

"Pure in Heart"

Have you wondered what happened to people's desire to be pure? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to explore what it means to be pure in heart. Stay with us.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. More than anything I want to please God and go to heaven. I want to see my Father in heaven who has loved me and sent His Son Jesus to redeem us from sin and give us eternal life. But to have eternal life I must conform to the will of the One in heaven, not my own will. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week. And we'd love to hear from you.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." To have a pure heart means it's not divided or compromised. A pure heart means I haven't mixed God's will with worldly pleasures. Proverbs 16 and verse 2 says, "All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirit." What you think is pure and what God thinks is pure may be different. And just because you approve of some lifestyle doesn't mean God approves. Habakkuk 1:13 says of God, "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You cannot look on wickedness with favor." God isn't like us. We may approve the sins of others, but God can't. His holy character will not permit Him to approve of sin.

Hebrews 12 and verse 14 says, "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." The Lord forgives our sins, but He also expects us to forsake our sins and to live holy lives. God didn't forgive our sins so we could continue living in sin. And unless we strive for holiness, we won't see the Lord. A pure heart leads to a pure life. Are you pure in heart or have you allowed sin into your desires?

If you want to study more, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 2 Corinthians 6:14 to 18, and explore what it means to be pure in heart.

Our reading today comes from 2 Corinthians chapter 6 verses 14 to 18. And there, the apostle Paul talks about our relationship with God and being pure and living like God's people.

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,

"I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM;

AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

"Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord.

"AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAR;

And I will welcome you.

"And I will be a father to you,

And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,”
Says the Lord Almighty.

If you wish to be a child of God. Then do not touch the things that are unclean. Let’s pray together. Heavenly Father we’re thankful that You have loved us so much that You want to walk in our midst and have us as Your sons and daughters. Help us to respect You to love You and to do Your will always. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

A person “pure in heart” is single-minded about God. He wants to do what is right and avoids doing what is wrong. He distinguishes good from evil, right from wrong, truth from falsehood, and the helpful from the hurtful. He takes seriously what God commands, because of his love and devotion to God. He doesn’t want any sin barrier to break his relationship with God. Sin offends God and separates us from His grace. Isaiah 59 verses 1 and 2 says, “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made (you) a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” You can’t expect God to bless you if you cherish your sins. Psalm 68 verse 18 says, “If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”

If we keep on sinning, we cannot presume the grace of God will still cover our sins. Paul asked the Romans, the question, in Romans 6 verses 1 and 2 “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?” God’s grace and forgiveness is a precious gift that came at a great cost. God forgave us so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. Continuing to sin shows that we’ve forgotten the cross. Continuing in sin after we become Christians puts our souls back into peril.

Romans 8:12 to 13 says, “So then, brothers, (now he’s not talking to people in the world, he’s talking to Christians) we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” The Scriptures get even more specific in Hebrews 10:26 to 31, “For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Many Christians aren’t serious about their faith but are Christians in name only. Oh, they’ll tell you they believe, but their behavior hardly differs from the behavior of the world. And though they wear the name of Christ, they cause others to slander Christianity. You can’t flirt with lust and sin, and it not hurt you. Sin can overcome you and harden your heart, destroy your faith, and dull your love for God. Hebrews 3:12 to 13 says, “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

So, what can we do to keep ourselves from getting overcome by sin and lose our souls? First, watch over your heart. Proverbs 4:23 says, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.” Well, why is the heart so important? The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 15:19 “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.” Choices begin in the heart; people choose what they want to do and what is important to them. When

people choose to sin, their hearts can lie to them. Their hearts may say, “oh, it’s no big deal,” or “no one will get hurt,” or “it’s only once,” or “no one will find out.” Oh, sin is deceptive and it’s destructive by its very nature. And that’s why God urges us and instructs us not to sin. He loves us and knows what sin will do to harm us.

When people justify sin in their hearts; they corrupt their lives and other people around them. Titus 1:15 to 16 says, “To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.” Don’t let sin get a foothold in your life; it’ll destroy you. Rather, control your thoughts and focus on God and what’s good. Philippians 4 and verse 8 says, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” Focus your heart on God and the good He’s doing in your life.

Repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of ways. You’ll never fully repent until your heart turns against sin and hungers for righteousness. It’s not simply that you stop the sin, you don’t want to sin anymore at all! You want with all your heart to love and serve God. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 to 22 says, “but test everything; hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” You must leave the ways of the world to follow Christ in righteousness.

Colossians 3 verses 1 to 4 speaks of this change. It says, “If then you have been raised with Christ, (that is when you’re baptized and made a new creature) seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

Colossians 3:5 to 10 continues, it says, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, (evil) passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (he says) On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.” Don’t excuse your sin; put it to death. Don’t blame someone else; put your sin to death. Don’t redefine sin; put it to death.

Second, pray fervently for God’s help. When the apostles at Gethsemane could hardly keep their eyes open, the Lord Jesus said to them in Matthew 26:41, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

We too need to watch and pray that we will avoid the temptations of life. The devil tempted Jesus. Yes. Even when Jesus overcame the devil’s temptations, the devil was not content to quit tempting Him. Luke 4 and verse 13 says, “When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.”

The devil attacks us when we’re weak or unprepared to resist. James 4:7 to 8 says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” Some folks, tempted to sin, flee from God in fear. Hebrews 4:15 to 16 reminds us, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that

we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” If you draw close to God, He will help you through every temptation.

Third, study the word of God diligently. The psalmist asked in Psalm 119 verse 9, “How can a young man keep his way pure? (the answer is) By guarding it according to your word.” The psalmist then resolved in Psalm 119:11 “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” The best way to know God and to know His will is to study His word. God gave us His wisdom in His word to protect us and to guide us.

Romans 12 and verse 2 reminds us, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Loving God means loving His will. You’ll be happy to live it out in your life. When you live God’s way, you prove to yourself and everyone that His way is right! The will of God leads everyone to become good and honest and kind. People want to be around them; they’re acceptable. Who wants to be around a drunkard when he’s drunk? An angry person when he’s angry? A thief when he’s stealing? Or a cruel person when he’s mean? God’s ways lift up rather than tear down; and that’s why we need to study and know God’s will. Because His way is truly perfect.

Fourth, flee from sin. Sometimes fleeing is the best to overcome our temptations. 1 Corinthians 6 verses 18 to 20 says, “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” Today people do everything but flee from sexual sin. Our sex-crazed world has lost the ability to blush or to feel ashamed. Sexual lust will kill your faith and love for God. It’ll rob you of your soul.

And if you want to stop sexual temptation, then avoid anything that promotes it. Put to death bad habits of viewing sexually explicit things on television or the internet. Stop reading literature designed to inflame sexual passions. Flee the source of your temptations. 2 Timothy 2:22 says, “So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.” By all means, get involved at a church of Christ near you.

Why does this matter? It matters, because we belong to Christ. And we’re accountable to God. We’ve been bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Paul said in Galatians 2 and verse 20, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Since we belong to the Lord Jesus, shouldn’t we serve Him? One day you’ll give an account for the choices that you’ve made, whether you lived a pure and righteous life or a wicked and indulgent life. Are you devoted to God or are you corrupted by sin?

If you follow the world, you’ll have eternal consequences of separation from God. Why not change and life?

Let’s pray together. Heavenly Father we’re thankful for Your love for Your grace and for Your guidance in the word of God. Help us to follow Your will and to leave the things that hurts and the things that are sinful. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Romans 13:11 to 14 says, “Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to

gratify its desires.” No one is getting any younger. As each day passes, we’re one step closer either to the end of life or to the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

If you’ve been sinning, isn’t it time you repented? Why risk your eternal soul for a brief moment of passion? Remember: “if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” The Lord Jesus died on the cross so you might be forgiven; but His grace has some conditions. You can’t continue in sin and expect God to save you. Grace doesn’t work that way. Grace teaches us “to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age”.

Do you need to repent? Today’s the best day to do that. Place your trust in the Lord Jesus, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Focus your heart on serving the Lord.

We hope today’s study about being pure in heart causes you to consider your eternal salvation. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord’s Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There’s also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, “SearchTVMinistry.” Be sure to like the programs you watch; this helps spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. And don’t worry, if you get a hold of us, we’re not asking for money. We’re here to help you draw close to God.

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And I realize that some of you for health reasons can’t attend worship; I’m speaking to those who can attend. There’s probably a church of Christ near you. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll gladly help you find one. We’ll be back next week, Lord willing. Keep searching God’s Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.