

GrowN
Week 8: THE Path of GrowN – Poor In Spirit – Matthew 5:3
November 1st, 2023
Devotional

2 Peter 3:18

17 Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stability.

18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity Amen. 2 Peter 3:18 HCSB

Starting out each day with prayer asking for:

INSPIRATION:

Lord, Your word is a lamp for life and direction. Please direct my feet and light my path day and night to show me how to live in a way that honors You. Please reveal where You want me to go. Psalm 119:105

Lord, Your word is alive, it has power, it is more sharp than any sword. It can & does pierce and divide even between soul & spirit, and joints & marrow. It detects and understands my thoughts and even the intentions of my heart. Please help me to understand and put in practice it's truth. Hebrews 4:12

REVELATION:

Lord, please open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Your law, it is the perfect law of liberty. Psalm 119:18, James 1:25

Lord, please give me eyes to see & ears to hear what You are saying. Matthew 11:15

NEXT STEPS: reaching up & reaching out

PERSONAL RESPONSE: Lord, please help me be a doer of the word, not just to hear it, I don't want to deceive myself. James 1:22

ENGAGING WITH OTHERS: Lord, help me take what you're teaching me and share it with others to help equip them for the ministry You are calling us all to so the whole body of Christ may be built up. Help us together come to the unity of faith and knowledge of Jesus, that we would be mature and grow to the fullness of Jesus. Ephesians 4:12-13

HELP TO REMEMBER: small & daily

What one, small behavior can I add in my day to live this Bible truth with intention & integrity?

Lord, I don't want to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed as my mind is renewed through the Holy Spirit and the word of God. Help me to prove what is Your good, acceptable, and perfect will. Romans 12:2

Lord, I please help me to hide Your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119:11

Pr. Robin Bjornson 11.1.23

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Day 1:

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

Matthew 5:3 NKJV

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:6 NKJV

- What is poor in spirit? What is the evidence of “poor in spirit” in someone’s life?
- Am I poor in spirit? Ask Jesus in prayer. Ask a trusted Christian friend today for their impression.
- Do I hunger & thirst for righteousness?
 - What behaviors are evident when I’m hungering & thirsting for righteousness?
 - Am I distracted by any self-righteousness?
- Do I have an experience of ‘being filled’ due to hungering & thirsting for righteousness? Connect with a friend to ask these questions, hear their answers and share yours with them. Pray together for a greater hunger & thirst for His righteousness.
- Who do you know that models a life that is poor in spirit, who hungers and thirsts for righteousness? Text or call them today with encouragement that their life has blessed you.

Day 2:

The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

Ps 116:6-7 NKJV

- Am I simple with God? Am I a person of simple faith in God?
 - If we’re not as simple in faith with God as we’d like, pray for His help.
- When did I realize I was “low” and needed God in my life? Write out your story.
 - What does His saving you mean to you?
- Is my soul “at rest?” Jesus offers that condition for us when we have a relationship with Him. He has indeed dealt bountifully with us.
 - Take a few minutes today to write a few ways Jesus has dealt bountifully with you. Look at your list & spend some time thanking & praising Him.
 - Who can you call or text today that needs hear the encouragement that God has rest for their soul?

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Day 3:

Psalm 40: 1 I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.

We all have to wait on the Lord at various times in our relationship with Him, that's normal life.

- Are we waiting patiently? If not, why not?
- What's getting in the way of relaxing and trusting in His timing and His provision? Where's the urgency coming from?
- Do our emotions, thoughts, & behavior reveal that we truly believe He is inclined toward me and hears my cry or do they reveal something else?
- Take a few minutes to talk to Jesus and share your thoughts candidly. He already knows and has comfort waiting for you.
- Is there someone in your life who is in a long season of waiting? Ask Jesus how can you encourage them today.

Day 4:

Psalm 40: 2 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.

Our salvation-take a minute and think about how far He has brought you since introducing Himself to you.

- Write in your notebook your thoughts of gratitude-what miry clay did He rescue you from?
- How have you been comforted by the solidity He, the Rock, has brought to your life?
- Take a few minutes to look back to see how He has established your steps.
- This week, text or call a friend & ask about how they met Jesus.
- If you haven't yet met Him and accepted that He loves you, what is getting in your way? Are there questions that you haven't gotten answers for yet? This week, find a Christian you like and whose life shows they believe in the love of God and ask to talk about those things you'd like to know more about.

Day 5:

Psalm 40: 3 He has put a new song in my mouth—Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD.

How do you demonstrate your affection and admiration to the Lord? Singing has been one of many ways of expressing devotion and thankfulness through the centuries.

- Do you have a song you like to sing to Him? Sing it with gusto today!
- Have you ever made up a song to sing to Him, based out of your life with Him? Take a few minutes today to sing your gratefulness to Him. Let your favorite playlist inspire you with ideas. If you feel awkward to begin, being alone in the car or in the shower are great places to start. 😊

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Day 6:

Psalm 40: 4 Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, and does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

When we make the Lord our trust, we are blessed. Yes, this is a choice we make for our life, but it's also a choice we make moment by moment when circumstances arise that challenge our sense of trust in Him. When we make the Lord our trust, we can choose to not be influenced by proud people who look to sway us from the ways & character of God. When we make the Lord our trust, we can choose truth instead of lies.

- In what ways are you standing counter to culture because you're choosing to put your trust in the Lord? Write out your thoughts today.
- Are you aware of the proud people around you? How can you pray for them to grow closer to Jesus today?
- *Hebrews 5:14 says "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."* Are you able to discern between truth or lies? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you today so your senses may be exercised through use for a clearer understanding.

Day 7:

Psalm 40: 5 Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done; and Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

Take a few minutes and think—what are God's wonderful works?

- What have you experienced?
- Is it a majestic place you have been or an incredible person you see His handiwork in?
- How about His still powerful ability to change lives?
- Write your observations down and say a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to Him. He is indeed marvelous.
- Who can you ask these questions of today? Find someone in person and ask them what wonderful works of God they've witnessed and help someone else enjoy that thankfulness to God moment for themselves.

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Day 8:

Psalm 40: 6 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.

Many people have been raised with performance-based acceptance—behave in acceptable ways and you will receive love, affection, and acceptance. Behave in ways that are unacceptable and you are shunned, affection withheld, and you are not accepted. When this is the case, it's usual to want to offer some sacrifice or offering as a bridge to the intimacy we crave. This is not how God loves us. He loves us unconditionally, and He also loves us enough to help us grow up in Jesus, setting aside those ways of behaving or thinking that helped us survive, but don't line up with the truth and freedom He offers us. They don't serve us, in fact, they insulate us from the very intimacy we would like to have with Him and with others. When we begin to understand and live in His love, our hearts are moved to compassion, to give, to offer, to sacrifice for Him and others as a natural outworking and overflow of His love within us.

- If not sacrifice and offering, what does God desire? Micah 6:8 says “He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”
- Take a few minutes to ask the Holy Spirit if you have anything getting in the way of the close relationship you'd like to have with the Father. Write down your impressions.
- Ask Jesus to help you with each one of your impressions.
- Share with a trusted Christian friend a place the Lord has helped you be freer. Enjoy together that He's still setting people free. Ask them if there is anything they'd like prayer for and take a few minutes to pray together.

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Day 9:

Psalm 40: 7-8 Then I said, “Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, o my God, and Your law is within my heart.”

This is a Messianic psalm and it is understood that the “me” that the book was written of referred to in this psalm is Jesus. A prophetic statement written long before Jesus came to the earth in human form the first time that provided hope to generations of those who love God. Today we live in the comfort and hope of knowing He is coming again.

This psalm shares that Jesus delights to do the will of the Father and that His law is within His [Jesus'] heart.

- Since Jesus found doing the will of the Father so delightful, how can we enjoy this same delight? Ask the Holy Spirit today to help you do the will of the Father.
- Jesus also hid the law of God within His heart. Is there a scripture that you find encouraging that you can begin memorizing to hide it in your heart?
- There are many practical helps online for scripture memorization. Don't be overwhelmed, just start with one verse. It helps to engage your whole self in the memorization process—sing it, write it, speak it out loud, carry it around on an index card, share it with a friend. Keep doing that until it's hidden in your heart. The beautiful part of memorizing scripture is that it is yours and it gives the Holy Spirit something to bring to your remembrance, which is a part of His job. 😊 Maybe memorize with a friend & share the scriptures you are memorizing together.

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Day 10:

Psalm 40: 9-10 I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly; indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know. I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly.

- We have good news. THE good news.
- Are we proclaiming it in the assembly? Do we restrain our lips?
- Are we hiding His righteousness in our hearts from those around us who would be blessed to hear?
- Have I declared His faithfulness and His salvation with those who have not yet been rescued from sin's clutches?
- Have I concealed His lovingkindness and His truth from those around me?
- If so, ask Him for forgiveness.
- Ask Him also for the boldness of the Holy Spirit to share and the wisdom of when and how to share so others will hear and receive.
- Start by singing aloud in church service. Raise your hands in adoration if you haven't done that. Or if you're able, kneel before the Lord-let your body participate in your heart's worship of Him.
- If you have your heavenly language, pray aloud at an appropriate time during the worship portion of the service.
- Decide today, by the help of God, you will not restrain from sharing His good news, or from hiding His righteousness or from concealing His loving kindness and truth.
- Ask the Holy Spirit for creative ways to add that into your normal conversation with people.
- Who do you know that could use some good news this week? Call or text them some encouragement.

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Day 11:

Psalm 40:11-12 Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me. For innumerable evils have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart fails me.

David reveals his mindset in this portion of scripture-he doesn't want the Lord to withhold His tender mercies from him. His great desire that God's lovingkindness and truth would preserve him. He realizes that he's surrounded on the outside by those who want his demise AND he realizes his own sinful nature wants to overtake him which is his demise on the inside. He says they are more than the hairs of his head. Evil on the outside. Evil on the inside. And because of that, he comes to the conclusion his heart fails him. David is revealing that he is poor in spirit. He has come to understand the wickedness of humanity and that it lives in his own heart. As anguishing as that had to have been, we know that "blessed are the poor in heart, for they shall see the kingdom of God." David having this revelation was a blessing-he allowed all this anguish to move him to cry out for more of God in his life.

Could this be a clue why God could call him a man after His own heart? 1 Sam 13:14/Acts 13:22

- Do you see the tender mercies of God in your life? Write down your thoughts.
- How does His loving-kindness and His truth preserve you?
- Because you have been created in the image of God, Satan hates you and is your supernatural enemy. When we invite Jesus into our heart, we have His wisdom, His protection, and the power of the word of God working on our behalf against the schemes the enemy lays out for us. Have you invited Jesus in? He wants to forgive you of sin and remove everything that is a barrier to rich relationship with the Father that He paid such a high price for you to have.

If you have, write out your gratefulness and spend some time thanking Him for rescuing you.

If you haven't yet invited Him in, I invite you to ask Him to help you to see just how much He loves you. And watch and see what He shows you.

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Day 12:

Psalm 40:13-15 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; O LORD, make haste to help me! Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion who seek to destroy my life; let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor who wish me evil. Let them be confounded because of their shame, who say to me, "Aha, aha!"

David knows that only God helping him will make the difference, his rescue isn't in humankind. But David wants God's help NOW! He cries out HURRY!

He then turns his attention on those who are the source of the danger and asks God to deal with them-that they would have a sense of shame for what they're doing. That they would be confused in their attempts to destroy his life. That they'd be not only stopped in their progress but backed all the way up. That they'd feel and live in the dishonor and shame of what they're doing to him.

David was being real with his feelings. He wasn't hiding behind any niceties and he didn't pretend he wasn't feeling or experiencing pain at the hands of others. And keep in mind, David wasn't experiencing pain only for himself-after God elevated David to be king over Israel, he was always the leader of the people that God loved and charged with protecting them. Any threat to David was a threat to the people he was to care for. Scattered sheep without a shepherd are vulnerable. And David knew that only God could stop those determined to do evil.

- Are you being real with God on the hard stuff you're experiencing? He knows it anyway and loves you. It's ok to ask for God's help NOW or to cry out for Him to HURRY!
- God sees all and He knows all and He still wants us to partner with Him in prayer by asking for what we need, an invitation to draw closer to Him. Talking. Verbally processing the issues of life.
- If you've been pretending with God because you think that's how Christians are supposed to behave, ask the Lord to forgive you and to help you be real with Him. We have no need to hide. [that didn't help Adam & Eve in the garden & it won't help us.]
- Do you have supportive people around you that can come along side and be with you in prayer and you can be with them in prayer for the things in their life? It's one of our greatest joys this side of heaven.
- Call them or text them today. Let them have the joy of praying with you.
- Ask them how you can pray for them. Be the kind of supportive person that you would like to have in your own life to someone today.

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Day 13:

Psalm 40:16-17 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!" But I am poor and needy; yet the LORD thinks upon me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God.
NKJV

David's desire is that all who seek God would find great gladness in Him. David wants for those who love that God makes rescue available to all from sin's condemnation and separation from Him would raise up in joyful expression and worship Him. We can see he realizes he's "poor in spirit" and is so grateful that the Lord's thoughts are on him. David knows that God is his help and his deliverer.

- Do we find great gladness in God? What are you glad about in God today? Write that down.
- If you've been rescued from sin's horrifying control and now have a relationship with God, how can you share that joy with Him and others today?
- Do you know that God's thoughts are on you? *Jeremiah 3:31b says "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."* *Zephaniah 3:17 says "The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."*

Both of these scriptures were written to a different group at a different time, but what they reveal for us is God's character which applies to us today. He loves-so thoroughly, so completely, that it truly compares to nothing else the world has to offer.

- Is there anything standing in the way of your allowing God to love you? This is a great question to ask in prayer. If the Lord reveals anything to you, ask His help to remove it so you can experience the fullness of the love and acceptance He has for you.
- Call or text a trusted Christian friend today and encourage them with how much God loves them.

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Day 14:

Psalm 34:18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; He saves those whose spirits are crushed.

Psalm 145: 17-18 The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

The Lord has great compassion for those who are brokenhearted. And He's as near as the mention of His name.

As we've explored Matthew 5:3, being poor in spirit, over these last days, how has the truth of His compassion impacted you?

He loves you. And He wants to be close to you, to do life together with you, to empower you with the amazing Holy Spirit, and encourage others with His love—all through you.

Today, right in the midst of our ordinary lives, our extraordinary God is with you.

Immanuel, God WITH us.

Truly THE greatest joy of all humanity for all time.

Praise His name.

Matthew 11:28-30 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."