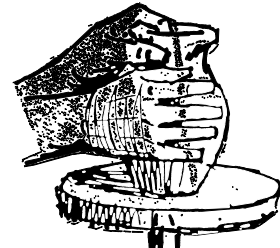


His Workmanship at Westside

*“For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works.”
—Ephesians 2:10*



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Isaiah 64:8

Develop a Mind for the Beatitudes to Mature in Christ *by Raymond Suriani*

The Beatitudes are the beginning of what is known as Jesus' sermon on the mount. At the beginning Jesus went to the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around Him, and He began to teach them, Mt 5:1-2. Matthew 5 ends with *“You, therefore, must be perfect [growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper growth of virtue and integrity], as your heavenly Father is perfect,”* Mt 5:48 [AMP]. Between lies Christ's plan for developing spiritual maturity.

The Latin word *beatitudo* means happiness. This is a clear sign to us of a special promise. By developing these character traits in our own lives, we open ourselves up for a happiness and contentment only available in Christ. The Amplified version of the text makes that promise even deeper with a full description of the blessings promised to us. *“Blessed [happy, to be imitated, and spiritually prosperous—with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of outward conditions]...,”* Mt 5:3. Look at what Jesus says will be the inheritance of those who learn to walk as He de-

scribes in the Beatitudes! Happiness. Spiritual prosperity. Life-joy. Satisfaction with God's favor and salvation regardless of your outward conditions! If that is not spiritual maturity, I don't know what is.

But how many Christians have really developed these attitudes that Jesus promised would produce this kind of happiness? As Christians, we need to develop a mind for the Beatitudes. That is crucial if we want to mature in Christ. But let's be honest. Most of these character traits are the opposite of what is valued by everyone else around us. In fact, some of them just sound plain weak. Developing a mind for the Beatitudes is extremely difficult, because they so easily confound our human minds—that is to say, from a purely human perspective, they make no sense! They turn things upside-down. We can demonstrate this by turning each into a question.

Blessed are the poor in spirit?

Who wants to be poor? Are you supposed to live in poverty, or to be sullen and depressed? We want to be spirited, full of life, not poor in spirit. Poor in spirit, according to the Amplified version, are those who rate

themselves as insignificant. Uh, oh. This is definitely not what the world teaches. Most people rate themselves, their needs, and their feelings, as more significant than anyone else's. In fact, for many, their lives literally revolve around themselves. Someone hurt *their* feelings. *Their* problem is because someone else failed *them*. People don't treat *them* fairly. They develop a total victim mentality because they think everyone owes them something. Those who do not meet *their* needs are obviously the ones who are wrong—it could not be *them*. Stand in a long checkout line or wait in a crowded restaurant, and the fact that most people do not know how to be poor in spirit will become painfully clear. The needs, feelings, or problems of others are of no significance. They want what they want. And they want it now!

Blessed are they who mourn?

What fun is there in that? As Billy Joel put it in one of his songs, "I'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints; the sinners have much more fun!" I don't want pain, trials, suffering, or loss in my life. I
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"But we have the mind of Christ." —1 Corinthians 2:16

don't want to mourn. But God knows that we grow personally and spiritually through trials and losses. What someone does in the midst of a trial, when he has no strength to keep up a facade or be fake, reveals what is truly in his heart. Where he runs for comfort in that time of need is a sign of where he really puts his trust. It is a tell-tell sign of Christian spiritual maturity. Some of us reach out to men. Others stuff the pain down with food or bury it in housework and office obligations. Instead of depending on God to be our source, we try to find a way to soothe ourselves and forget the pain. But God wants to be the One Who walks with us through all of life's storms. When you run to your loving Father, "You're blessed when you've lost what is most dear to you," Mt 5:4. Part of spiritual growth is learning to run to your Comforter. Joyce Meyer says, "Instead of running to the phone, we need to run to the Throne!"

But most important, to enter the kingdom, we mourn because of our sins, because of the suffering our own actions have caused, because of the horror of sin and the punishment of death. We are compelled to turn to Christ for comfort and cleansing: blessed are those who mourn.

Blessed are the meek? You mean the wimps of the world who let others walk all over them? Doesn't meek really equal weak? That does not compute! Oh, you mean blessed are those who know their absolute dependence on God? I thought dependence was a sign of weakness, and independence a sign of strength!

So why does the kingdom of heaven belong to the humble? Because when we humble ourselves and put needs of others before our own, it is then God's responsibility to take care of us.

He will give us favor with Him and with man, Pr 3:3-5. He will step in and clothe us in true honor, instead of this world's empty pride. "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted," Pr 29:23. Meekness is not something that our world understands. Even the world's dictionary gives definitions like "not having spirit or courage." But being meek takes more courage than most people have. It actually means strength under control; yielded; willingly submissive and obedient; modest. The Amplified Bible explains meek as "*mild, patient, (and) long-suffering,*" Mt 5:5. A truly meek person—in the Biblical sense—is not timid, shy, hesitant, or unassuming, but trusting, confident, and secure, having his selfish spirit tamed and under the control of God. The root meaning of the word *meekness* is *yieldedness or surrender—a characteristic without which we will have no real maturity.* We have peace in the midst of patience because we yield to God and know He always works for us. He is in control—what a relief!

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness? Where will being righteous get me? I hunger for fame and fun, not being "holier than thou." But longing to be like Christ is the primary requirement for being a mature Christian—having a deep hunger and thirst for the things of God, constantly wanting to please Him more, to love Him more, to be more like Him. A mature Christian knows that he is powerless against the trials and tribulations of this world. He cleaves to the Lord and His Word for dear life because he understands His love for him. He is not just after God's hand, and what He can do for him—he is after God's heart. No

matter how close to God he becomes, he always wants more of Him. He always seeks spiritual growth. "As the hart pants and longs for the water brooks, so I pant and long for You, O God," Ps 42:1. Immature Christians become complacent, assuming that since they have been in church for X years, they are already as close to God as they can get. But the mature Christian knows that God always has more in store for him. His very heart longs for more of God in his life.

(We've briefly discussed the first four beatitudes. Next week we'll discuss the last four and blessings in store.)

Effort to develop a mind for the beatitudes. When a person has a deep hunger to understand and become proficient at something, we say he "has a mind for it": Bill Gates, for example, has a mind for working with computers; Lee Iacocca has a mind for running a business; Vince Lombardi—one of the greatest coaches—definitely had a mind for football.

As a human being with a human nature tainted by my flesh and pride, I do not have a mind for the Beatitudes, and neither do you. If anything, we have a mind for the anti-Beatitudes! Sad to say, they make far more sense to us. That's why we must *develop* a mind for the beatitudes truths—and this requires personal effort (as well as the grace of Almighty God!). Of course, we can take some consolation in the fact that this is true for almost everything else that's productive or worthwhile in life: like it or not, effort is necessary to develop a mind for it.

For example, Bill Gates did not come into this world with a mind for computers; Lee Iacocca wasn't born with a mind for business; and Vince Lombardi didn't come out of the womb with a

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Psalm 133:1



Fill your can-teen in 2013

“May you be filled with all the fullness of God.”
—Ephesians 3:19

Beatitudes from p. 2

mind for football: Gates *developed* a mind for computers over time; Iacocca *learned* business and helped save the crumbling Chrysler Corporation; and Lombardi *practiced hard* as a pro football coach, which is why the Super Bowl trophy now bears his name. How did they develop "minds" for their respective enterprises in life? Very simply, they studied, they pondered, they learned, they practiced. How do we develop a mind for the Beatitudes? We do the same thing: we study, we ponder, we learn, and, of course, we pray—because ultimately this has to be the work of God's grace in us.

The great saints—men and women who are right now in the kingdom of God—not only come to understand that the Beatitudes are true, but they also LIVE them. In other words, they develop both a mind *and* a heart for these sacred truths of our faith.

Memory verse: "The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God." —Psalm 98:2-3

Discipleship Here At Home

Bereaved A memorial service for **Gail Storatz**, Gary Boyd's sister, is planned for 4/12, 11 am, Lakewood Link Recreational Center, 1295 S. Reed St. Send cards to her son: **Zac Storatz**, 7420 E. Quincy Ave, Unit 305, Denver 80237.

Down's Syndrome from p. 4
Life expectancy has risen from about 12 years to almost 60 since the 1950s. Mostly the "suffering" we want to prevent is our own as parents. DS children usually won't be trophies in the competitive parenting game that starts with the "gifted and talented" test at age four and leads to the cool career and world domination. Calcano says, "There are some people who just can't move ahead knowing that their children face limitations. Most children with DS aren't going to become doctors or lawyers." Is there anything Calcano would like to be different? Yes. "For me, the moment Carter was born my biggest regret was all the time I wasted on worrying about the 'what ifs.' "

We Carry Death and Life by Elizabeth Eliot
When Jesus lived on this earth, he lived in an ordinary man's body, carrying in that body both life and death.

His 33 years of life were lived so that He might die and through His death forever destroy the power of death, Heb 2:14; 1 Cor 15:54-57. He doesn't live here anymore. But we do. We who believe are His body, the church, assigned to carry in our bodies the death He died. Paul said it, 2 Cor 4:10. Insofar as we are willing to die, to die to sin, to "cross out the self," we carry the death Jesus died. But that isn't all! We carry also the life Jesus lived—the life that brings life to all, that will never end, that is at work in the world because we who love Him are in the world.

O Life Eternal, purify this vessel of my body, that it may lovingly bear the death and life of Jesus for the life of the world.

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here & away

Madge Wallace—lung cancer; suffering severe pain in side; to have outpatient nerve block this week

Samantha Harrod—recovering from surgery for pilonidal cyst

Mark Campbell—full recovery expected from "brain bruise"; respiratory testing at Nat'l Jewish after pneumonia complication

Matt Reames—VA unable to insert shunt to drain fluid from his brain (hydrocephalus), the cause of Matt's headaches and blurred vision; pray for VA speed

Judy Strand's son Joe Huff—recurrence of neurological symptoms, black-outs, from brain injury he suffered in a 2007 car accident

Mina Gonzalez's uncle Charles Hawkins—colon cancer

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr;

Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma

Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis

Nell Free—heart; spinal pain

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy

Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; house-bound in cold weather and needs help

Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes;

Virginia, now legally blind from rapid macular degeneration; high BP

Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibro

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Job concerns Andrew Tope and Frank Savarese are seeking jobs. **The Menards' son** is out of work.

Expecting Marie Carlson—July 1 girl; **Amy van der Coi**—in the summer.

Traveling Brett Withering-ton is in MD for work. **Pat Campbell** is in AR caring for her parents: **Ruth Hice** fell and broke her arm last weekend; **Delmar Hice** has pneumonia. Cards to: 28345 Highway 69 W, London, AR 72847-8129.



Exposing current thoughts & trends

The Gifts We Lose by Aborting DS Babies by Kyle Smith

As mothers tend to do, Britt Sady loves her child Noah. He's 3 years old, and recently to his delight she taught him how to raspberry. That Noah has Down syndrome hasn't diminished Britt's love. But won't he become increasingly a source of frustration and even disappointment? Isn't rearing a Down syndrome (DS) child supposed to be a nightmare? Sady asked a friend raising a 14-year-old son with DS, "When does it get hard?" He said, "If you don't care too much what other people think, and you don't live too far into the future—it's all easy."

Don't care too much about what other people think. That really says it about why, according to one estimate, 92% of expectant mothers who obtain a certain DS diagnosis choose to abort.

Children are a status symbol that we love to boast about, and we afraid that raising a DS child lowers our status, makes us pitiable. But is embarrassment a good enough reason to extinguish a life? Last week North Dakota passed a law making it illegal to abort a child because of expected birth defects or because the parents want a child of a different sex. The new law seems certain to be struck down by the courts, not that the state could keep its residents from going elsewhere for an abortion. (There is only one abortion clinic in ND anyway). Forty years after *Roe v. Wade*, it's almost impossible to imagine major restrictions on abortion standing up to judicial scrutiny in any state. But the absence of a legal issue doesn't mean there's no moral one. "I wouldn't want to bring a child into the world just to see him suffer," we say. But these children are not suffering, says Stacy Calcano, a NY mother of four including a boy with DS. "I have yet to see or meet a person with Down Syndrome whom I would categorize as suffering." She says the DS diagnosis didn't change the fact that he is her son. "I became a parent because I wanted to be a parent, not because I had preconceived ideas of what my children would accomplish. Anytime you have a child, you don't know what you're going to end up with." A DS child is not "an empty vessel. We now know that these kids can do anything that typically developing kids can do. It just takes a little more work on the front end."

In a survey published in the *American Journal of Medical Genetics*, 99% of DS people said they were generally happy. DS children are mentally disabled, but with early training many are able to attend school in the same classrooms as non-DS kids. Many go on to hold adult jobs and live successfully and independently. *continued on p. 3*

Westside church of Christ

meets at
13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
(303) 233-5683

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987

DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This morning: *"Get out of the Grumble Seat,"* by Jim Reingrover

This afternoon:

A Walk in Their Sandals Series

"Adam," by Jim Reingrover

Salida evangelism: Jonathan Hadders is teaching and preaching in Salida this morning,