

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

To be pure in heart is to be pure in our thinking and feelings that result in proper decision making. Outside of the beatitudes (Matt. 5.8), we find the idea of a pure heart three times. A pure heart is referenced in 1 Timothy 1.5 discussed in the article on the inside of this bulletin. Let's explore the other two occurrences.

The second time we find mention of a pure heart is in 2 Timothy 2.22. It is there that Paul wrote, "*Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*" Calling on the Lord is a reference to obeying the gospel. On the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted Joel who wrote that "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2.21). Peter then tells us that we call on the name of the Lord by repenting and being baptized (Acts 2.38). Paul was told by Ananias to be baptized, "*calling on the name of the Lord*" (Acts 22.16).

In 2 Timothy 2.22, Paul refers to those who called on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart. It was Paul's intention that Timothy be at peace with those who obeyed the gospel with pure motives. Take that over to Romans 6.17 where brethren have "*obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine.*" There are some who obey the gospel with pure motives wanting to be cleansed of their sins and be a part of the family of God. There are others who obey the gospel with impure motives. Obeying the gospel might be done with the intention of pleasing their parents or their spouse. Our obeying the gospel needs to be with a pure heart.

The third time that we find this idea of a pure heart is in 1 Peter 1.22. Peter writes, "*Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.*" We have separated ourselves from sin by obeying the gospel that was revealed by the Holy Spirit. We did so that might obtain the friendship enjoyed by the brethren. With that being the case, we need to always do what is best for our brethren by always acting with pure motives.

It is interesting that in these three occurrences, a pure heart is always used in connection with our relationship as brethren. Never let your heart be influenced by the things of this world (Matt. 15.19,20). Instead treat your brethren with pure motives concerned always with their well-being. CLP

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"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"
-Mark 16.15

January 1, 2023

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM

SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:30 PM

ATTITUDES AS OLD AS CAIN AND ABEL

It can be discouraging when we encounter those who have no interest in the things of God. Those who call themselves Christians scoff at the idea that their worship practices are practiced without God's approval. They see Christ as a tolerant teacher who doesn't care how one worships.

This attitude is not new. It dates all the way back to the book of Genesis with Cain and Abel. God commanded that Cain and Abel offer sacrifices. Abel offered the "*firstborn of his flock.*" Cain offered the "*fruit of the ground*" (Gen. 4.3,4). Abel's sacrifice was accepted while Cain's was rejected. Out of jealousy, "*Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him*" (Gen. 4.8).

Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice while rejecting the offering of Cain? The Hebrew writer reveals that "*By faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*" (Heb. 11.4). Faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10.17).

Although Genesis does not specify it, we can conclude that Abel heard the word of God and offered the kind sacrifice that God desired. Thus, "*by faith Abel offered...*" Cain also heard the word but chose to offer a different sacrifice.

How long will man reject the will of God and replace it with their own? As long as time continues. CLP

THIS YEAR ALSO PHILIPPIANS 3:14

INTRODUCTION:

1. Consider the parable of the unfruitful fig tree. (Luke 13.6-9)
 - a) The setting of the parable. (Luke 13.2,3)
 - b) The storyline of the parable. (Luke 13.8)
 - c) The significance of the parable. (1 Pet. 3.9)
2. Will this year also be a year of failed resolutions? Yet there is one goal we cannot afford to fail. (Phil. 3.14)

I. ETERNAL LIFE IS STILL FUTURE

- A. **PHILIPPIANS 3.12:** *“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected”* The goal was not yet in his possession.
1. What was the goal that Paul was seeking? The goal of eternal life. (Phil. 3.7,11,14; cf. 2 Cor. 9.24,25)
 2. **1 TIMOTHY 6.12:** *“lay hold of eternal life.”*
- B. When will eternal life be in our possessions?
1. So certain is the promise, it is as if we have already received it. (1 John 5.11-13; Titus 1.2; Rom. 4.17)
 2. We will reach it in the end. (2 Tim. 4.7,8; Mark 10.30)

II. ETERNAL LIFE IS TO BE PURSUED

- A. **PHILIPPIANS 3.12:** *“but I press on”* (with v. 14).
1. Press (dioko): Literally, to pursue, chase after.
 2. **PHILIPPIANS 3.12:** *“that which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me.”* (Acts 9.2,6,15; cf. Acts 22.16)
 3. Paul had other goals, but he had to choose what Jesus wanted for him. (Acts 9.9)
- B. How can I pursue the goal of eternal life?
1. Paul had to make a choice. (Phil. 3.5-8)
 2. Can must choose the goal to pursue. (1 Tim. 6.17-19)

III. ETERNAL LIFE IS TO BE OUR FOCUS

- A. **PHILIPPIANS 3.13:** *“One thing I do.”*
1. **PHILIPPIANS 3.13:** *“forgetting those things which are behind.”* Paul forgot the past. (Acts 22.3; 1 Tim. 1.13).
 2. **PHILIPPIANS 3.13:** *“reaching forward to those things which are ahead.”* Paul stretch himself out.
- B. We must be focused on the goal of eternal life. (Heb. 12.1)

CONCLUSION: To achieve the goal, you must be in Christ.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

The heart is where it all begins. We are defined by our heart (Prov. 23.7). Since the heart is what determines our character, we must be careful what we allow to influence our heart (Prov. 4.23). Is it any wonder what Jesus said that the one who is truly happy is the one who is pure in heart (Matt. 5.8).

What does it mean to be pure in heart? The word “pure” translates the Greek word “katharos” which gives us our English word, “catharsis” and “cathartic.” It is defined as a purging or cleansing of impurities. Often the word is used in reference to morally and spiritually clean. Paul used the word twice in the book of Acts to refer to being guiltless after preaching the gospel (Acts 18.6; 20.26). There was no one who could accuse him of not teaching them what they needed to know to be saved (Acts 20.27).

The word “heart” refers to three major components. It is the origin of the emotions. Jesus said that we are to love God *“with all your heart”* (Matt. 22.37). It is the origin of the intellect. Solomon wrote that *“as a man thinks in his heart, so is he”* (Prov. 23.7). And it is the origin of the will, the place where decisions are made. Paul explained that the brethren in Rome *“obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine”* (Rom. 6.17).

When you put it together, the pure in heart are those who live their lives with clean and blameless emotions, thoughts, and make good decisions. They do not have ulterior motives. They do not love in pretense. They are pure in their thinking, feelings, and decisions.

Four times in the New Testament, you will find reference to a pure heart. The first time is in the beatitudes (Matt. 5.8). We also find it is 1 Timothy 1.5 where Paul writes that *“the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart.”* We find a context where individuals were created strife and division by giving their attention to *“fables and endless genealogies”* (1 Tim. 1.3).

Paul commands Timothy not to give attention to these things. He then says that the purpose of this commandment is *“love from a pure heart.”* As a preacher, Timothy was not to be motivated by matters that are divisive. His heart was not to be polluted with thoughts and feelings of being right. Instead, he was to be motivated by love.

Too many brethren (and too often preachers) are motivated by matters of opinion and issues that do not matter. What drives them to debates and strife is the desire to prove their opinions right and their opponents wrong. This has led them to “idle talk” (1 Tim. 1.6). Yet our motives are to be pure as we are seeking what is in the best interest of others.

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