own name! People who are poor in spirit don't flaunt their own gifts!

V. You Also Don't Get Stuck Obsessing Over How Bad You Think You Are

Beating yourself up and focusing on feelings about how bad you think you are is still the same problem as thinking how great you are, because it's still an unhealthy preoccupation with self!

Humility isn't thinking less of yourself or putting yourself down, it's not thinking of yourself at all. It's self-forgetfulness because you're so focused on God and others.

VI. You Stop Holding onto Your 'Rights' and Start Laying Down Your Life to Really Love Others

Pride is self-seeking and is easily provoked because it's focused on what everyone should be, but isn't doing for them. It's the opposite of love. Love is giving for the needs of another, expecting nothing in return.

I Corinthians 13:4-5 "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged."

VII. You're Able to Avoid Stepping into So Many Sins that Others Are Blind To

Being poor in spirit is the starting point for all the other blessings and it's also a safety-measure or guard against so many other sins.

Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

I Corinthians 10:12 "Let anyone who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

When you pursue humility, or cultivate being poor in spirit, you strike a severe blow to one of our greatest sins – pride. Doing that weakens your flesh's ability to deceive you and lead you into other sins.

VIII. You're Able to Persevere in Affliction without Complaining or Cursing God

I Peter 4:12 "Don't be surprised at the fiery trial, as though some strange thing is happening to you."

I Peter 5:5-11 "... God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

God gives grace to the humble, so it makes sense that if you want grace to go through a trial, then you'll humble yourself as much as you can.

The only way you'll ever begin to live poor in spirit is by giving your life to Jesus, who became poor for you and gave His life for you. See **2 Corinthians 8:9**.