

## THE CHARACTER OF THE KINGDOM

The world's values are often very different from God's values. Can you think of some examples?

Listed below are some "kingdom of God" values, as described by Jesus. Think about what Jesus is saying in each statement and describe how it conflicts with what the world says.

### Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

| Jesus Says:<br>Blessed are                    | What this means!  | Who the World says is blessed.  |
|---|---|---|
| The poor in spirit                            | Those who realize they are spiritually in need and have no means of spiritual self-support. They understand they are not self-reliant or self-sufficient. | Those who "have it all together" and need nothing from anyone.  |
| Those who mourn                               | They grieve over their sinful state and are repentant.  | Those who aren't restrained or burdened by conscience. Those who are always celebrating personal victory. |
| The meek                                      | Meek does not mean weak, but rather Humility and Confidence, Strength and Gentleness.   | Those who have a right to be arrogant. The "survivor" who looks out for himself. "Me first" attitude!     |
| Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness | Those yearning for a Christ-like life that conforms to the character of God   | Those who strive for success and status.  |

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| The merciful                                      | Those who show God's grace to others.<br>Quick to forgive.   | Those who give people what they deserve.   |
| The pure in heart                                 | Undivided: Surrendered fully to the will of God.<br>Motives are a deeper concern than surface behaviour. | Those who are able to get what they want by any means                                |
| The peacemakers                                   | Promote reconciliation between others and with God   | Those who fight for what they want.  |
| Those who are persecuted because of righteousness | Stand firm in their faith despite consequences.<br>They stand out in the darkness.                       | Those who conform to society.<br>Those who put peace with others before love of God. |

**How does each beatitude build on the one before it?**

**The process begins with:**

- Poor in spirit:** Recognizing [sin and spiritual need](#)
- Mourns:** Progresses to [repentance](#)
- Meek:** Progresses to [a humble perspective of who we are](#)
- Hunger:** Progresses to [a deeper longing for the character of God](#)
- Merciful:** Progresses to [showing God's love and grace to others](#)
- Pure in Heart:** Progresses to [a deeper spiritual maturity](#)
- Peacemaker:** Progresses to [representing God's peace in this world \(image rule\)](#)
- Persecution:** Progresses to [being persecuted just as Jesus was.](#)

**What are the some of the benefits of kingdom character?**

| Jesus Says:<br>Blessed are                        | The Benefit & Why?  |
|---|---|
| The poor in spirit                                | <b>Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.</b><br>Those who understand their rebellion against God are the only ones who may be pardoned and accepted into his kingdom. The proud and self reliant ones are those who do not submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ and therefore cannot enter his kingdom. The self reliant pride our world embraces is the very thing keeping us from God. |
| Those who mourn                                   | <b>They will be comforted.</b><br>We will only be freed from bondage to sin and death when we begin to grieve over and hate sin. Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit, who brings us to a point of repentance SO THAT we can be freed from our guilt and shame. Mourning is the path to comfort.   |
| The meek  | <b>They will inherit the earth.</b><br>Those who understand who they are before God are the ones who will rule on the earth. They understand that they are who they are by the grace of God and that all authority comes from Christ. They are the people who represent God's interests as opposed to their own.  |
| Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness     | <b>They will be filled.</b><br>Those who desire a deeper relationship with God will work towards gaining a deeper relationship with him. It is God who fills us and fulfills us, bringing us peace and joy. We are most content in life when we experience a deeper walk with Christ.   |
| The merciful                                      | <b>They will be shown mercy.</b><br>God tells us he will treat us based on how we treat others. When we choose to show love to others it is because we have been in a position to receive love from God and now allow his love to flow through us. When we don't show love to others, it is because we have already turned away from receiving God's love.                            |
| The pure in heart                                 | <b>They will see God.</b><br>Without holiness no one will see the lord. (Hebrews 12:14)   |
| The peacemakers                                   | <b>They will be called sons of God.</b><br>God is a peacemaker. Jesus gave his life to establish peace between us and the Father. Children of God take this same mission of reconciling others to God and embrace it with their lives. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)  |
| Those who are persecuted because of righteousness | <b>Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.</b><br>This world will not appreciate the stand we take – but God does! To those who persevere, he gives the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. It is the reward for those who choose God over this world.   |



How can we live each of these characteristics out in our lives?

|   | <b>Jesus Says:<br/>Blessed are</b>            | <b>How?</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Relationship with God<br/>Spiritual Need</b> | The poor in spirit                            | Reflect on your desperate need for the grace of God in your life. Die to self! Submit fully to the control of the Holy Spirit.  |
|   | Those who mourn                               | Repent of every sin in your life. Grieve when you see sin at work around you. Start to hate every sin you see active in your life and remove it.  |
|   | The meek                                      | Be confident, yet humble. Submit to others to build them up. You are the image of God by the grace of God and all that we have comes from him.  |
|   | Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness | Long to know God more, to the point that you make it a personal discipline in your life. Make time for prayer and the reading of scripture. Keep learning to surrender every area of your life to the control of the Holy Spirit. |

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| <b>Relationship with Others<br/>Spiritual Abundance</b> | The merciful                                      | Show mercy when others don't. Look for opportunities to express God's unconditional love that will run counter to our natural sinful inclination. Be slow to anger and quick to forgive.   |
|   | The pure in heart                                 | Choose righteousness over sin. At those points when your conscience is in tension with your desires, make a conscious decision to do what you know is right. Remove areas from your life that bring temptation and cause you to stumble. |
|   | The peacemakers                                   | Be a promoter of reconciliation between others and God. Look for opportunities to bring peace in the midst of conflict. This most powerfully occurs when we help people bring God into the midst of all their relationships.             |
|   | Those who are persecuted because of righteousness | Live your faith publicly. Don't shy away from righteousness because of the opinion or persecution of others.   |

Do you really believe it makes sense to live according to these kingdom value statements?

If the whole world operated according to these values, how would the world be different?

Why does the world struggle to embrace these values or better yet, why have you struggled to embrace these values?

What one kingdom value do you want to focus on this week?