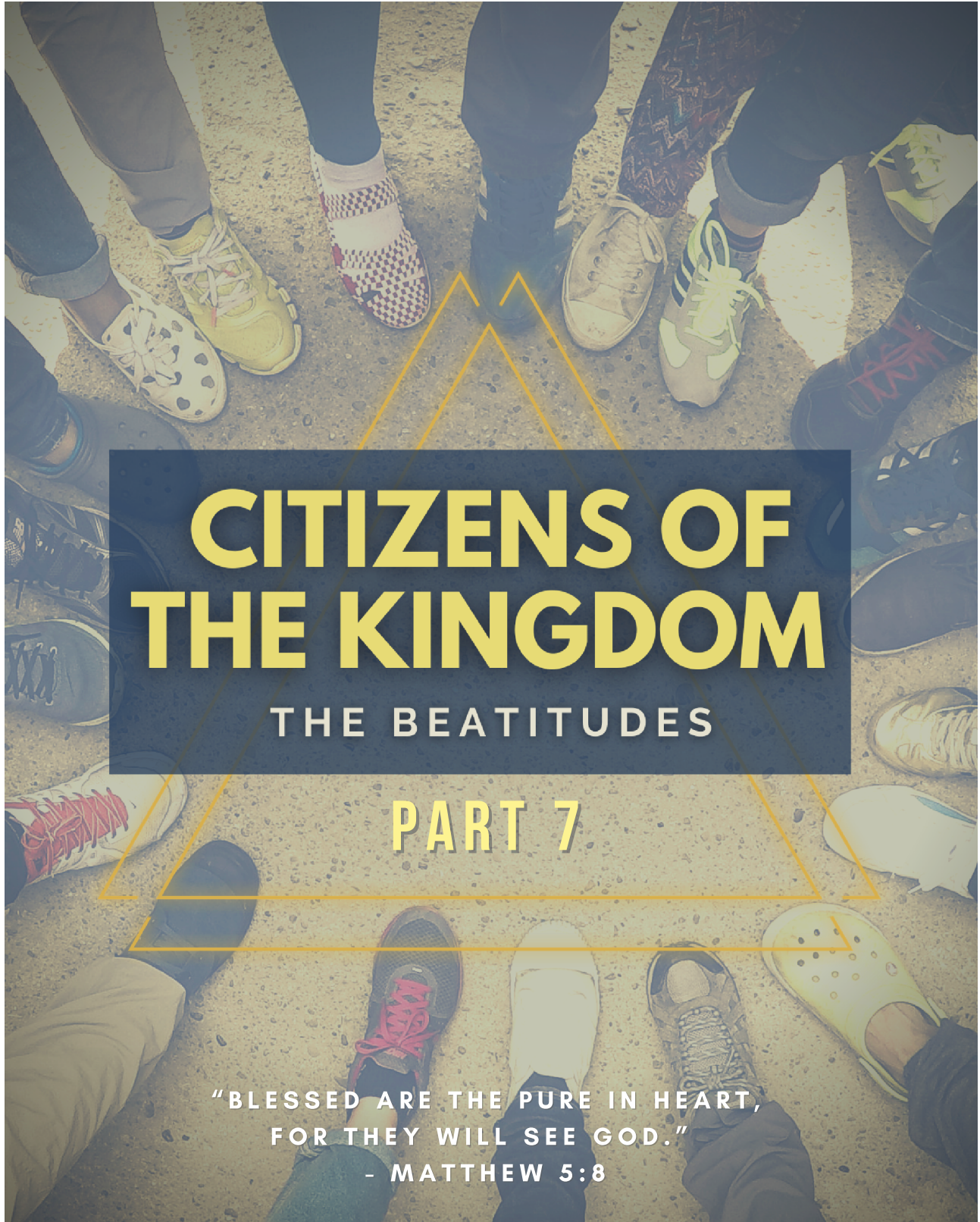


AUGUST 8, 2021 | STUDY GUIDE |



# CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM

THE BEATITUDES

PART 7

"BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART,  
FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD."

- MATTHEW 5:8



# CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM

“On first reading [the Sermon on the Mount] you feel that it turns everything upside down, but the second time you read it you discover that it turns everything right side up. The first time you read it you feel that it is impossible; the second time, you feel that nothing else is possible.”

- G. K. Chesterton

## I. **Psalm 24 as the Backdrop**

“Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?  
“The one who has clean hands and a pure heart...Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob” - Psalm 24:3;6

To be “pure in heart” has to do with a life of utter integrity – of consistency all the way down.

So J.B. Phillips, in his paraphrase of the Bible, renders the sixth Beatitude as “Blessed are the utterly sincere.” John Stott elaborates this: “Their whole life, public and private, is transparent before God and men.” (In Johnson)

## II. Pure in Heart

**Pure.** “clean” or “guiltless” or “unmixed.”

**Heart.** the “seat of the will”, the center of a person; where all our decisions come from – where our behaviours, words, attitudes arise out of.

**Jesus addresses the issue of “purity of heart” later in the Sermon on the Mount:**

“When you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others....but when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret” – Matthew 6:3-4

## III. Connecting the Gospel

What does Jesus intend for this beatitude to “do” in us?

1. It paints a picture of the kingdom life that is beautiful. It gives us this picture of a person whose inner life – their intentions and motives – are pure, not polluted with self-interest.
2. It stands as a critique of the visions of life we can too easily ‘buy into’ – that of the “just be true to yourself” story, of individual self-expression, and the “external purity” that is fueled, again, by self-interest, by keeping up appearances.

How do we tap into this life as Citizens of the Kingdom – to this pure in heart-ness?

### A. The Healing

“If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being.”

– Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn



Like all the beatitudes, they send us back to the first one: “Blessed are the poor in spirit – those who recognize their deep and desperate need for God...blessed are those who know they are not pure, for they can be made so through trust in Jesus, and through his Spirit’s empowering work.”

“The “pure in heart” are not perfect. It is just that they know they cannot hide anything from God. So, living in sync with the really real, they bring their thoughts, their emotions, their fears and dreams into the light of God’s truth and grace.”

– Darrell Johnson

**Jesus gives us His Pure Heart!** Jesus himself lives with utter ‘purity of heart’ and then He lets his “Pure Heart” break, in order that we can be forgiven and healed; to actually “give us a new heart” – one that begins, slowly but surely to live in sync with his kingdom ways.

“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”

- Ezekiel 36:25-27

### B. The Help

Jesus promises to enable us to follow his kingdom ways by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us (Ez 36:27; Jn 14-16).

## **IV. The Promise**

“...for they will see God.”

### A. Here and Now

“There is a sense and a measure in which this is true of life here and now. The pure in heart see God in a way that that the impure never know.” - Leon Morris

“Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.” - Psalm 73:1

- A. We see God in His work around us.
- B. We see God in Nature (Psalm 19; Rom. 1)
- C. We see God through the words of Scripture (Psalm 19)
- D. We see God in Jesus (John 1 & 14; Col. 1)
- E. We see God in the faces of our sisters and brothers in Christ - especially those in need (Matt. 25)

“This is the secret to the joy Mother Teresa found in her work in Calcutta: She saw in the faces of discarded infants and discarded elders the face of the Lover of her soul.”

- Darrell Johnson

### B. Then - Face to Face!

God says to Moses: “You cannot see my face, for no one can see my face and live” (Exodus 33:20). Why not? Why not see God’s face? Was it because Moses was human, and God divine? No. It was because God was perfectly holy, and Moses was not.

In Revelation 21 we find that one day, those who belong to God “will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads”

- Revelation 21:4.

“But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

- 1 John 3:2

“All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.”

- 1 John 3:3

The author is not suggesting that we ‘save’ ourselves. That’s not the point. The point is that we live ‘lined up’ with the new heart we’ve received, the new identity we have as God’s “beloved children.”





## V. Being Pure in Heart

1. The Christian tradition prepares us to grow in ‘purity of heart’. We won’t always (or ever?) have 100% pure motives, but the ‘pure in heart’ are those who regularly pray with the Psalmist: “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting”  
– Psalm 139:23-24.

2. Acknowledge to God what our motives might be, and ask him for help, to do the right things for the right reasons – and trust that he will work through us still.

3. Focus on Jesus.

“Focus your vision outside yourself on the beauty, graciousness, and compassion of Jesus Christ. The pure of heart praise Him from sunrise to sundown. Even when they feel broken, feeble, distracted, insecure, and uncertain, they are able to release it into His peace. A heart like that is stripped and filled—stripped of self and filled with the fullness of God. It is enough that Jesus is Lord.” – St. Francis of Assisi

# Life Group Discussion and Reflection

(Some of these questions are borrowed and adapted from Darrell Johnson, *The Beatitudes: Living in Sync with the Reign of God* and Jonathan Dodson, *Our Good Crisis: Overcoming Moral Chaos with the Beatitudes*).

## Read Matthew 5:1-12

What is the most awe-inspiring thing you've ever seen? Describe it for your group.

1. When you hear the phrase "pure in heart" what comes to mind?
2. In the message, we looked at how our culture often views "purity of heart" as a sort of "inner purity", defined in our culture as "individual self-expression." How does this expressive individualism hurt the church?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of 'outer purity'? Which strengths do you need to embrace?
4. What do you think Jesus means when he promises that the pure in heart we will "see God"? (You can review and discuss the five ways Pastor Dave spoke of in the message and in the notes above).
5. What does it mean to be "pure in heart"? How might that be lived out in your daily life?
6. Consider Psalm 139:23-24. How might this prayer help believers to live as 'the pure in heart'? How can you incorporate that sort of prayer into your life more regularly?

**Prayer:** Pray for those in your group, specifically regarding some of your answers to questions 3 and 4. Spend some time simply thanking Jesus for the ways that you've "seen" him at work in your life or around you recently – how you've seen him in others too.

