



**elev8**

life on another level

# Student Workbook

**YEAR 1**

**Life and Action**

**Blessed are the  
Poor in Spirit**

**Bible Readings**

Matthew 5:3

Luke 11:1-12

Luke 18:9-14



### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this week you will be able to:

- Begun to develop an understanding of what Jesus meant by 'poor in spirit'
- Begun to appreciate the value of being 'poor in spirit'
- Been challenged to develop an attitude of humility in your own life

### Notes from Bible Reading

**Scripture** A word or phrase that stood out to me:

---

---

---

**Observation** What is happening in this Bible reading?

---

---

---

**Application** Something that I learned about who I am or how I should live:

---

---

---

**Prayer** What I would like to say to God, ask of God, or what I think God is saying to me:

---

---

---

**Key Question** What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

---

---

---

### Engage

Go around the group and share one thing for each heading that has happened since you last met :

- Plus – What has been good or enjoyable ?
- Minus – What has been difficult or painful ?
- Interesting – What has been unusual or thought provoking ?

#### Discussion starter:

Do you see yourself as a 'sinner'? Why/Why not?

#### Some interesting facts:

The Pharisees were religious leaders in Jesus' time who were very concerned with living perfectly by the Jewish law. They had all kinds of rules that they inflicted on other Jews, and seemed to think highly of themselves because of their 'holy' lifestyle.

Tax collectors were not well liked in Jesus' community. The lands where the Jews lived were a part of the Roman Empire, and the Romans imposed many taxes on them.

Tax collectors were Jews who began working for the Romans and collected the hefty taxes from their fellow Jews. They were seen as traitors of a sort, and you can see why!

### Explore – Locate

- *What stood out to you in the Bible readings this week?*
- *What did you find meaningful or significant?*
- *Is there anything that you didn't understand or found confusing?*
- *Any questions or comments you may have?*

**Read together:** Luke 18:9-14; Matthew 5:3; John 11:1-12

"You're full of yourself!" "You think you're so good!" Have you heard these things said before? These kinds of comments can help us understand what Jesus meant by being 'poor in spirit'. You might say that someone who is 'full of themselves' is rich in spirit. So, to be poor in spirit is the opposite of this: kind of being empty of yourself, realising that you're not so good after all.

This is written by an amazing Jesus-follower named Shane Claiborne:

"A few years back, I was talking with a homeless guy in an alley downtown, and he started sharing with me about God. He was familiar with the Bible but kept talking about "the Christians"...A little confused, I finally asked him, "Are you not a Christian?" "Oh no," he said, "I am far too messed up for that". I asked him what he thought a Christian was, and he said, "Someone who's got their stuff together and has things figured out." I confessed that I must not be a Christian either then and that I wasn't sure I had ever met one, and we laughed.

We read together the passage where Jesus tells the Pharisees (the ones who "had things together"), "It's

not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mt. 9:12-13)

The gospel is good news for sick people and is disturbing for those who think they've got it all together.

Some of us have been told our whole lives that we are wretched, but the gospel reminds us that we are beautiful.

Others of us have been told our whole lives that we are beautiful, but the gospel reminds us that we are also wretched.

The church is a place where we can stand up and say we are wretched [screwed up!], and everyone will nod and agree and remind us that we are also beautiful."

This is what Jesus was on about when he said "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven": it is not those who are full of themselves and think they're awesome who God includes in his kingdom - why would he?

These kinds of people don't think they need God's help at all! It is those who are 'empty of themselves', poor in their spirits, lacking something, who know they're messed up and need God's help.

They are the ones who Jesus came for. We are all broken, and to be poor in spirit is to be aware of your own brokenness.

Shane Claiborne. The Irresistible Revolution: living as an ordinary radical. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2006. pp. 245.

### Explore – Express

Draw a picture depicting both the darkness and faults of yourself, as well as the light and beauty within you.

OR

Write a list of 5 elements of yourself that you see as broken (i.e. your faults), as well as 5 things about you that are beautiful.

When you have done this, screw up or fold the paper and place it in a bowl in the centre of the room.

This signifies that you are offering yourself to God with both your weaknesses and strengths. He loves you despite your brokenness, and he accepts all of you - the good and the bad.

### Explore – Apply

- What do you think of the tax collector in the story?
- Why do you think he, rather than the Pharisee, was made right with God?
- What do you think Jesus meant by saying 'Blessed are the poor in spirit'?
- As a result of this lesson, in what ways has your understanding of God or yourself been changed or challenged?

### Extend

Discuss with your group the challenges you are tackling. Use the time to ask for any help you might need.

#### Questions that may be helpful include:

- What challenges are you working on at the moment?
- Do you need any support or assistance?
- Are there any challenges that you have completed that we need to recognise and celebrate?
- Are there any new challenges that you want to work on?

### Encourage

Tell another student in your group something you value or appreciate about them.

Pray together:

*Our Father, who is in Heaven,  
Blessed be your Name.  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done on earth,  
As it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread,  
And forgive us our sins  
As we forgive those who sin against us.  
Help us to resist temptation,  
And please deliver us from evil.  
Amen.*