



## Gospel Community Notes & Questions

**Title:** The Upside-Down Kingdom

**Text:** Matthew 5:1-12

**Theme:** God honors Christlike, countercultural character that honors God.

**Teaching Notes:** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is describing how to live as his disciples in his kingdom that has already arrived. The first major theme is the upside-down nature of this kingdom. Jesus doesn't value and honor the same character traits that our world celebrates. He calls us to live counterculturally, walking in humility and grace, rather than mimicking the pride of our society.

### Outline:

Intro: What are the top 5-10 character traits that our culture admires and affirms?

#### 1. The upside-down qualities God honors.

- a. Poverty of spirit.
- b. Mournful over sin.
- c. Meek.
- d. Hungry and thirsty for righteousness.
- e. Merciful.
- f. Pure in heart.
- g. Peacemaking.
- h. Persecuted and slandered for righteousness' sake.

#### 2. The upside-down honor God bestows.

- Earthly honor is all about the self – right here and now: shower me with respect, wealth, promotions, perks, and praise. But the honor God bestows is the honor of knowing who you are and finding peace and satisfaction in relationship to him.

#### 3. The upside-down key to this blessed life.

- The key to this life is the presence and power of God. You become this kind of person as the Spirit bears his fruit in you.



**Questions to explore individually and with your group:**

1. What are the top 5-10 character traits that our culture admires and affirms?
2. What are some reasons Jesus values our admission of brokenness and inability (when our culture obviously values strength and success)?
3. What are some things our culture tends to mourn/grieve over? How is this different than the kind of mourning Jesus calls us to?
4. How would you recognize someone as being a genuinely meek person?
5. What motivates you to be a morally pure person? Explain what both your motives and your morality have to do with being "pure in heart."
6. What are some reasons you might not encounter much slander, ridicule, or persecution from the world?
7. What surprises you most about this list of qualities God honors? What challenges you the most about this list?
8. Go back and reread all the blessings God bestows on those who live this upside-down life, beginning with the words "for theirs" and "for they." What do you observe? How would you summarize these blessings?
9. What's an area of weakness of yours from this list? What specific, concrete steps could you take to grow in that area this year?
10. What one actionable thing will you do this week in response to this Scripture?

**Prayer Prompts:**

1. Praise Jesus for identifying with and accepting spiritually bankrupt sinners in order to save us by his grace.
2. Acknowledge the key character traits that currently describe your life; confess where there is a misalignment between what you value and what God values.
3. Ask God, by his Spirit, to transform you into the kind of person Jesus describes in The Beatitudes.