

Devotion The HEART of the matter...

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8

The **HEART** is the control center of our life. It represents the source of our life and the place where life is renewed. **Proverbs 4:23** says, *"Guard your **heart** more than anything else, because the source of your life flows from it."* The Bible uses the word **HEART** to refer to three different parts of our being:

- ♦ **Our intellect:** Mark 2:8 says, *"Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their **hearts**."*
- ♦ **Our will:** Daniel 1:8 says, *"But Daniel purposed in his **heart** that he would not defile himself",* and
- ♦ **Our emotions:** We read in John 14:1, *"Let not your **heart** be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me."*
- ♦ The **HEART** is where the battle is being fought for control of our lives. It is in our **HEARTS** where the power and grace of God is displayed. Since our hearts play such a vital role in all aspects of our lives, we need to have regular heart checks.

Jesus tells us that those who have **PURE** hearts are blessed. In the Greek, the word used for "pure" means clean, free from contamination. When God created man He said that His creation was good (**Genesis 1:31**). But man turned his heart away from God, went his own way, and his heart was corrupted. **Gen 6:5** says, *"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time."* **Jeremiah 17:9-10** says, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart."* **Psalms 12:2** refers to those with a darkened heart as those who, *"utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak."* We read in **Proverbs 12:2** *"A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but a man of evil devices he condemns."* God hates sin and longs for His creation to come back to Him.

Three Scripture verses come to mind as we think about living life with a **PURE** heart:

1. **Psalms 24:3-5** says, *"Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a **pure** heart.....He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Savior."*
2. **Ezekiel 36:26-27** says, *"I will give you a new **heart** and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances."*
3. **Hebrews 10:22** says, *"let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."*

We read in **1 Samuel 16:7** that *"man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."* No matter how clean we may appear to be on the outside, even if our deeds look commendable and pure, but inside they are done for show, personal advancement or self-promotion, they do not please God and reveal a darkened, impure heart--a heart that has turned away from the Lord and trusts in man. **Jeremiah 17:5** says, *"This is what the Lord says:*

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"Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord."

Anne Graham Lotz in her book *The Magnificent Obsession*, states that *"Our contemporary culture...mocks sin, denies sin, excuses sin, defends sin, ignores sin, rationalizes sin, enjoys sin, flaunts sin, promotes sin, glorifies sin, applauds sin and relabels sin...but God hates sin."* Until we see ourselves in the light of God's purity, we will feel comfortable in the environment in which we find ourselves and care little about having a pure heart. Isaiah was impacted by God's purity in his culture when he saw the Lord and exclaimed in **Isaiah 6: 5**, *"Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"*

Jesus goes on to say in this beatitude that the pure in heart will **SEE** God. I believe He is speaking of a present as well as a future fulfillment. Presently, we will **see** God much more clearly when we have pure hearts because the obstacles that blur and distort His true image are removed (**1 Corinthians 13:12**). We can **see** God by experiencing His reality in our lives, not with physical eyes, but with spiritual eyes as we draw close to Him and find that He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother (**James 4:8**). He is our Savior who extends us a clear view of His attributes, character qualities and will.

We will also **see** Him in the future as we are promised in **Psalms 17:15**, *"But I will see Your face in righteousness; when I awake, I will be satisfied with Your presence."* **1 John 3:2-3** says, *"Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is."* We read in **Revelation 1:7**, *"Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, including those who pierced Him."*

The \$64,000 question is how are we to develop a PURE HEART so we shall SEE Him and are blessed? First, we must remember that a sinful nature never pleases God. It must be dealt with, not by being reformed, but by being put to death, crucified (**Galatians 5:24**) and be born again, putting our faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ. It is then that He pardons sin and sends His Holy Spirit to dwell within our hearts. He is the One who purifies hearts through faith (**Acts 15:9**).

Purifying our hearts is also a work in progress. The Holy Spirit is the One who opens our eyes to the impurities in our hearts as we spend time in His Word. As we obey His truth by submitting to the leading of the Spirit, our hearts are purified.

Let me suggest eight ways to develop a pure heart and see God:

1. Forsake sin (**Psalms 51:2**).
2. Love righteousness (**2 Timothy 2:22**).
3. Guard your heart (**Proverbs 4:23**).
4. Spend time meditating on God's Word (**Psalms 119:11**).
5. Have a regular and consistent time of interaction with God in prayer (**Psalms 5:1-3**).
6. Build a close, intimate relationship with your Savior (**Philippians 3:8**).
7. Commit to obeying the Holy Spirit in all things (**1 Peter 1:22**).
8. Share the thoughts that He imparts to you with others (**2 Timothy 4:2**).

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*I've just seen Jesus
I tell you He's alive
I've just seen Jesus
And I'll never be the same again*
Bill Gaither

Dave Dagwell

Assistant to the President