

TRUTH

“... Your word is truth” (John 17:17)

June 2025

“BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART”

The full message of Matthew 5:8 is, “*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*” One major goal for every disciple of Jesus is to keep his/her heart pure. On our personal list of “Things to Accomplish This Week,” there is nothing more important than protecting our heart and keeping it pure!

In the Bible, a person’s “heart” is his mind — it includes one’s emotions, feelings, intellect, desire, and conscience. Why is a person’s heart so important? The truth of Proverbs 4:23 never changes: “*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.*” The Lord Jesus said, “*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil*” (Luke 6:45). Our words and behavior come from our heart, so if we want to have pure speech and pure conduct, the key is keeping our heart pure.

A “pure” heart is one that is clean, unspotted, uncontaminated. Such a heart has a desire to please God and avoid those things that He does not approve. The devil and his workers may take my house, my health, and my money, but my heart is off limits!

The apostle Peter reminded first-century saints that they had “purified” their souls in obeying the truth. They did that when they were born again by the word of God (1 Peter 1:22,23). We could call that *one-time* purification/cleansing of the heart. In addition, in James 4:8 we read that some who already were Christians were instructed to purify their hearts. That would be *ongoing* purification of the heart which takes place as we walk in the light (1 John 1:7,9).

Keeping our heart pure can be a real challenge. Worldly philosophy, blatant appeals to fleshly desires, and more external matters can feel overwhelming. At the end of the day, however, my attempt to keep my own heart pure comes down to one person — me. If I fail to keep my heart pure and as a result engage in sin, that happens because of *my own* desires (James 1:14,15). Protecting *my* heart is *my* responsibility, and *I alone* am the one who is responsible for *my* choices. Whether it is pride, pornography, or an infatuation for material things (called “covetousness”), it is up to me to “*abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul*” (1 Peter 2:11).

What can you and I do in order to keep our heart pure? First, strive to maintain this mindset: “*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer*” (Psalm 19:14).

Filling our heart with God’s word is a huge help. “*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You*” (Psalm 119:11).

Our mind is limited in space and retention. Why not put forth our best effort to fill our heart with good, wholesome thoughts? “. . . *whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things*” (Philippians 4:8).

We can learn from Joseph, the son of Jacob. When that young man was faced with strong, daily temptation from the wife of Potiphar, how did he respond? He resisted her evil proposal. He verbalized the thoughts of his heart, saying, “*How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*” (Genesis 39:9). When her sensual appeal intensified, Joseph wisely fled, putting distance between himself and the one who threatened his heart’s purity (39:12).

We need to do our best to protect what goes into our mind through our eyes. The Psalmist expressed a valuable idea: “*I will set nothing wicked before my eyes*” (Psalm 101:3). Job’s approach is also worthy of imitation, as he declared, “*I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?*” (Job 31:1). Job was a married man, and he understood that protecting his heart and its desires began with controlling what he allowed his eyes to view. The same truth applies to our ears: we must be persistent in protecting them from inappropriate words that are found in some comedy, music, and movies.

If we really desire to keep our heart pure, let us do our best to surround ourselves with folks who want to keep their hearts pure, too. Let us be honest and recognize our vulnerabilities, remembering that one who is convinced he could never stumble is setting himself up for a painful crash (1 Corinthians 10:12).

-- Roger D. Campbell

TAKEAWAYS FROM 2 SAMUEL 11-12

We now arrive at, perhaps, the most famous section of the book of 2 Samuel. Sadly, it is also, perhaps, the most infamous part of the life of King David. Let us consider some of the events of the text before discussing some takeaways.

11:1-5 – Sin. This chapter opens with a brief description of David being in the wrong place at the wrong time. When he should have been at battle with his troops, he was at home in Jerusalem. Oh, how often this leads someone to a dangerous situation that ends in sin!

While at home, he observes a beautiful woman, Bathsheba, bathing on her rooftop and lusts for her. He sends for her, and they commit adultery. Bathsheba returns home and it appears as if their encounter would remain a secret . . . That is, until she sends word to David that she is pregnant.

11:6-27 – Sinking in Sin. At this juncture, David has an opportunity to take responsibility for his sin and to change his ways. Unfortunately, as we often do in our lives today, he begins to compound the problems he already has and attempts the vain effort to cover up his sin.

David's first attempt to cover his sin involves bringing Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, home from battle. David's hope is that while Uriah is home, he will spend time with his wife and then as people find out Bathsheba is pregnant, they will naturally assume that the child belongs to Uriah.

However, Uriah is a loyal soldier, and he refuses to go home, but instead stays at the king's house all night. David makes another attempt to get Uriah to go home by causing him to become drunk. But, once again, Uriah stays at the king's house.

Up to this point, David's sins have included lust and adultery. But he now decides to add murder to the lengths that he is willing to go to cover up his sin. David sends Uriah back to the battle with instructions for the military leaders to send Uriah to the heaviest part of the fighting, causing him to die. And with that, David is able to marry Bathsheba and their son is born. David has sunk deeper and deeper in sin and this chapter ends with the tragically sad statement, "*But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord*" (2 Samuel 11:27).

12:1-12 – Showing Sin. We do not know exactly how much time has passed between these two chapters, but God sends the prophet Nathan to David with a parable. This parable is of a rich man, with many sheep, and a poor man who had but one

ewe lamb. As the rich man is in need of a lamb to prepare for a meal, instead of taking from his own large flock, he takes the poor man's one ewe lamb. This story rightfully enrages David, who sees the unjust nature of what has happened.

Nathan takes advantage of the correct reaction of David's anger to say to him the chilling words, "*You are the man!*" (2 Samuel 12:7). Nathan goes on to describe the punishment David would bear because of his sin. King David, being shown his sin, finally realizes just how far he has sunk in sin and accepts his responsibility.

12:13-23 – Sorrow. One lesson to note here is that even when we express sorrow for our sin, and even when we repent of our sin, we still must suffer the consequences of our sin. David would experience the punishments listed in verses 10-12. But also, the son born from the sexual relationship at the beginning of chapter 11, would fall ill and die. David's mourning of this illness and death remind us of just how much sorrow sin brings.

What are some other lessons we can learn?

- Sin never gives what it promises. David expected to enjoy pleasure from his relationship with Bathsheba. But it also brought about dishonor and death. When we become involved in sin, it often takes us further and further away from God.

- We cannot hide our sin from God. "*The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good*" (Proverbs 15:3). We may be successful, for a short time, in hiding it from other people. But we cannot hide anything from God (Hebrews 4:13).

- Wise counsel is invaluable. From the beginning of these two chapters and this part of David's story, what David needed most was for someone to be honest with him and show him just how far he had turned away from God. We do not have prophets of God speaking today, but an honest friend who kindly helps us see our shortcomings and offers correction has eternal value (Proverbs 12:15).

- Once we commit sin, the right thing to do is to repent. That is the bottom line. We should not try to cover it up. We should not commit more sin to cover it up. We should stop sinning, repent of that sin, and enjoy the blessings of a God who "*. . . is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9).

-- Joel Danley

Practical Suggestions for Christians Who Are Dealing with an Addiction

To be clear, we are speaking about children of God who are struggling with *their own* addiction. Some are addicted to a sinful activity such as pornography, while others are addicted to matters which, in and of themselves, do not violate God's will. Using the internet is a legitimate activity, but if one becomes addicted to it, he has crossed a line.

Paul's inspired message was, "*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any*" (1 Corinthians 6:12). Conclusion: we must not become the slaves of any earthly activity. When facing a personal addiction, we suggest:

- Admit it – Be honest with yourself and others by acknowledging your addiction. "*He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy*" (Proverbs 28:13).

- One day at a time – Do not overwhelm yourself by thinking about "holding out" for years and years. Instead, focus on being victorious over the devil's devices today (Matthew 6:34).

- Be optimistic – While it can be extremely difficult to overcome an addiction, it is doable. Some who in the past were slaves to drugs, pornography, or gambling are now free from the chains of such vices. They currently can say, "I am a *former* addict."

- Appeal to God for help – Cast your care on Him so you and He can face your problem together (1 Peter 5:7). Remember that we can go to God's throne to receive grace, mercy, and help (Hebrews 4:16).

- An accountability agreement – Consider asking someone whom you trust for special help. Agree to contact him each day and tell him whether or not you have abstained from your troublesome issue in the last 24 hours. This setup causes two people to work together to hold you accountable (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

- Watch your partnerships – Because evil companions can corrupt good habits (1 Corinthians 15:33), it makes good sense to avoid people, places, and situations in which you will be hit with strong temptations to engage in your unwanted habit.

- Forgive yourself – If you lapse back into old, destructive habits, but afterwards repent and turn to God for forgiveness, be grateful for His mercy. And, when He by that mercy forgives you, be willing to forgive yourself (1 Timothy 1:13-16).

- Depending on the nature of the addiction, you may need professional assistance to deal with it. If so, we strongly recommend turning to a qualified Christian for guidance that harmonizes with the Bible.

-- Roger D. Campbell

To whom does the term "antichrist" refer?

Many in the religious world have questions about the term "antichrist" as used in the Bible. Does the term refer to some singular, powerful individual who will arise seeking world domination, persecuting Christians, and leading humanity away from God? Many believe so, and many teach this person is inextricably linked with events related to Jesus' return and the end of time. While some tend toward fanciful theories and conjecture, sincere Bible students prefer to know, not what men may say about this (or any) subject, but what the Bible has to say on the matter.

Many are surprised to find that **the term "antichrist" is found only five times in Scripture**. Though some spend vast amounts of time and energy on this concept, the term is found only in 1 John 2:18 (twice, once singular and once plural), 1 John 2:22; 1 John 4:3; and 2 John 7. From these references, what does the Bible teach about "antichrist"?

- **Jesus' disciples were warned about antichrist.** "*As you have heard that the Antichrist is coming*" (1 John 2:18). Jesus told His disciples that false Christs would arise, seeking to deceive (Matthew 24:5,24). Paul also warned similarly (Acts 20:28-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10).

- **Antichrist is not just one single individual.** Many think and talk about the antichrist as a single individual for whom we should be on the lookout as a signal of the impending end of time. The Bible, however, makes it clear: "*Even now many antichrists have come*" (1 John 2:18).

- **Any person potentially is an "antichrist."** Though their immediate context points to first-century Gnostics (those denying Jesus' coming to earth in the flesh) as "antichrists," the four Bible verses where this term is used show certain characteristics of an antichrist. An antichrist is one who denies Jesus as the Christ and, in so doing, denies both the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22). Jesus Himself said, "*He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him*" (John 5:23). Furthermore, an antichrist is one who does not acknowledge that Jesus came in the flesh (1 John 4:3; 2 John 7). Then and now, anyone with these characteristics is an antichrist.

"Antichrist" is not some unique title for a singular individual (whether past, present, or future). Rather, the term is a broad description of those who are in opposition to Jesus. In a very real sense, it can be said that anyone who speaks and/or acts against Jesus the Christ is an antichrist, for such is the literal meaning of the original Greek word.

-- Chad Dollahite

JESUS' CONVERSATIONS WITH A BLIND MAN (John 9:6,7,35-39)

During His public ministry, the Christ healed a number of individuals who were blind. The lengthiest Bible record of such a miracle is found in John 9. In connection with that incredible sign, several conversations took place, including those between the blind man and his neighbors, the blind man and Jewish leaders, the Jewish leaders and the blind man's parents, and two conversations between the blind man and the One who healed him, Jesus.

The first-recorded conversation between Jesus and the unnamed blind man was brief, with Jesus doing all the talking. Before He spoke to the blind man, Jesus saw him as He passed by (John 9:1). The Master spit on the ground, made clay with the saliva, and anointed the blind man's eyes with the clay (9:6). Jesus then charged him, "*Go, wash in the pool of Siloam*" (9:7). How did the blind man respond? "*So he went and washed, and came back seeing*" (9:7). Imagine the man's joy that the Lord had used His amazing power and mercy to heal him of his blindness! Imagine the elation of the blind man's parents!

When was the blind man healed? When he complied with Jesus' instructions. Jesus had told him to go. Where? To the pool of Siloam (in Jerusalem). And do what? Wash in that pool (9:7). When he did so, he was healed. What can we conclude about his healing? It was a *conditional* blessing from the Lord. What were the conditions? Go to the place designated by Jesus, take the designated action, and carry out that specific action in the designated place. Was the power to heal him in the water itself? No, the water had no miraculous healing power. He was healed by Jesus' power and mercy when he submitted to what Jesus told him to do. This scenario reminds us of the healing of a leper named Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-14).

The Christ's command to go and wash in the pool of Siloam in order to be cured of blindness, would that make sense from a medical/health standpoint? Not really. On the surface, some of God's instructions may seem unreasonable if one uses worldly wisdom to analyze them . . . things like sprinkling a lamb's blood around a door (Exodus 12), looking at a bronze serpent on a pole as a cure for snake bit (Numbers 21), or having one's body immersed in water in order to receive the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). But, God's ways always work when humans respond properly to them! Give the blind man of John 9 credit: instead of rejecting Jesus' proposal as being silly, he was willing to submit to what the Master told him to do.

After the blind man was healed, what did he acknowledge about Jesus? He called Jesus "a prophet" (9:17) and admitted the greatness of the wonder He

had performed (9:29-32). As Nicodemus had done, the former blind man confessed, "*If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing*" (9:33). He saw the evidence of Jesus' power, and he accepted it.

The second biblical interaction between Jesus and the former blind man is recorded in John 9:35-38.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of God?' He answered and said, 'Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?' And Jesus said to him, 'You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.' Then he said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped Him.

Jesus' question, "*Do you believe in the Son of God?*" (9:35) is one that every person in the world needs to be ready to answer. How a person responds to that question is the difference between salvation and condemnation, as we read, "*He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*" (3:18).

How did the former blind man answer the Christ's inquiry? He asked his own question: "*Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?*" (9:36). Think about those words. They remind us that one cannot believe in Jesus without proper evidence and understanding. You and I cannot expect someone to make the decision to follow Jesus if he lacks information, proof, and comprehension. We must be ready to take God's word and show folks from the Scriptures who Jesus is (20:31).

When Jesus informed the man who had been born blind that He was the Son of God, the fellow did two things: (1) he confessed, "*Lord, I believe,*" and (2) he worshiped Jesus. This gentleman did more than believe in his heart: he confessed his faith. We know from other statements of Jesus that the kind of faith He wants to see in us is more than heart-and-mouth faith. He wants us to obey Him, as He said this about life eternal: "*Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he shall never see death*" (8:51).

What a difference one day made in the life of this blind man! When his day began, he was still blind, just like always. Before the day ended, his physical eyes could see, and his spiritual eyes saw that Jesus is the Son of God and worthy of man's devotion.

-- Roger D. Campbell

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