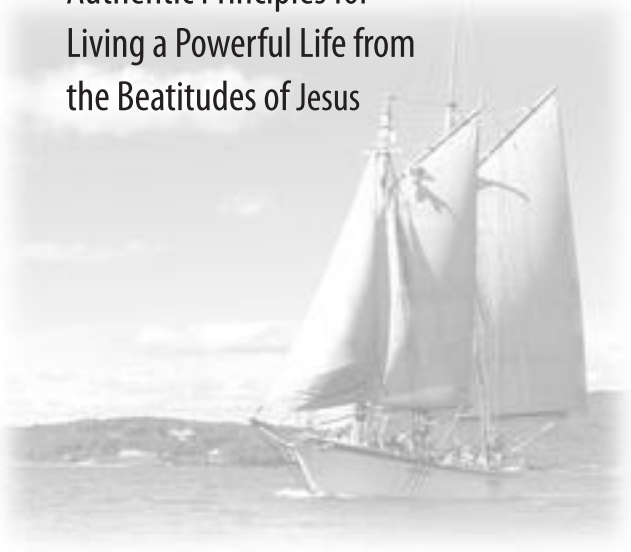


# The Seven Virtues

Authentic Principles for  
Living a Powerful Life from  
the Beatitudes of Jesus



Dr. Isaac James Schaeffer

## A Journey of Discovery Through **The Beatitudes**

Sand and sea are vital and inspirational parts of our lives as Caribbean people. I awoke one Saturday morning with a sudden yearning to drive to the beach. I imagined myself enjoying the bright sunshine and walking barefoot in the white sand on the shore, just as Caribbean people have done for hundreds of years before me. This urge was a familiar feeling. Being from an island, I was naturally inclined this way. I had no plans for the day, so I thought spending the day on the beach would be very satisfying.

I decided to drive to Cramer's Park on the east end of the island of St. Croix. When I arrived, I was met by a gentle breeze and the vibrant blue hue of the warm, salty ocean under the vast Caribbean sky. From the rocks where I sat, I could see Buck Island in the distance. Sitting there bathing my feet in sparkling clear waters was like touching a

piece of heaven. I began to think about a sailing adventure I had once taken. That trip made an indelible imprint on me because it distinctly impacted me at the core of my being.

Lounging against black volcanic rocks, I gazed at the tranquil turquoise waves. This private sanctuary had become a place of relaxation, meditation, and prayer for me. Thoughts of past adventures on other islands continued to bubble up in my mind. As I considered previous travels through this glorious region of the world, I meditated on the words of Jesus and His Sermon on the Mount. I reflected on how that simple message can powerfully transform lives, strengthen our relationships, and open heaven to us.

In the Bible, Jesus shared practical attitudes meant to alter how we connect with the world around us. This book serves as a diary, logging my journey into the paradise of seven islands. This journey reflects the seven timeless virtues Jesus shared with the world in His Sermon on the Mount

(Matt. 5:1-12). When we live by these principles of morality, honorable conduct, and uprightness, we find ourselves immersed in love, joy, and peace. These virtues can become an anchor for our souls, as we face life's trials.

This adventure in the great, big, Caribbean Sea is much like life—an experience of learning, growing, and persevering. Discovering the Seven Virtues is akin to going on an ocean trip and sailing from island to island. As we learn to walk out these virtues daily, we can find greater satisfaction in the ocean of God's peace.

Navigating through the seven islands, I share my discovery of the Beatitudes of Jesus. The life lessons learned along the way are treasures and the foundation for a well-lived life. This story is one of moving past our natural limitations into an eternal hope made possible by Jesus Christ. The Beatitudes of Jesus are the ageless and priceless gifts he provides to us, which transform us as we embrace them.

Therefore, you are invited on a journey of self-discovery, fascination, and dramatic encounters. This is a journey through seven majestic islands of the beautiful Caribbean, each with its own character and culture.

*The Seven Virtues* speak to the quality of our lives, our eternities, and our significance. You can take charge of your life with Christ-centeredness, enabling you to overcome whatever situation you face through His power.

The message of *The Seven Virtues* will ignite your emotions as you confront the deeper issues of living. The eternal truths of the Beatitudes of Jesus help us become the people we were created to be—moral, loving, courageous, compassionate, and emotionally strong in the face of adversity.



## Ship's Log: Day 1



## The Island of **Humility**

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

—Jesus Christ

We sailed all night and are now approaching the first island in a distant sea, a stand-alone piece of land called Humility. Surrounding this island is a sea of pride—not the self-confidence we all need, but arrogance and conceit. I watched as waves of self-will and self-indulgence licked the hull of our boat. But, we steadied the boat and set our course straight ahead.

While on the island, I thought about a time when I visited a church where I was a keynote speaker at a youth empowerment conference. After the event,



I noticed that people were cleaning up. I joined in to help put the auditorium back in order so it would be ready for the church services the next day.

When we finished cleaning up, I had collected a large bag full of trash. Just then, I noticed a well-dressed man coming out of another room. I asked him if he could discard the bag since I was in a rush to leave and did not know where the dumpster was on the church premises. He exclaimed: “Excuse me! I am Dr. Smith; I don’t take out the trash!”. He then went on to let me know that he was a university professor and a member of the church board. Embarrassed and caught off-guard by his behavior, I quickly apologized and headed toward the exit placing the bag of trash outside the door. After thinking about it, I was surprised that he refused to take out the trash in his church home. Should I have confronted his haughty attitude?

I recall times when I was offended when others did not recognize me or asked me to do something

I thought was someone else's job. I am compelled to ask myself, "How many times have I been too important to take out the trash?" A passage in Scripture reads: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matthew 20:28, NIV). Jesus washed the feet of His students (John 13:1-17)—a task not customarily performed by rabbis in that day. Jesus' lifestyle and words make clear that He did not see Himself as too important or too superior to serve others in love.

## Treasures from the Island

From the Island of Humility come many treasures. The first among many is the recognition that God alone grants us life, position, and prosperity. Knowing that He is the source of all we have, we can more willingly take on a humble and thankful heart attitude. We can then realize that we have nothing outside of what we have been given.

Humility is "a modest or low view of one's own importance" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023).

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Blessed [spiritually prosperous, happy, to be admired] are the poor in spirit [those devoid of spiritual arrogance, who regard themselves as insignificant], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven [both now and forever]” (Matthew 5:3, AMP). So much is made available to us when we are humble and willing to turn to God for our provision, rather than in our pride, keeping up the appearance that we can do it all on our own.

## Consider

This encounter served as a model of humility, someone intentionally choosing to be on the losing end. Consider laying aside boastfulness and pride and instead show an attitude of gratitude. Because humility means “a modest or low view of one’s importance,” consider giving someone else credit. Humility promises a tremendous spiritual reward (Matthew 5:3). Trust that you will see God’s reward coming to you as you live and act in humility.

## Prayer

I invite you to pray this simple prayer in the act of faithful humility: “Father God, graciously grant me the ability to live and walk in humility as I travel in the footsteps of Christ Himself. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

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