**Study Series: The Blessing of Humility**

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**Lesson Title: “Poor in Spirit” (pp. 97-108)**

April 25, 2021 Session 08

The main point of this lesson is: Humility means recognizing our own abject spiritual poverty and dependence on God.

Focus on this goal: To help adults understand the meaning of humility and being poor in spirit.

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 5:3; Ephesians 4:1-2

Before the Session

1. Have available a large **writing surface** and writing **instrument**. (Step 1)

2. Have **one index card** per learner. (Steps 3 and 7)

During the Session[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion**

On the board, **write** Poor in Income.

**Briefly share** a time when you were making very little money.

**Invite a few volunteers** to do likewise.

**Erase** income and **write** knowledge.

In the same fashion, **briefly recount** when you made an unwise decision (or series of decisions) based on a lack of knowledge; invite a few volunteers to do likewise.

**Erase** knowledge and **write** experience sharing memories of the first days at your first real job, the first year of being a new parent, or something similar.

**Erase** experience and **write** spirit, **explaining** this will be your focus for the day: how being poor in spirit is connected to humility.

**Step 2. Day One – Precepts and Promises, Part 1**

**Enlist volunteers to read** the following Scriptures now and throughout the session: Matthew 5:3; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; Ephesians 4:1-2; and 1 Peter 5:5-6.

**Ask** how many of the passages instructed or encouraged God’s followers to be humble. (All of them.)

**Call for** Ephesians 4:1-2 to be read again.

**Point out** the concept of walking in humility, **engaging the group** in discussing what characterizes the life of a person who walks in humility.

**Point out** the other words listed in that passage: gentleness, patience, and love.

**Ask:** How might these characteristics help us or guide us in our humility?

**Step 3. Day Two – Precepts and Promises, Part 2**

**Call for** 1 Peter 5:5-6 to be read again.

**Draw attention** to the words humility and grace, **pointing out** that we receive God’s Spirit-supplied grace only when we walk in humility with other people.

**Give learners** an index card and **instruct** them to write humility in the center, then to draw a horizontal line with arrows on either end beneath it.

Above the word, **have them draw** a vertical line with an arrow at the top.

**Use** the Day Two content (pp. 99-101) to **help learners understand** that our humility is exhibited in the way we treat others (signified by the horizontal line). However, as we are humble, God will lift us up (notated by the vertical line pointing upward).

**Step 4. Day Three – Poor in Spirit, Part 1**

**Call for** Matthew 5:3 to be read.

**Read** the account of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14).

**Say:** The tax collector illustrates what “poor in spirit” looks like.

**Engage learners** in observing the man’s position (eyes down, beating his breast) and his prayer (“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”).

**Use** the Day Three content (p.103) to **explain** the Greek word for merciful and how the man’s prayer proved he understood he deserved God’s wrath.

**Read** the last paragraph from Day Three (p. 103), **explaining** that the word “a” does not appear in the original language.

**Ask:**

1. How aware are we of our sin?
2. How might we be more attuned to our abject sinfulness?

**Step 5. Day Four – Poor in Spirit, Part 2.**

**Ask:** What might bring us to the point of being poor in spirit? (Consider what is involved in seeing and acknowledging our sin and the sin around us.)

**Read** Isaiah 6:1-5.

**Say:** Isaiah saw his own uncleanness because he saw God clearly.

**Encourage learners** to check their hearts, minds, and attitudes in worship so they can clearly see themselves in contrast to God’s holiness.

**Use** the Day Four content (p. 104) to help learners **understand** the word unclean and **point** to the fact Isaiah saw himself as a moral leper.

**Read** the opening sentence of the first full paragraph on page 105.

If learners are familiar with either of the hymns mentioned in Day Four (pp. 105-106), **consider singing** them together.

**Step 6. Day Five – Poor in Spirit, Part 3**

**Call for** 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 to be read.

**Ask:**

1. Who wrote these words? (Paul.)
2. What do you know about Paul?

**Engage learners** in discussing Paul’s prominence in the early church and the spread of the gospel around the world.

**Ask:**

1. Did you catch Paul’s humility?
2. How can you tell he was poor in spirit when he wrote these words?

**Read** the Day Five paragraph (p. 107) that begins, “Those who are poor in spirit do not murmur …” as well as the following paragraph.

**Say:** Humility is not unwitnessed by those around us. When we are truly poor in spirit, it shows in our actions, our attitude, and our attention to God and His Word.

**Step 7. Practical Application - Live Out the Lesson**

**Direct learners** back to the index cards they made in Step 3.

**Instruct** them to turn the cards to the back and write a simple reminder statement connecting humility to being poor in spirit.

**Say:** As children of God, we can be both victorious followers as well as poor in spirit. It’s when we see ourselves honestly—in light of God’s glory—that we walk in worship and humility.

**Close in prayer.**

**Additional Questions for Discussion**

1. When Paul describes what it means to walk worthy of our calling, he lists humility first. Why do you think God’s Word puts humility before gentleness, patience and love?
2. Why is a life of humility not an option for a believer to choose or reject?
3. In what ways did Jesus Christ display humility? Why are these examples so astonishing?
4. Which of the precepts described in this lesson do you find most challenging? Which of the promises do you find most motivating?
5. How has this lesson changed your understanding of what it means to be *poor* in spirit? How has it changed your understanding of what it means to be poor in *spirit*?
6. How can a Christian who is growing spiritually and becoming more like Christ be poor in spirit at the same time?
7. In moments when you see yourself as truly poor in spirit, where should your attention turn next?
8. How do those who are poor in spirit view others? Themselves? God’s Word? Their circumstances?

1. Additional questions for discussion are included on pages 5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)