

## THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Taught by Bruce Bickel

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Gracious Heavenly Father, Thou art worthy to receive all of our honor, praise and glory. We're humbled by the fact that we live in a country where we can gather to sit at your feet, that your Holy Spirit would be our teacher and guide us into all of your truth. Father, remove all the thoughts of this world from us. We just pray, Lord, that our minds would be focused upon those things which are heavenly, beautiful, which come from you. Most of all, Father, we are very dependent upon your Holy Spirit to be our teacher, to guide us into all truth, and would you once again, as you so faithfully do every Friday morning, open our eyes that we might behold you more clearly for Christ's sake. Amen.

Another gift for you guys, if you'd like to have one. This is a book that I think I gave some of you before, but we have some new brothers. If you'd like to have a copy, I've got them over here in this yellow folder. It's called Blueprint for Success. The reason I'm giving them away is I moved my office and I don't have enough room in my new office for these books {LAUGHTER} and nobody's buying them, so I'm going to give them to you. {LAUGHTER}

This is not a Christian book, per se; it's a businessmen's book, called Blueprint for Success. Some of the other authors are Ken Blanchard and Stephen Covey. Myself, I wrote one chapter. Mine happens to be on priorities and decision making. Mine all comes from 1 Corinthians and Paul's letter to the church at Corinth, although I allude to that, but when you read my chapter, you will realize it because we've talked about it. If you'd like to have a copy, they're up here on that couch. Take as many as you'd like—my gift to you just for your faithfulness, to say thanks. Again, this is not a Christian book per se, but it was one of the ways in which we were able to plant some seeds hopefully in the business world by people who were buying the book. It might be beneficial; my gift to you just to say thanks. Help yourself.

Let's turn in our Bibles to Matthew 5 continuing our study of the Sermon on the Mount, working our way through these Beatitudes, the beautiful attitudes of life that Jesus describes for us in his preamble to the Sermon on the Mount. Remember this is his first staff meeting. He's beginning to tell his disciples, "This is who you will become so that ministry will be who you are where you are."

As we've been learning over the years, ministry is not so much what you do as it is who you are where you are with the people that you are with. That's why we are mission minded members of a movement motivated by mercy for ministry in the marketplace. Our marketplace is the world. Wherever we go, that is our marketplace.

As we're coming to these Beatitudes in Matthew 5, this will be your lesson 8. Let me read the Beatitudes because these are all in divine order in a wonderful sequence, and we'll see that more even explicit today as we look at this one. <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 shall be comforted. <sup>5</sup>"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup>"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. <sup>7</sup>"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. <sup>8</sup>"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

There's a wonderful sequence as we look at all of these Beatitudes. The first one realizes that we're absolutely nothing, we have nothing, we can offer nothing to God, and that we are spiritually bankrupt. Then we move into the second one, which is mourning. We mourn over our sinful condition and our offensive lifestyle to God; we mourn over that, and that begins the whole process of regeneration.

Then we move to "Blessed are the meek." That's living according to the power of God. We give up our

own life as the resources of our own life, and we now begin to live a life of power based upon God's wonderful power under control.

Michael had a very good illustration of that he sent me this, week of a situation in his life, where he exercised meekness, applying what we've been learning. It's wonderful to realize that you don't have to be the resources of your own life, that we can live according to the grace and power of God, and that really is what we want to do is to have our power under control.

Then we go into hungering and thirsting after righteousness. That means we become our own reward system. We don't look for external things to reward us. We look for our desire to be satisfied by our desire to be right-wise; in other words, to make right decisions based upon how the Holy Spirit integrates the Word into our being, into our souls, into our mind, and that becomes our reward. We learn to become our own reward system and not motivated by externals. One of the expressions of that being satisfied is that we're merciful.

One of the first indications of true saving faith is the character quality of mercy. Jesus was merciful to us, and therefore, we give away what he gave to us, we give away to other people. Ministry is essentially in its basic form giving away to God, giving away to other people what God has given us. One of the first things that we can give away is mercy because that was one of the first things that we saw that we received from him.

Now we move into, "Blessed are the pure in heart." Remember the word "blessed" means happy in spite of circumstances. Happiness really is based upon happenings. Blessedness is based upon the internal attitude of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, who helps us realize that we're citizens of a larger kingdom, and not the citizens of this world. We're in the world, but not of this world. Our blessedness comes from the whole series of these Beatitudes being integrated into our being.

We come to the one today, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8) In the biblical imagery, the heart is the center of all personality issues relating to the person, be they male or female, the heart is the imagery of the position of the entire personality. In this particular Beatitude, Jesus conveys special blessings upon, not the intellectually keen or the brilliant or the emotionally pious or the legalistically obedient, but those who are pure in heart.

The purity of heart does not necessarily mean, and it certainly does not mean sinlessness. When we talk about pure of heart, we're not talking about sinless perfection. We know that there's only one who was sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient, and that's why we are justified by faith alone. We get credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. When we talk about being pure in heart, we do not mean sinlessness of life.

When you look at the great saints of the Scripture, you'll notice that's also true biblically. You take the history of God's saints in recorded history, you'll see that Noah got drunk. Now I'm not giving you license to do these things. Please understand what I'm saying. I'm just giving you illustrations to help you understand that pure in heart does not mean sinlessly perfect. We see, historically, Noah got drunk. Abraham equivocated. Moses disobeyed God. Job cursed the day that he was born. Elijah fled in terror from Jezebel. Peter denied Christ. You've got to understand when we talk about pure in heart, we're not talking about being sinlessly perfect.

We know from 1 John, one of the seven tests and seven traits of true saving faith, "If you say you have no sin, you're a liar and there's no truth in you." So we're not talking about being sinlessly perfect. We're talking about the attitudes and the motives of the heart, which we'll see in a moment.

“Blessed are the pure in heart.” Now theologians would debate whether this has to do with the new heart received at regeneration or the moral transformation of character that accompanies a divine work of grace, having been wrought in the person’s soul. Probably, and in my judgment, it includes both of those, because one cannot happen without the other. In other words, you cannot have the transformation of the soul without the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit in your soul.

When we look at pure in heart, we’re looking at two things. First of all, how God takes a depraved heart and he purifies that. Ezekiel 36:22-27, one of our standard verses is, “I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” That’s when he begins to purify the motives and the way that we think. The very first thing that happens is regeneration. Jesus is referring to what happens at the transformation of the character of the person through the act of, the work of the Holy Spirit through regeneration or the new birth. As a result of that, there is a transformation of the outward conduct of the person because of the inward graces of the Holy Spirit. His blessings is that internal cleansing that both accompanies and follows the new birth is what we’re referring to when we talk about pure in heart.

Pure in heart is the initial act of the Holy Spirit’s regenerating us, giving us saving faith. The second part of pure in heart is how I begin to think as a result of my mind being changed and my heart being changed as a result of the work of regeneration. In as much as there’s no inward purity exists without the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, we can look at pure in heart as being both the act of conversion and both the act of transformation.

It’s interesting, in my time with Ravi Zacharias in Turkey, when I was teaching with his staff, one of the things that he says in dealing with false religions, there are three areas that you can deal with that they don’t have answers for. As he was teaching all of his apologetic students around the country, he says three things that they deal that we really have the upper hand because of biblical truth in Christianity, and that would be, first of all, creation. They have to have a starting point. It starts somewhere. Christianity starts out of nothing. Genesis 1:1, “God created out of nothing.” Ex nihilo—he started out of nothing. God is the source. In all of the false religions, they have to have a starting point as their source. In Christianity, they starting point is the heart and mind and soul of God himself.

The second thing was transformation—transformation from a depraved heart to righteousness. All other false religions can’t deal with that. They have to deal with that through legalism or through outward conduct. Christianity deals with it from the inside out. False religions deal with it from outside in. The second phase is what we’re talking about here, is this transformation of going from a depraved heart to righteousness.

The third area he would suggest would be translation—that’s going from death to life, eternal life.

The one that we’re going to talk about today is transformation. How is a person transformed in their mind, in their motives, in their attitudes, and that is what Jesus is referring when he’s talking about being pure in heart. Jesus describes the condition of the heart in rather graphic terms. I’d invite you to turn to Matthew 15. We’ll see the implications of the purity of the heart. Quite honestly, friends, this is one of the most difficult ones for me teach because it constantly exposes the motives of my own heart, which are far less than I want them to be, so this one is very, very convicting for me personally.

If you’ll look at Matthew 15:19-20a, <sup>19</sup>“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. <sup>20</sup>These are what defile a person.” Now that’s what he’s talking about. He’s purifying the heart so that those things will not occur. It’s the same thing that Jesus said, “Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.” One of the great barometers of the maturity that we have in our Christian faith is what do you talk about. What words do you use? What phrases do you use? What’s on your mind? What comes out of you? You see, he’s basically saying that’s a function of

the purity of your heart. It's a function of your heart condition.

We flippantly say, "Oh, that person has a good heart." Really? That's really not true. We do not have good hearts. In a generalization, when somebody would say, "Are they a Christian," "Well, I'm not sure if they have saving faith, but she has a good heart." Well that's a nice cover up for the realization that we really don't know the condition of that person's life. Jesus is talking about something far deeper than that. He's talking about purifying the heart's condition so that the motives that you have now are radically changed, they're transformed, and that only can be done through regeneration, through the new birth.

This is not something that you can learn. It is not something that you achieve; it is something that you receive. That's the wonderful verses in Ezekiel 36 about the new covenant, "I will take your heart of stone, your heart, which is insensitive to spiritual things, I will replace it with a heart of flesh that is now sensitive to spiritual things, and now you begin to think differently and you're going to act differently."

That's why Paul tells us in Romans 12, "Do not be conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Where does that renewing of the mind start? It starts in the renewing of your heart. You see, it starts in your heart condition. When Jesus is talking about being pure in heart, he's talking about something supernatural has to happen to you so that your heart condition is radically altered and transformed so that you begin to think differently. That's when we use that illustration of think/act/feel. The world's going to teach us to feel/act/think. The Scripture teaches us to think/act/feel. You can't think differently until your heart changes. You cannot think differently until your heart changes. There are a lot of activities, a lot of groups, a lot of discipleship is oriented to getting people to do something rather than helping people become something. You've got to become something before you can do something.

What Jesus is talking about here in being pure in heart is you've got to become something, you've got to become a person with a whole new personality, and that starts in your heart. The greatest barometer, in my mind, brothers, is this. Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. What do you talk about? What words do you use? Why do we say the things we do? You see, those are all a reflection of that.

We are not given the ministry of the Holy Spirit to determine or discern other people's motives. That's not a role we've been given. It is the Holy Spirit's role to confirm assurance of salvation not ours. Assurance of salvation is not a ministry that has been given to mankind; it's only a ministry given to the Holy Spirit. We can't tell somebody they're a Christian. You can take them to the Scripture and as Paul says, "test yourself to see whether or not you're in the faith." We take them to the book of 1 John and say, "Look at these seven tests of a true believer. Is that you?" The Holy Spirit can do that. You and I can't pronounce salvation on somebody.

The same thing with the Holy Spirit now, working in our purity of heart, of motives. It is not our role to discern or to evaluate other people's motives. The only motives that you can evaluate are your own. All I'm saying, brothers, is this. One of the ways in which you can really evaluate your motives are what words do you use. Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. The words that you talk about, the phrases you use, the things that are on your mind, are the things you're going to talk about. Thoughts become our words. Words become our actions. Actions become our habits. Habits become our character. Character becomes our destiny.

You see, it all starts with how you think, and how you think is a reflection of your heart. If your heart is not changed, you're not going to think differently. Sometimes, you know, I get so frustrated with me, just because, you know, "Why am I thinking that? Where does that thought come from? Lord, you know, I've been dealing with that for years. Remove those thoughts." That's why you've heard me say

that often times, many times a day, I have to say to myself, “Lord, remove those thoughts because if you don’t do that, it’s going to be a disaster. If I pursue those thought patterns, which really are a reflection of my heart, it’s really a reflection of me.” I can’t check somebody else’s motives. I’ve got to look at my own. When I look at my own thought life, it really is very, very convicting because it takes me back to the condition of my heart, and I say, “Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner. Lord, remove those thoughts because if you don’t do that, if I pursue that, it’s going to be a disaster. So Lord, protect your name. Protect your glory. Protect your reputation. Remove those thoughts.” What I’m really saying is, “Lord, purify my heart,” because my heart is the reason for my thoughts.

How critical it is that we understand what Jesus is teaching us when he says, “Blessed is the person who’s pure in heart,” whose motives have been altered, whose lifestyle of thought patterns have been transformed. That’s the person who’s blessed, because that’s the person who’s going to be happy in spite of the circumstances. As we look at all of this, it’s very critical that we understand what he’s talking about.

Go to Jeremiah 17:9, and I’ll show you some Old Testament references to this same concept of pure in heart, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” But she’s got a good heart. He’s a good person. He’s got a good heart. No. No. A thousand times no. She does not have a good heart if she’s unregenerate. He does not have a good heart if he’s unregenerate, if he’s unsaved. He does not have a good heart, because the heart is deceitful above all things.

What is it that causes justification, rationalization in our minds? It’s the heart. I can get away with it. I’m okay. You see, we begin to think like that. Then what do we do? You see, it is the condition of the heart that justifies everything that we do, or rationalizes our own conduct, because our hearts are evil. They’re deceitful. We deceive ourselves by how we think of ourselves. That’s where you’ve got to start with the first Beatitude, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Do you realize you’re absolute nothing? There’s nothing you can do, there’s nothing you can offer God. You’re bankrupt. You see, it all starts with that.

Sometimes, brothers, we need to go back and recognize our spiritual bankruptcy because that’s how we deal with the impurity of our heart. We rationalize so many things, just because our heart has been deceived by the system of this world and by sin. Total depravity doesn’t mean that you’re as depraved as you can be, because you can always become more depraved. But what it does mean, it means every part of your being has been affected by sin, including your heart and the way that you think.

You see, that’s what is so frustrating for me sometimes, “Lord why do I think that?” You see, it’s just because I’ve got to be careful not to deceive myself by thinking, “Oh, I’m okay. You teach on Friday. You’re alright. You can think that.” No I can’t. No I can’t. “Lord, you’ve got to remove those thoughts, because if you don’t, this will be a disaster.”

***Ted:*** *Why do you think those things? Why do you continue to think those things? After all these years and having Jesus in you and you’re in Jesus, why do you think those things?*

The question is why do I think those things after I’ve had Christ in my life all these years, I have the Holy Spirit, I study. Why do I think those things? I think it’s because of Romans 6. There’s sin in the members. You know, I’m still in an unredeemed body. My soul has been redeemed, but I live in a body that has been unredeemed. I will not be free from the presence of sin until I’m glorified. So I’m still in a body that is...we’ll talk about that in a moment about Romans 6 and Romans 7. Paul says, “Why do I do the things that I do. I don’t want to do them?” He says there’s sin in your members. It’s in the senses. It’s in my eyes. It’s in my ears. It’s in my mouth. It’s the things that I take in through society. You see, our body is still under the bondage of sin. It won’t be until God separates us from that, through our glorification, will I ever be free of that. In the meantime, we struggle. We battle. That’s why we live by

faith, not by works.

Part of it's a designed system, Ted. I think that the realization is to make us be on our knees. It drives us to our knees when you realize that about yourself. Hopefully, it would motivate us to be on our knees and just ask for repentance. Repentance is not something that happens once. Repentance is a style of life.

**Tom:** *Isn't sin not so much a matter of what I do, but who I am?*

Yes. You and I are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we're sinners. There's a difference. Somebody would say, "Well he's sinful because of what he did." No, he did what he did because he's sinful. You see, that's the condition we're in. That's why Jesus is saying, "Blessed is the person who recognizes that, whose battling that." But that will not be free until our time of glorification, when we're free from the presence of sin.

**Audience Member:** *[UNCLEAR] ...over time, having found that though you still have those thoughts, [UNCLEAR] become less? Or have you just been able to handle them better?*

Good question. The question is—boy you guys are picking on me {LAUGHTER}. Wait a minute; I think I have a phone call. Wait a minute here. {LAUGHTER} That's a great question. I'll answer it. The question was how am I handling it? Am I doing it better now than I was years ago? Or what do I do, do I just think I'm managing it better? Or have they changed? It's both. I'm managing it better and it's changing. It's not changing as fast or as quickly as I would like, but I'm learning to manage it better. One of the ways in which I manage it is this, "Lord remove them!" I've got to realize that I don't have the strength to do that, nor do I have the desire to do that sometimes. Sometimes they're nice, juicy thoughts. You just want to feed them. That's reality. You can't justify yourself and hide behind it. I've got to say, "Lord, that's a juicy thought. Man, I'd love to do that. But Lord, you've got to remove that." So yes, I'm learning to manage it, through the Scripture, through the work of the Holy Spirit. How he brings the Scripture back into your life in a situation in your life so you can apply it. But at the same time, I'm learning, more and more, of the depravity of my own sinfulness and not rationalizing it. I can't hide behind it. I can't hide behind my knowledge. That's the danger of a deceitful heart. We hide behind what we think we know, rather than really working on what we need to show, through a pure heart.

**Audience Member:** *Question...does not living in a fallen, sinful world somehow sustain us?*

Absolutely. The question is does living a sinful, fallen world sustain us? Absolutely. That's what Paul writes about in Romans 6 and 7. That's why it says, "Do not be conformed to the system of this world." You see, there are two systems out there. The one you think about is the one that's going to control you. Am I motivated constantly by the thoughts of the things of this world, or am I motivated in thoughts about the kingdom? That's why we're taking so much time going through these Beatitudes. What I find most interesting in the Sermon on the Mount, this is the first thing that Jesus dealt with before he talked about what you should do. He says, "Let me tell you what you're going to become." That's where we are right now, so that you and I begin to think differently so that we will act differently. So yes, in a fallen world, we're going to be exposed to that, and that's why it's a battle.

The three words that describe God's chosen people from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation are always the three same concepts. First of all, remnant. It's not for everybody. There's a small group of people who are God's chosen people. In the old covenant, it was the nation of Israel. In the new covenant, it's individuals. But the remnant. It's just not everybody. Secondly, is warfare. Warfare. We're involved in spiritual warfare. What we're talking about is spiritual warfare. The third thing is persecution. We're going to be persecuted by the system of this world be of the way we think.

**Don:** Bruce, let me be the first person, first of all, to apologize. My motive probably wasn't 100% pure when I corrected you about Noah versus Jonah.

Oh no, no, that's fine. Thank you.

**Don:** The other thing is I think that we need to realize the thing about warfare, because I think it's so easy for us to forget what Ephesians 6 says. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.

Amen.

**Don:** Satan would love to bring us down like that. If it weren't for Christ, he would, just like he did Peter, almost. It's not the ACLU or television or whatever, or the political philosophies or the president or whatever, it's these principalities and powers that we constantly have to do battle with, as well as the world [UNCLEAR].

Amen. Thank you. That's one of the three words that describe the church—warfare. That's why we need to have a warrior mentality. Not war like, but warrior mentality. We need to think like warriors because we are involved in spiritual warfare. We need to recognize the enemy, know how to defeat the enemy.

I want to show you one other thing about that. Don's brought up a good point. Let's go to Romans 5:1-2, <sup>1</sup>"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup>Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand." Critical word there is the word "stand." In other words, you and I are not moving in and out of grace. The word "stand" means to be solidified and permanent. You're standing in grace. You don't move in grace and you don't move out of grace. When you're justified by faith, you are standing in grace. That's why you have access to God. The reason you have access to God is because you have peace with God.

Notice the result of being justified. You have peace with God. Now you look at Philippians 4:7, the peace that passes all understanding, the peace of God. There's no peace of God until you have peace with God. That's once you have peace with God, you're standing in his grace. You don't move in and out of it.

Now go to Ephesians 6, which Don mentioned. Ephesians 6, that wonderful classic on the whole armor of God. Let me read this, beginning at verse 10, <sup>10</sup>"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might." That's our equipment for battle. It's his might, not our knowledge, not our strength. <sup>11</sup>"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil." You and I do not take on the devil; we stand. We stand firmly and permanently because we've got the grace and power of God. Do you see the word "stand?" It's the same thing that we see in Romans 5 is you stand in grace. You and I are standing in grace; we don't move in and out of it.

Let's read on, <sup>12</sup>"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup>Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm." Brothers, you and I have been given all the equipment we will ever need to take on the system of this world. Our battle is not against the system of this world. It's against the prince and powers, of the rulers of that system of the world. You and I have been given the grace of God to stand firm in that and not move.

When you notice the armor of this soldier that he's describing here, you'll notice there's nothing on the soldier's back. That means you don't have to retreat. You're covered in the front, you're covered,

everything from your head to your toes, but there's nothing covering your back, because the imagery is this. You've been given all the power of the grace that you'll ever need to stand firm and take it on. That's warfare. You don't have to move.

**Audience Member:** *Perfect example that came to mind is that Saul tried to equip David with his armor, which did not fit.*

Did not fit.

**Audience Member:** *He stood in the armor of God.*

Amen.

**Audience Member:** *And defeated Goliath.*

My point is this, brothers. In the midst of the reality of not justifying your own thought life and your own motives, you've been given all the grace that you'll ever need to know to battle that, and to stand firm in that. You don't move in and out of grace. So yes, you might do it better one day and might be effective more one day than the other, but you're always in grace if you're truly regenerate.

One of the indications of that would be this. What comes out of my mouth? You see, that's such a great barometer for us to understand the condition of my soul is what comes out of my mouth, because it's a reflection of my heart. Why do I say the things I do?

**Brian:** *Last week, we hit, you said something pretty profound, [UNCLEAR]...*

The first time I've been profound. {LAUGHTER}

**Brian:** *You said when we become believers, we give up our right and have only responsibility to take on the responsibilities....so if you could maybe unpack that with the backdrop of this conversation we've had, and then tie that in with Jeremiah 17:9-10, where you said "<sup>9</sup>The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? <sup>10</sup>I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds." We have to stand, we have to do all these things, and we have responsibilities, but really, doing all this stuff, is walking that line between what I'm responsible for in my power versus Ephesians 6 in his power, in his might.*

You have no power. Forget it. You have no power. Accept that. Got it? It's not your power at all, so forget that side of it. So there goes half your argument. You don't have any power. You have the power of God. You have the power of the grace of God. That's what I'm trying to say. It's all his power. Now that means this. When you and I become regenerate, when God grants us saving faith, you give up all of your personal rights for personal responsibilities, responsibilities that you and I have now do not have to do with our conduct. It has to do with managing ourselves. That's my responsibility is to manage myself in the grace of God. It's not I have a responsibility to do this and to do that and to do this and to do that. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm saying you get rid of all those rights, of self-deification, I get rid of all of those rights, of self-deification, I realize I'm absolutely nothing, I'm going to depend upon him for everything, and the one I'm going to be responsible to is manage myself according to the grace of God.

The responsibility is not to do things; your responsibility is to become someone. That's what Jesus is teaching us in the Beatitudes. So forget all the doing. It's the being. That's my responsibility. I've got to manage myself, and this is one of the ways in which I manage myself is, "Lord, listen to my words. It's



an indication that there's something amiss in my heart. Will you continue to purify my heart? That's my responsibility. I can't rely upon you to do that. Fellowship won't do that. That's my responsibility."

That's why worship, we are responsible for our own worship. You don't go to church and have somebody, a worship team establish your worship for you. You have that responsibility. When you go into the house of the Lord, it's your responsibility to have a worshipful attitude, not have somebody create it for you. Now granted, they can make it easier on us than other people. I'm not suggesting that. All I'm saying is that worship is my responsibility, not the worship leader's responsibility. That's my responsibility. That's what I'm talking about, Brian. I'm saying that our responsibility is to manage me according to the grace of God and according to the life that I have according to the Scripture.

It's not about my responsibilities of doing something; it's the responsibility of becoming someone. It's becoming all that God desires me to be in his grace, and I work on that. That's my responsibility. Out of that responsibility overflows giving away to other people what God has given you. Help me realize this, Brian. I'm not talking about things you should do. I'm not talking about doing. I'm talking about managing yourself. That's your responsibility. You do that with the grace of God. To do that, you're standing firm.

**Carl:** *Bruce, when you look at this text that you just [UNCLEAR] on Ephesians, we also have to look at verse 13 and 14...*

Yes.

**Carl:** *...because verse 13 and 14 basically tells us two more times that we've got to stand.*

That's it.

**Carl:** *That we've got to always stand, and when we're standing, we've got to recognize that it's not our power, it's not our might, it's God's. It's always his. It's never us. Once you give yourself over to him, then you're operating in his power...*

Amen.

**Carl:** *...in everything that we do.*

That's meekness. That's living according to power of God. Power under control. Whose power is it? First of all, we've got to realize that I am powerless. That's what it means to be poor in spirit. I have no power. I just don't have it. You see, you and I were never designed to live the Christian life. We can't do that. The only one who can live the Christian life is Christ himself, because he's the only one who can meet the standard of sinless perfection and perfect obedience. That's why the Scripture says, "It's a righteous man lives by faith." Faith in who? Faith in the life of Christ. I'm constantly feeding my mind with the thoughts of Christ so that I can be trusting of his life living that through me. That's what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit, remember his job description is to guide us into truth. That's what he does. He comes along side of us and guides us into all truth.

In a couple of weeks, we're going to talk about the integration of how the Holy Spirit takes the Scripture and He puts that into your soul, and at a certain time in your life, there's a situation in your life where you need to have the right thought pattern, you need to have the right action, and what happens is, the Holy Spirit brings the Word back into your mind because you've got a regenerated pure heart that has been altered by the Holy Spirit through regeneration. He brings that back to your mind and all of a sudden, you begin to think differently about how you're going to respond to this situation. That's the

work of the Holy Spirit. You don't do that yourself. That's why it's so important that you and I be in the Word.

It's like your C: drive on your computer. In the situation where you're exposed to something in life, a normal situation in life, and all of a sudden, a thought comes from the Scripture back into your mind, a concept, a precept, a thought or something like that, some of the things you've learned here on Friday. You see, that's the work of the Holy Spirit saying, "There! That's what we're doing. Now you apply that right here." But it's not something you come up with ten things you do this, I've got to do this today or tomorrow. It's the idea of becoming an aggressive responder to what you see the Lord doing in you and around you. That's our responsibility.

So yes, there is human responsibility and there's also divine sovereignty. Those two things work together. But we've been given, through the sovereignty of God, all the grace and power we need. We just need to realize that we need to stand firm because you don't move in and out of grace. When you have your feet solidly planted in God's grace, that's when you begin to realize yourself and take responsibility for managing yourself.

***Audience Member:** Right from the Garden of Eden to the present time, Satan uses the same method—lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and boastful pride of life.*

Yes. Absolutely.

***Audience Member:** Sometimes it's so subtle. It's not an overt battle that you can stand up and point out.*

Exactly right.

***Audience Member:** It just sneaks in there.*

It sneaks in there.

***Audience Member:** All of a sudden...*

And here's how Satan works. His greatest weaponry is the accusation of the brothers. (Revelation 12) He's the accuser and deceiver of the brethren. Here's what's going to happen. "Bruce, you had that thought. You've been thinking that for 40 years. How can God use you? How can God use you when you think like that?" Now there's a balance there. First of all, that may be Satanic, when he's accusing you, when you realize that you're washed in the blood of the Lamb. The second thing is you've got to be careful not to rationalize, not to rationalize [UNCLEAR] look what I do though. You've got to be careful. All I'm saying is that he will deceive you of your worth and accuse you of your value. That's Satan's primary tool is accuse you of your worth and deceive you of your value. You see, that's why self-esteem is a disease and not the cure.

Self-esteem is thinking too much of yourself. It's not about my esteem at all. That's the disease. Really what it is, is when Satan comes along is he deceives you of your worth and accuses you of your value. "Your worthless. You're not valuable." You see, then, so we come up with this panacea, a bandaid, called self-esteem. Let's just put something on top of that and we never deal with the condition of the heart. You see, the heart's got to change; not a bandaid called self-esteem. What we do is we give programs for kids to go do something so they feel better about themselves. That's external. Nothing internal has happened. That only happens to thru the washing of regeneration when God changes your heart. Then you begin to see yourself as God sees you. He sees you as a beloved. He sees you wrapped in the robes of righteousness. He justifies you by faith. He gives you credit for the sinless perfection and

perfect obedience of Christ, and all of a sudden you begin to see yourself in a different value system, a different significance system because of the kingdom of God. It changes from the inside out. Self-esteem is from the outside in. It's what all false religions do.

***Sig:** A good friend of mine pointed out to me in this way. He [UNCLEAR] find out about myself too, that I tend to judge other people, I tend to...let me get this right...I tend to look at other people's outside knowing my inside. So I think of my insides and I look at them and I say, "Wow! Look at the job they're doing," but all I know is my insides and my corruption, but I look at them and say, "Boy, they've got their act together," not knowing their insides.*

That's a good thought. We've never been given the ministry of checking somebody else's motives. The only ones you can check are yourself. That's what Jesus is talking about when he says pure in heart. Look at your own motives. We'll pick this up next week, because there's a series of questions that I want us to really think about.

Let me give you one question to think about between now and next Friday, and that's this. What do you think about when you have nothing to think about? {LAUGHTER} What do you think about when you have nothing to think about? Where does your mind go? You see, that's a function of pure in heart. We'll talk about how we deal with that next week. Let's pray.

Gracious father, be merciful to us as sinners. Our hearts are deceitful above all things. Father, don't let us hide behind what we think we do to impress you or to impress others. Don't let us hide behind the rationalization of thinking I know so much therefore I'm more spiritually in tuned. Father, help us see you clearly. Open our eyes that we might behold you more clearly for Christ's sake. Father don't let us hide behind the deceitfulness of our own heart. Check our motives. Father, may we examine our own lives and take responsibility for how we think, and at those times when we struggle with how we think, may we depend upon your grace because you've given us a firm foundation on which we can stand, and that is in the power of the work of the Holy Spirit. Father, we just, again, come to you recognizing our absolute powerlessness and our absolute need for your powerfulness, and may it be so for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said...Amen!!!