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Blessedness is a state of receiving approval, and to have poverty in spirit means to have true humility. God approves of a humble attitude. He hates pride and arrogance so much they are an abomination to Him (*Proverbs 6:16, 16:5*).

A proper view of oneself as a spiritual ‘beggar’ helps us realize how dependent we are on God. Regarding salvation, we must realize that cannot earn it. We have nothing to pay for our sins. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Knowing ourselves, our strengths and weaknesses, also allows us to be and do our best for the glory of God. We can use the strengths to help overcome the weaknesses, and the weaknesses to better understand our reliance on God and His mighty power.

The Lord says in *2Corinthians 12:9*, “*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*” Paul responds, “*Therefore I will gladly and contentedly boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest on me.*”¹⁰ *Therefore, for the sake of Christ, I am well content in weaknesses, in reproaches, in hardships, in persecutions, in distresses. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*”

An honest self-assessment should make us truly humble. Honest humility does not mean to be spiritually anemic, ‘wimpy’, or feeling worthless. The fact that God loves us so much, and actually gave His Son to die for our sins, reminds us that although unworthy we are far from worthless. God places great value on us. Plus, He created us in His own image.

Truth is always liberating. Scripture says, “*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free,*” (*John 8:32*). God Himself is the ultimate truth, as revealed in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ (*John 14:6*). God’s Word is truth (*Psalms 119:160, John 17:17*). God’s Holy Spirit of truth will guide us into the truth (*John 16:13*).

It is also liberating when we believe the truth about ourselves; when we are honest both with ourselves and God. Why is “*Blessed are the poor in spirit*” listed first among the Beatitudes? Because, until we admit our need, we can never receive what God has for us.

The Lord rebukes the lukewarm church of Laodicea (*Revelation 3:17*) “*Because you say, ‘I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched (sinful)...*”. Such an attitude often prevails today.

A contrast in spirit can be seen in the lives of Israel’s first two kings, Saul and David. Saul continually disobeyed God because of his haughtiness and pride. David displayed honest humility (and great bravery... he was certainly no wimp!) when he fought Goliath. He continued to give God the glory through the battle and after the great victory.

Saul’s character was one of arrogant disobedience. God gave him many chances, but he chose rebellion. So, he lost his kingdom, his family did not inherit the throne, and he died a pathetic death by his own hand.

Scripture is clear that David was far from perfect. His sin of adultery and murder resulted in tragic consequences for him and his family. But, Scripture also records him as a “*man after God’s own heart*” (*1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22*), and “*he had great success because the Lord was with him*” (*1 Samuel 18:14*).

An evidence of being poor in spirit is how we accept circumstances. Do we become bitter or envious when things don’t go our way? Are we manipulative, or even vengeful? Paul says, “*I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances*” (*Philippians 4:11*). That doesn’t mean we should not honestly try to improve our circumstances.

It does mean we should have a right attitude about God, others, and ourselves. We should also have the right attitude about things. Paul continues, “*I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.*” A poor, humble spirit does not measure someone’s worth by material possessions.

This truth is illustrated by the farmer (*Luke 12:17-21*) driven by wealth, but poor towards God. He did realize he was only a steward. “*For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his own soul,*” (*Mark 8:36*).

There are many biblical examples of true poverty in spirit (or lack thereof). The best is in Christ Himself. He is always the perfect example for us to emulate.

“*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich,*” (*2Cor. 8:9*).

Matthew 5

The Sermon on the Mount

5 Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

The Beatitudes

2 And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

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

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you on My account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Memory Verse for the Week

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich," (2Cor. 8:9).