

“Poor in Spirit”

Question:

In the “Beatitudes,” Jesus promised a blessing to those who were “poor in spirit” (Mt. 5:3). What does “poor in spirit” mean?

Our Answer:

The word “poor” in this verse comes from the Greek word *ptochos* (Strong’s 4434). It literally means “beggar.” However, its use in both the Old (Septuagint) and New Testament show God’s favor toward the lowly and contrite in spirit (humble). In other words “poor in spirit” is plainly a frame of mind. Therefore, this term refers to those who in their deepest consciousness realize their entire need for God’s grace. This self-emptying conviction, that before God we are void of everything, lies at the foundation of all spiritual excellence. Without it we are inaccessible to the riches of Christ; with it we are in the fitting state for receiving all our spiritual needs.

(See also: Ps 9:12; 10:17; Pro 29:23; Jas 4:6)