

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

**James 1:9-11**  
**Lesson #3**  
**Trials and Glory**  
**03/14/2021**

**“Every hand’s a winner  
and every hand’s a loser”**



**“It’s all in how  
you play the game.”**

The 1st lesson  
in social ethics:

***It’s not about  
our material circumstances  
but rather our relationship  
and response to them.***



1

## How does America measure success?

- ✓ **Competition** separates the winners & losers.
- ✓ **Net worth** defines self worth.
- ✓ **Rewards** go to the winners not the losers.
- ✓ **Earnings** are what I deserve from hard work.
- ✓ **Associations** determine success.



**How successful were  
Jesus and his disciples?**

2



3



4

## America’s cultural drift

**Thee  
We  
Me**



5

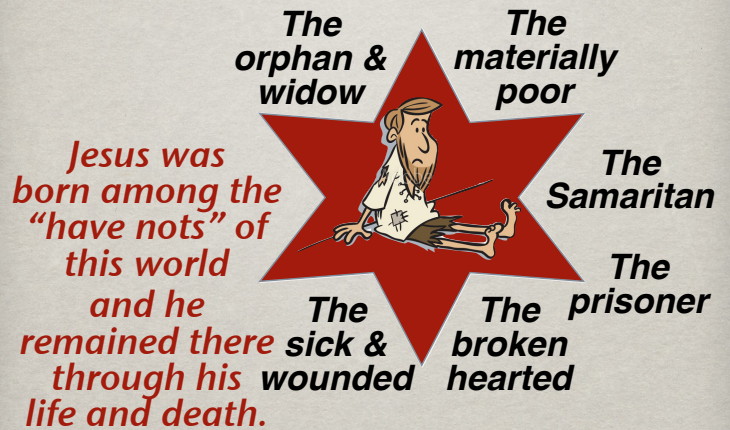
"This is **my** Bible.  
**I** am what it says **I** am.  
**I** have what it says **I** have.  
**I** can do what it says **I** can do."



Joel Osteen

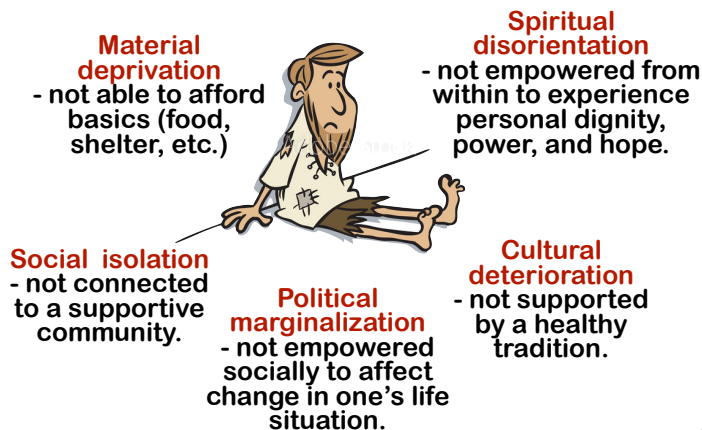
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**What do these groups share in common?**



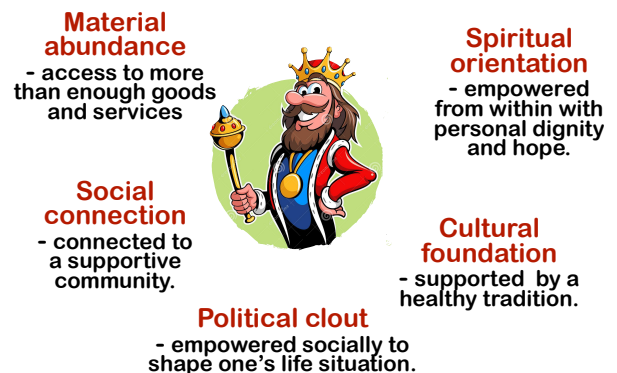
"Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of God" 7

**The many dimensions of the "have nots".**



8

**The many dimensions of the "have lots".**



9

*James 1*

"9 But the **brother of humble circumstances** is to glory in his high position;"

the "have nots" can be  
**reduced by their poverty**

"10 and the **rich man** is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away."

the "have lots" can be  
**seduced by their wealth**

10

"Religion is the thing that makes the ordinary man feel extraordinary; . . . "

. . . and  
the extraordinary  
man feel ordinary."



G.K. Chesterton

11

*James 1*

“<sup>9</sup> But the **brother of humble circumstances** is to glory in his high position;”

**The “have nots” are not to expect to find freedom through material change.**

*1 Corinthians 7*

“<sup>20</sup> Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called. <sup>21</sup> Were you called while a slave? **Do not worry about it**; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. <sup>22</sup> For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is **the Lord’s freedman**; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ’s slave. <sup>23</sup> You were bought with a price; **do not become slaves of men**. <sup>24</sup> Brethren, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called.”

12

**Don’t let our material circumstances destroy our joy (vs.2-8).**

**Don’t let our material circumstances define our glory (vs.9-11).**

1. See ourselves as God sees us  
**not as the world sees us.**

*Romans 8:6*

“For the mind set on the flesh is death but **the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.**”

*2 Corinthians 5:16*

“Therefore from now on **we recognize no man according to the flesh**; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.”

13

**Don’t let our material circumstances define our glory (vs.9-11).**

1. See ourselves as God sees us  
**not as the world sees us.**
2. To serve God, be content, and significant  
**we do not need ideal circumstances.**

*Philippians 4*

“<sup>11</sup> Not that I speak from need, for **I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am**. <sup>12</sup> I know how to get along with little, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every *circumstance* I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. <sup>13</sup> **I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**”

14

**Don’t let our material circumstances define our glory (vs.9-11).**

1. See ourselves as God sees us  
**not as the world sees us.**
2. To serve God, be content, and significant  
**we do not need ideal circumstances.**

- O.T. saints (Heb.11:1-40)
- Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor.12:7-10)

**• Jesus (Phil.2:5-8)**

15

# Jesus

**Renewed** hope for the poor

**Recognized** the value of the poor

**Revealed** himself as one with the poor

**Recruited** disciples from among the poor

**But he made no one rich or powerful in a worldly sense.**

*Matthew 9*

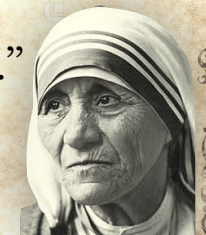
“<sup>6</sup> But **in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority** on earth to forgive sins” – then He said to the paralytic – “Rise, take up your bed, and go home.” <sup>7</sup> And he rose, and went home.”

16

**When asked what she had done to reduce poverty she said,**

**“I have spent most of my life trying to be one with the poor.”  
like Jesus**

Mother Teresa



17

**Don't let our material circumstances  
define our glory (vs.9-11).**

- 1. See ourselves as God sees us  
not as the world sees us.**
- 2. To serve God, be content, and significant  
we do not need ideal circumstances.**

*Philippians 2*

<sup>5</sup> **Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,** <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but **emptied Himself**, taking the form of a **bond-servant**, and being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled Himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

18

A socialist  
society

is willing to sacrifice individual  
liberty and material productivity  
for material and social equality.

A capitalist  
society

is willing to sacrifice material and  
social equality for individual  
liberty and material productivity.

A Christian society

views liberty and productivity as responsibilities  
more than a rights - and competition as  
inseparable from compassion, and cooperation.

**Christians can "do good" in both  
capitalist and socialist societies.**

19

*1 Timothy 6*

<sup>1</sup> Let all who are **under the yoke as slaves** regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine may not be spoken against. <sup>2</sup> And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles. <sup>3</sup> If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, <sup>4</sup> he is conceited and **understands nothing**; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,"

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<sup>5</sup> and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. <sup>6</sup> But **godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment.** <sup>7</sup> For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. <sup>8</sup> And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. <sup>9</sup> But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang."

**The Way of the Cross is a stumbling  
block and foolishness to the world.**

21

**The Way of the Cross is the Christian's I.D.**

*1 Corinthians 1*

<sup>23</sup> but we preach **Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,** <sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. . .**

<sup>26</sup> For consider your calling, brothers *and sisters*, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; <sup>27</sup> but **God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,** <sup>28</sup> and the insignificant things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no human may boast before God."

22

**The Way of the Cross is wisdom under fire.**

*Romans 8:6*

"For the mind set on the flesh is death but **the mind set on the spirit it life and peace.**"

*Philippians 2*

<sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who although He existed in the form of God, **did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,** <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond servant, and being made in the likeness of men <sup>8</sup> . . . **He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."**

23

### 2 Corinthians 8:9

“For you know the Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake **He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.**”

**If there is any question about the application of Jesus’ sacrifice just look at the experience & teaching of Jesus and his Apostles.**

24

### James 1

“<sup>10</sup> and the **rich man** is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. <sup>11</sup> For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.”

The Christian “have lots” are not to define themselves **by their worldly circumstances.**

The Bible has more to say about the **dangers of material wealth to those who have it** than the value it might be to those who do not have it.

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## What does the Bible say about material wealth?



26

As a blessing from God be thankful.

As an opportunity for ministry be responsible.

As a desensitizer to God, people, & your spiritual need don't let it blind you.

As a dangerous deception don't let it seduce you.

27

### Observations

- ✓ Both the rich and poor are challenged to define their identity **in something other than their outer circumstances.**
- ✓ Like Jesus, the poor reveal their I.D. in finding their glory in Christ and **not in the difficult circumstances of this life.**
- ✓ Like Jesus, the rich reveal their I.D. in **not clinging to their earthly glory**, which is passing away.
- ✓ Our material circumstances are the playing field **but not the game.**

28

### Shocking truths about Kingdom Wealth

- ✓ Jesus changed lives **but not circumstances.**
- ✓ Jesus made his followers wealthy **but not in the things of this world.**
- ✓ Jesus made a mockery of the world's gospel by delivering **peace, power, and dignity with out the world's stuff.**
- ✓ Jesus modeled the **“Way of the Cross”.**

29

### 1 Timothy 6

“5 . . . men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, **who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.** 6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9 But **those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.** 10 For **the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil**, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.”

30

### Four important truths about “the Way of the Cross”

- ✓ There is a danger that both the “have nots” and the “have lots” will focus on the sins of the other and **neglect** their role as a witness to the kingdom.
- ✓ Social ethics (justice for the “have nots”) is **a responsibility of the “have lots”**. We will see this in subsequent chapters in James.
- ✓ Social ethics **start** with applying the Way of the Cross to our lives, whether rich or poor.
- ✓ Social ethics are a **sign** not a solution.

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# THE BEREANS

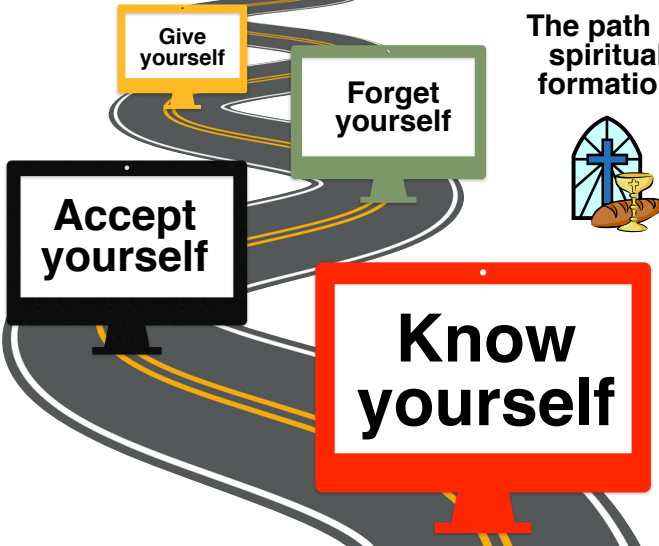
ACTS 17:11

**1 Peter 2:18-25**  
**Lesson #12**  
**Slaves**  
**10/25/2020**



32

The path to spiritual formation



33

## The Way of the Cross


### Luke 14

“25 Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 26 “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even **his own life**, he cannot be My disciple. 27 **Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.**”

**is the Way of a Disciple**

34

“If you are humble nothing will touch you, neither praise nor disgrace, because you know what you are.”



Mother Teresa

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