

THE POWER OF A PURE HEART



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Matthew 5:8- “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

These words are transcribed in one of my favorite books of the bible and even better, they're in red, indicating that these are the actual words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But what does it really mean to be “pure in heart”? The answer to that question is so simple that it tends to perplex even the most fascinating Christian mind. So let's explore what it truly means to be pure in heart and the steps we need to achieve that virtuous level of righteousness.

Merriam-Webster defines the word pure in several different denotations, one of which being free from what vitiates, weakens or pollutes. This will be the definition of pure that we will be referencing when it refers to biblical matters. As we jump deeper into that definition it would be helpful to define vitiates as to spoil or impair the quality or efficiency of. In abstract thinking, you should picture a blank sheet of paper, no lines or markings, not even the faintest of a fold mark, as close to perfection as one can get. That would be one comparison that being pure would relate to. Some people correlate childhood with purity, in the fact that being a child you have yet to be tainted by the outside world.

As a kid growing up on the streets of Pomona, CA, I realized that the lessons I didn't learn from my parents or family members I usually learned from the streets. This defines the saying "A product of my environment." Luckily for me, most of those days were spent in a Church, namely, New Gethsemane, day in and day out. And I mean day in and day out. Church on Sunday, Choir rehearsal on Monday, Boy Scouts on Tuesday, Bible study on Wednesday, God's Royal Priesthood (praise team) practice on Thursday, and Vacation Bible school throughout the summer. However, spending numerous hours at the church does not make one pure. Even those who claim to be "holier than thou" still have imperfections and impurities.

Psalms 51:10- Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit in me.

Another one of my favorite books of the bible, Psalms, (yes, I have a lot of favorites) tells us that we need to ask God to create in us a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us. This is a scripture I recite every morning before I take on the day. The day is filled with so many demons, so much evil and temptation that you need to refresh your mind, body and soul to prepare you for yet another day. Think of it as if someone were to introduce you into someone whom you already despise, your impression

would already be tainted because of previous knowledge of the individual. However, if you were to purify your heart and thoughts, it's possible to attain knowledge that you did not know beforehand that could possibly be beneficial to you. I was once told that "It's amazing what you can see when you choose not to look at it." When I was first told that, I took it at face value but as time progressed I began to truly think about the depth of the meaning. So many people are so focused on one thing (tunnel vision) that they tend to block out things in the bigger picture. As Christians, sometimes we also have tunnel vision. Sometimes we are so focused on the problems and issues that we are facing that we don't realize that God is standing right next to us. If we concentrate more on the positive, it will eventually overshadow the negative.

Titus 1:15- Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Do you consider yourself to be an optimistic or pessimistic individual? When I was younger my cousins, brother and I were sometimes responsible for taking care of my little cousin. This usually consisted of making sure he was fed, properly cleaned and entertained. Entertaining my little cousin was the easy part; he really enjoyed watching the show, Winnie-the-Pooh, which

meant we all spent a lot of time watching Winnie-the-Pooh. One character in particular I remember from that animated show is Eeyore. Eeyore, for those who don't know or remember, was a stuffed grey donkey who was a friend of Winnie-the-Pooh. Eeyore epitomizes a pessimistic person. Regardless as to how the day was going, Eeyore would always have the same dry, slow, depressing outlook on life. Proverbs 23:7 says for as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Meaning that if you continue to harbour up bad thoughts and have negative aspects towards life you will continue to reciprocate those same outcomes. Sometimes you have to speak things into existence. Words have more power than most people can even imagine.

Proverbs 23:26- My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

Giving your heart to God begins the divine process of righteousness. (I know, I show have begun with this verse.) Giving your heart to God means more than just getting saved, it carries far beyond being baptized, and requires more than just going to church. For those of you that are married, giving your heart to God is the most sacred of matrimonies. It relates to a marriage in the fact that it is an everlasting bond saying that no matter what comes ahead, whatever obstacles you must overcome, the storms, trials, tribulations and test (Yes, I said

test. God does test us, but I'll get to that later) you must go through; God will always have your heart. Once you have undoubtedly and wholeheartedly given your heart to God, you will begin to feel your eyes open. The world will begin to appear brand new like a baby emerging from the womb into the world. You can't physically see the plans that God has for you but you will begin to see how he operates in your life. Once you begin to see God's ways then you will have an unspeakable joy that can't be surpassed nor taken.

Psalms 26:2 Test me, Lord, and try me; examine my heart and mind.

As I stated before in the previous text, God does test us. The most renowned example of God testing his people would be the story of Job. Job was what many considered to be a rich man with many sons and daughters and thousands of heads of livestock. But in almost one fell swoop he lost it all. He lost his family, livestock and fell deeply sick with leprosy. Throughout all Job faced, he never blamed God nor sinned against him, and in turn, Job was given twice as much as he had before. When we as a people go through storms, we are all too likely to cast the blame of our despair on someone else. Proverbs 3:5-6 says trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him

and he shall direct thy paths. This verse simply tells us that once we give God our heart, not to rely upon our own understanding of how things are or why they are going a certain way. We will be faced with challenges, obstacles and test in life. These are the things that make us who we are. God is simply telling us that if we give our hearts to him that he will turn our obstacles into stepping stones that lead us towards the purpose he has planned for us.

Proverbs 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts.

In my collegiate levels of education I once had a professor that always told us when giving assignments, “There are two ways to do this, my way or the wrong way” and further into life, I began to understand what that truly meant. Now, as a father, I see that saying being played out all too often. There have been numerous times at which I’ve told my children to clean their rooms and when they claim to be done, lo and behold, they aren’t clean. In my children’s eyes the room appears to be clean, but my level of cleanliness far surpasses their standards. The same perception is involved when it comes to our Father God. Man will argue until he is exasperated or until he turns blue (or red) in the face even if he knows his stance on a topic or subject matter is wrong. One of the hardest things for a person to do is to admit when he/she

is wrong but that's exactly what we have to do sometimes. I urge you to sit down and talk with God and advise him that you might be wrong for things you have said and done and ask for spiritual enlightenment. Not only will he direct you to the truth, he will also break down the massive barrier in your heart called pride.

Proverbs 20:9- Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

In the book of John it speaks of a time when Jesus was at Mount Olive teaching the gospel when scribes and Pharisees brought in a woman who was taken in the act of committing adultery. The Pharisees and scribes all mentioned to Jesus that the Law given to them by Moses commanded them to have the woman stoned. They went on to ask Jesus what his thoughts were and Jesus spoke unto them saying “**He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.**” In my eyes those were the perfect words spoken at the perfect time. Every day in our Christian lives we are all too quick to pass judgement or prematurely convict someone without looking at our own faults. Jesus speaks of this again in Matthew 7:4-5 saying **or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to**

cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. What Jesus was saying here is that prior to judging another or pointing out their negativities, we should first examine and purify ourselves so that we may be able to see more clearly.

Proverbs 30:12- There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

Are we this generation? I asked myself that question several times as I read verse after verse of Proverbs 30. Have we, as a generation, become so full of ourselves that we've lost perception of what is right or wrong and just or true? Can we not take the time out to do a self-analysis? I will be the first to admit that I am far from perfect but I do strive for perfection every day. Romans 3:23 says for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; but are we that generation that cannot recognize when we have become tainted from being a product of our own way of life? As the old saying goes "the first step to solving a problem is to admit that there is one." Once we as Christians are able to see more clearly and identify the problem within ourselves, whether it is spiritually, physically or emotionally, we are then able to better address our issues and take a step closer to purity.

Proverbs 22:11- He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.

I challenge everyone who reads this to go to those among you whom you consider to be your friends and simply ask them this question. Why do you consider me as your friend? Some of the answers you get may startle or shock you and some of the answers may even make you laugh, however; I implore you to actually listen to the answer they give you and when you have time, begin to actually break down what they said. Do they like you because you make them laugh? And if that's the case, are they laughing at you or with you. Now don't get me wrong, I don't want you to second guess your friends. I simply want you to deeply look into the basis and foundation of your relationships. As adolescents and even further in life, we tend to long for friendships. People see friendships as possible connections to things they have not done nor seen, but this verse says that if you strive for purity in your heart you will speak with a grace that possess kings to befriend you. Having that attribute will prevent you from overreaching for those unnecessary friendships and bring true friends closer.

Philippians 4:8- Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,

whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

The mindset you take when faced with a challenge or obstacle can be detrimental or instrumental to the outcome of your situation. Even an infinitesimal degree of confidence can take you a long way as opposed to any level of self-doubt. When I was younger, I spent a few years dabbling into theatrical arts. I was a thespian at a young age and my first theatrical performance was a musical titled Godspell. At the young age of 14, I was inserted into the cast of a collegiate level musical with a role I was terrified to play. Thankfully, prior to the opening of the curtain at our first performance, the cast all held hands and said a small prayer which, in my eyes, propelled my confidence level to a height that I would have never dreamt of. From that point on I knew how strong of an asset one's mind could be. I was able to bring my mindset to a point of such tranquility that I was able to perform at the peak of my ability. In hindsight, I realized that's what God wants for us. I often tell people when you feel you have truly reached rock bottom, the only possible direction to go from there is up. Take some time to yourself find a quiet place and think of those things that will boost your spirit. I have yet to read in any book of the bible where it says the journey to our destination will be easy. It never said all the roads will be smooth, however; it does say in the end that we will have

the victory. Establishing a positive mindset is your strongest ally because your greatest enemy could always be you.

Psalms 66:18- If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

When I think of God, I think of the greatest father, ever, of all time, with absolutely no equivocations. And now that I am a father, I begin to see glimpses of how our worldly father operates. Having children is one of the greatest blessings God has given us. But within that blessing lies a deeper spiritual requirement that most of us don't realize until our later years of life. When you truly know your children, you are able to examine them and discover what is hidden beneath the superficial layers they project to the world. You know when your child is hurting on the inside, you feel when your child is sick and you know when they are being deceitful or not telling the whole truth. With mothers that maternal bond is even stronger. Some mothers are able to sense when something is wrong with their child even when they are miles away. There have been many times my children have come to me asking for things only to have an ulterior motive. Those are the times I tend to tone out what my children are asking for. That same perception is applied when it comes to Our Father God. God is able to see your heart when you come to him in prayer; he is

able to read your mind and thoughts and the true actions for what you ask of him. Having the ability to cleanse and purify your heart enables God to hear you more clearly.

Psalms 37:4- Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give you the desires of thine heart.

I'm probably not the first to say this, but sometimes living by God's word can be a bit demanding and challenging. Having to love your enemies and praying for those who persecute you can be a tough task at times. There are a lot of evils in the world that we must face and conquer but remember while fighting your battles you have the secret weapon, God. When faced with the challenges of the day I know at times it's hard, but you have to maintain that confidence, happiness and joy that permits you to fight the battle with a smile on your face. God told us we would win the war, but he didn't explain the strategic details that accompany the victory. The devil and the enemy are the only two forces that want to see you in despair. Don't provide them with that sense of accomplishment. Jeremiah 17:10 says I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. Having that joy in the Lord will equip you with blessings beyond measure.

Matthew 5:8- “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

Yes, I know that this is the verse that I began with; and I figured it would be the best one to end on. Ask yourself, what is the overall purpose of life? What is the grand prize that we are all searching for? What is your most significant long term goal? The answer to all those questions should be the same for any Christian, to make it to heaven. Like the famous song lyrics say “One of these days, and it won’t be long, you’ll look for me and I’ll be gone.” The time God has given us on this earth is not infinite, we all have an expiration date, and if you don’t make it to heaven, then all your life’s works would have been in vain. Matthew 25:21 says his lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. This parable, as told by Jesus, is a summation of your life’s works. What will you do with the talents that God has given you? Will you multiply them and use them for his glory, or will you hide them in fear of their usage. God has instilled in us great gifts and an answer for every situation or obstacle we face. We must first be able to purify ourselves and our hearts to activate all the blessings that God has planned for us.

Purity Prayer:

Father God, I thank you for the life you have blessed me with, but I know that my heart is not clean. I pray that you search my heart and purify me with the power of the Holy Spirit. Remove any doubt, malice or impurities. Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me, so that I may see the plans that you have for me dear Lord. All these things I ask and pray in your son, Jesus, name. Amen.

Fellowship of Faith Ministries



“For we walk by faith, not by sight”

2 Corinthians 5:7

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