



WEEK ONE: THE REALITY PRINCIPLE

CONNECT

This week we begin a new series called Hope Changes Everything! In this eight-week series, we'll look at the principles Jesus gave us in the beatitudes that help us see the hope and freedom we find in God alone. In this first week, we look at the **Reality Principle** that we are not God; but thankfully, He is!

- Have you ever experienced a power outage? If so, what caused it? Were you, or are you prepared for one? How does the possibility of one during a storm make you feel?
- If you could have a superpower, what would it be?

DISCOVER

Read Matthew 5:3

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (ESV)

- In Matthew 5:3, one of the verses in what we call the "Beatitudes" we find the phrase "Poor in spirit". This is a significant phrase meaning humility and sorrow for our sins.

Read Romans 7:15-25

I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So, you see how it is: In my mind, I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

- In what way can the "kingdom of heaven" belong to the "poor in spirit"? Why should we have this attitude?
- When you read the Romans passage, is Paul not taking personal responsibility for his sins?
- If we are controlled by the power of sin, should we be held accountable for our actions? Why or why not?
- How does Jesus set us free from the power of sin? If Jesus has set us free, why do we still sin?

GROW

Big Idea: Realize I'm not God; I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable.

Mark 5:1-5

So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the burial caves and **could no longer be restrained**, even with a chain. Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. **No one was strong enough to subdue him.** Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones.

The evil this man struggled with was extreme. Most of us won't experience this level of unmanageability, but we all struggle for control at some level in different areas of our lives.

- The man from the Gerasenes was "unmanageable". What are some ways in which your life feels "unmanageable", or where do you feel in some way like this man? Or, where have you in the past?
- When have I felt conflicting emotions regarding behaviors or decisions in my life?
- In what areas of my life am I fighting God for control?
- How can I separate what I do from who I am?
- Who do I have in my life that I can admit "Powerlessness" to? Who is my support team? If there isn't at least one name here, have the group pray for at least one relationship grow to this comfort level.

NEXT STEPS

- If you feel comfortable, share with your Small Group an area you have a tendency to do the wrong thing, and where your life seems unmanageable, so they can pray for you, encourage you, and walk with you, as you work to grow past this in your life.
- If you struggle with any Hurts, Habits, or Hang-Ups, come try out Celebrate Recovery on Monday nights at 6:30, at the Goodyear Campus, 431 N Litchfield Rd, Goodyear, 85338.
www.palmvalley.org/celebraterecovery
- If you're struggling and need hope, please call the church office (623-536-2106) and speak with one of our Pastors.