

# **CHRISTIANS AS BRETHERN: PERSONAL CHARACTER AND CONDUCT LESSON ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

1. When we enter the saved relationship with Christ we are CHRISTIANS
  - a. Baptized disciples (Matt. 28:19, Mk. 16:16, Acts 11:26, Gal. 3:27)
  - b. The name stands for a definite character and conduct of a person connected with Christ (I Pet. 4:15-16; 18-19).
  
2. The Christian also enters the relationship with other Christians as BRETHERN
  - a. "ALDELPHOS" – related to "DELPHUS" – the womb – denoting closeness and kinship.
  - b. Individually (my brother)- Phil. 2:25
  - c. Collectively (my brethren)- Eph. 6:10
  - d. Members together of a spiritual family (Col. 1:2, 4:15-16)
  
3. God exhorts Christians to Interact with one another as a harmonious family.
  - a. Individually (Philippians 2:1-3)
  - b. Collectively (I Cor. 1:10)

## **I. THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN CONVEYED IN THE BEATITUDES (Matthew 5:1-12).**

- A. Jesus introduced His sermon before the multitudes in the mountain with eight characteristics God's people should possess.
  1. Characterized as "happiness" because of a "supreme blessedness" (Beatitude) in the Lord
  2. Not a happiness that the world relates to: How can one that is poor be happy? How can one who mourns be happy? How can one experiencing persecution be happy?
  3. The blessed state issues with happiness because one possesses the kingdom of heaven, though poor; One is comforted when in mourning, and one has a great reward waiting when suffering for Christ's and righteousness sake (Matt. 5:3, 4, 10-12).
  
- B. All Christians are to have this character – not reserved for "exceptional Christians." We should never think "ordinary Christians" are exempted. Who is the "ordinary Christian?"
  
- C. All characteristics are to be manifested in all Christians. Like the "fruit" of the Spirit – Christians are to manifest every facet of the blessed state like every facet of the single fruit (cf. Galatians 5:22-23)
  
- D. All Christians, possessing all eight of these character traits, manifest citizenship in a heavenly kingdom – different from the kingdoms of this world (cf. Jn. 18:36)

**CHRISTIANS AS BRETHREN...CHARACTER AND CONDUCT**  
**PAGE 2**

1. All redeemed Christians are translated into this spiritual kingdom of God's beloved Son (Col. 1:13-14)
- E. Before we examine the "conduct" of the Christian, one's actions; we will examine the "character" of the Christian and first examine who they "are..."

**II. BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT... (Matthew 5:3)**

- A. The word translated "poor" is from the Greek word, "PTOCHOS" which conveys abject poverty making one a pauper or beggarly.
  1. Usually denoting the destitute who are financially poor
    - a. widow – all she had was 2 mites (a mite is equal to about 1/5 of cent) Mk. 12:43)
    - b. the poor who cannot repay you (Lk. 14:13-14)
  2. Jesus specifies the type of poverty He has in mind "poor in spirit."
    - a. While Luke says, "blessed are the poor" (Lk. 6:20), it is not blessed is the spirit of the financially poor – like poverty is exalted in the rule of God. Such concept is behind of people taking an oath of poverty in their devotion to God.
    - b. "poverty does not guarantee spirituality" (Martin Lloyd Jones, Sermon on the Mount, p. 43). – Poor can have a love for money, desiring to be rich (I Tim. 6:9-10). The poor can be jealous of those who are rich.
    - c. the poverty or destitution is in the spirit of one as he sees himself before God.
- B. Being poor in spirit is contradictory to the way the world thinks.
  1. Exalting poverty in spirit before God is thought to be a "crutch" - negative concept among people of the world who exalts "self-reliance," "self-sufficiency," and manifesting a "self-confidence" in the world.
    - a. Is a crutch a negative thing when you can't walk – powerless (cf. Rom.5:6)
    - b. Jesus came to save the sick in sin, not the healthy who was self-sufficient, needing no one (Matt. 9:11-13).
  2. Poor in spirit vs. Self- esteem
    - a. God did not encourage Moses with self-esteem when Moses balked with lack of self-confidence in being God's spokesman – he needed to look to God not himself (Exodus 3:11-12)
    - b. God's help not self-reliance is the poor in spirit before God – Paul (I Cor. 15:10).
- C. Being poor in spirit is seeing ourselves before God, not merely when we sin, but When we are blessed by God – David (Psalm 51:17, cf. 2 Sam. 11; I Chron. 29:10-14)

- D. Peter's and John's "boldness" did not come from "self-reliance" but rather poor in spirit before the rule of God (Acts 4:13, 27-29).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. It is fitting for Jesus to begin with the character of the Christian as he or she sees herself Before God. Poor in Spirit before God is one that comes before Him empty of self and ready to be ruled by God.
2. What makes the poor in spirit blessed or happy is that the one who has the humility to see self as in total need of God is one who characterizes those who are blessed by God in His spiritual kingdom.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Does the word "Christian" have a definite character connected with it?
2. What all does "brethren" in Christ signify?
3. What does God exhort all Christians in their interaction as brethren?
4. What does "beatitude" mean – how is it conveyed in the beginning of the sermon on the mount.
5. Are all Christians to manifest all the beatitudes?
6. Do the Beatitudes emphasize the Christian's character or his specified conduct?
7. What does "poor" in spirit signify?
8. Is Jesus exalting being poor monetarily? Why or why not?

**CHRISTIANS AS BRETHERN...CHARACTER AND CONDUCT**  
**PAGE 4**

9. How does being “poor in spirit” contradictory to how the world thinks and what the world honors?
  
10. What does the demand to be “poor in spirit” say about God’s attitude toward man’s “Self- esteem?”
  
11. Is poor in spirit only seen when we are reflecting on our sin?
  
12. Did Paul manifest poverty of spirit when he said, “I labored more abundantly than they all?”
  
13. Were Peter in John manifesting being poor in spirit when they manifested “boldness?”
  
14. What reason does Jesus give for the poor in spirit to be happy, experiencing a blessed state?