

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

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

Pure = Greek/kathoros - without blemish, mixture, alloy or alien elements e.g. silver or gold with no alloys, an army rid of all inefficient and uncommitted soldiers, corn or wheat sifted of all chaff.

In the Old Testament there were two different kinds of purity; ritual and inward.

- **Ritual / Ceremonial Purity** Many world religions have these outward cleansings. Jews were careful about foods, animal sacrifices etc. The priests approached the temple with the caution exhibited by a worker at a nuclear power plant. On the Day of Atonement the high priest had to wash all of his body in clean water 5 times and his hands and feet 10 times. The Law listed 142 blemishes which would disqualify a priest from offering temple sacrifices. Jesus emphasized another kind of purity which must have shocked many religious purists.
- **Inward Purity** - This includes cleansing from filth, iniquity etc. Modern man may think of the heart as only man's emotional feelings, but the Hebrews saw the heart to include the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical life, for they considered man a whole unit. In the Bible the heart refers to the innermost or hidden part of anything. eg. (Exodus 15:8, Deuteronomy 4:11, 2 Samuel 18:14, Matthew 12:40). **The heart is the core of man, the seat or throne of his life.** The heart is the source of all our attitudes and actions, therefore one must be just as alert as a soldier who guards a territory from enemy intruders. In the Greek the word '**kardia**' is used 250 times. Greek scholar H.W. Robinson says it refers to **the personality, inner life and character of an individual.** **Once God has our heart, he has our entire life.** God tells us that above all else we should guard our heart. - Proverbs 4:23. Believers must protect their affections from values foreign to citizens of heaven. Colossians 3:1-3 and think on good things Philippians 4:7. The heart is the source of all our attitudes and actions, therefore one must be just as alert as a soldier who guards a territory from enemy intruders. The heart is the source of all we speak and sometimes of spiritual defilement - Matthew 13:34-35, Mark 7:14-23.
- **The Pure in Heart** **Single-minded, sincere, whole-hearted to God,** not double-minded - Jeremiah 32:38, Ephesians 6:5-7, Romans 7:22; 8:6-7, James 4:8
The word 'sincere' in that day meant 'without wax'. Sometimes a potter discovered a chip or a crack in his pottery and to hide it he might fill the crack in with some wax. The unsuspecting buyer would only discover the imperfection later when the pottery became warm and the wax melted. A prudent buyer would check the pottery in the sunlight first to spot imperfections. When we go through fiery trials and pressures, the true nature of our heart is tested and revealed.

'The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart.'

- Proverbs 17:3 NKJV

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defend it
with all
your might*

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep His commands. -Deuteronomy 8:2

When it came time to enter, conquer and occupy the promised land, most of the Israelites did not trust God's promise. Their eyes were focused on the giants they would face rather than God, who is greater than giants. Caleb was different, for he was pure in heart, whole-hearted (NIV) and fully committed to God - Numbers 14:24. He saw God and acted in faith - Numbers 13:31; 14:7-9. God commands us to love Him with all of our heart for it is the most blessed thing we can do. It not only honors God but brings the greatest blessing to us and others. - Mark 12:30.

The root cause of the vast majority of difficulties in our lives is losing sight of God and His working in our lives. Jesus said: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Conversely, it may be assumed that contamination of the heart prevents us from seeing God, and that seeing God purifies and heals the heart.

- Mark Virkler

The Blessing: 'They shall see God' / Greek =future continuous sense

They shall be continually be seeing God as they live in the presence of God

Our knowledge and interest in a subject makes a difference in what we see. If a person is travelling through the countryside and sees a scenic field. Their perception would depend on what was in their heart.

- Farmer: 'This would be a great piece of land to grow some crops.'
- Real estate developer: 'What a great place for a golf course or housing development'
- Artist: 'I could see myself sitting here and painting a lovely landscape'.
- Environmentalist: 'This land should be restricted from any human activity'.

Back in the 1970's I had a part-time job at a ski resort which included being a chauffeur to and from the airport in Erie, Pa. One time I made two trips to the airport with businessmen who had been at a conference at Peek'n Peak Resort. On both trips to the airport, both groups made comments about the awnings on the same building as we rounded a corner on the way to the airport. I learned later that they were all involved with the awning business. They all had noticed what was in their heart and mind.....awnings.

When we examine the life of Jesus, we see a person who was single minded and of pure heart. He was obsessed with the kingdom of God not only living it, but teaching about it. The kingdom is ultimately about the joy of a Heavenly Father, His Son and Spirit as they gather and get to live with an immense family (the church/ecclesia) who can enjoy their vast kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy for all eternity. **'Joy is the serious business of heaven.'** - C.S. Lewis

At the crucifixion of Jesus, the gathered crowd only observed the natural events; criminals being crucified, soldiers cursing and gambling, skeptics sneering, women weeping, downcast disciples,

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and all the followers of Jesus mourning the suffering and injustice of it all. Evil seemed to be winning. Jesus could see and hear all of that, but He also saw beyond that. He knew that God was at work through Him and for Him to achieve an eternal purpose. He had proclaimed this at His last supper with his disciples. He knew they would be scattered and would leave him alone, but He said that He was not alone for the Father was with Him. He went on to speak of victory..

'I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.'

- John 17:33 NIV

It is easy to focus on the bad things happening around us, but God wants us to see Him no matter our circumstances. The Bible gives some examples of those who did.

- Joseph when he was betrayed by his brothers - Genesis 49:20
- Elijah during fiery spiritual warfare - 2 Kings 6:17
- Stephen when being stoned to death saw God's glory - Acts 7:55-56
- John alone in exile on the island of Patmos - Revelation 1:9; 4:1-2

The idea of **'seeing God'** reminds us of the **privilege of standing in a king's presence** 1 Kings 10:8. Moses desired to see God - Exodus 33:18, as did **David**, who was called **'a man after God's heart'** - Acts 13:22. During his hard times in the desert, David earnestly sought God and then said:

'I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your glory and power.' - Psalm 63:2

'Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication From God his Savior.' - Psalm 24:3-5 NIV

In Psalm 27 David speaks of God being his stronghold in times of trouble and his greatest desire.

'One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek Him In His temple. For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling'

- Psalm 27:4-5 NIV

And I - in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness. - Psalm 17:15 NIV

This is the hope and promise for every Christian at their resurrection. Jesus has become their righteousness because of the exchange made at the cross. He became sin that we might become righteous. - Romans 3:21-22.

God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. - 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV

One day we will **see Jesus face to face** and fully see Him - 1 Corinthians 13:12. Love comes from a **pure heart** and a good conscience and a sincere faith - 1 Timothy 1:5.

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Avoid and Reject Contamination

- Sin, unbelief, fear, guilt, anger, inferiority, depression, past traumas, hurts which prevent us from seeing God as they cloud our heart. Two men on the Emmaus Road did not see Jesus at first because they were influenced by disappointment and unbelief.

Luke 24:16-17,21,25.

‘Skepticism is a mark of illness. Unbelief is abnormal, belief is normal. Cynical doubters can’t believe until healed; released from lies and negative memories. Negative emotions and thoughts block faith and us going to the one who can help us - God.

Robert H. Schuller

- Double-mindedness
2 masters is too many Matthew 6:24
2 minds is too many James 1:7; 4:8
2 worlds is too many 2 Timothy 3:2-5

**Woe to those with contaminated hearts, they will not see God
in all of His providence, goodness and glory.**

Maintain Purity of Heart

- Pray as David did Psalm 51:10; 86:11-12
- Stay in the Word of God John 15:3, Acts 15:9, Ephesians 5:26, 1 John 1:7
- Fix your eyes on Jesus Hebrews 12:1-2
- Obey the truth, have a sincere love 1 Peter 1:22

The pure in heart will see God’s activity or influence in:

- Nature/creation Romans 1:20
- Matter/molecules Colossians 1:16-17 (not pantheism)
- Circumstances Colossians 1:11, Romans 8:28
- Life and breath Acts 17:28

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