



THE BEATITUDES

**BEAUTIFUL CHARACTER
FORMED BY CHRIST**

**PT. 6:
BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART**

PURE IN HEART

"When is it difficult for you to live out in your actions what you believe in your heart?" (John Stott)

What does it mean to be pure in heart? Some of you reading this right now will pipe up: 'Not like me.' You know you aren't pure, you are poor in spirit because you know the depth of your impurity and your need for the pureness of Jesus. So then, what does it really mean to be pure in heart?

D.A. Carson says that we know that the heart is the center of the entire personality, and the initial "diagnosis" Jesus gives the heart is not very encouraging (Matt. 15:19).. And yet this is the "prerequisite for seeing God," (Carson) The Psalmist echoes the same thing "The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." (Ps. 24:3). - that is the person who can *ascend* the hill of the Lord - who can see and be with Him!

Blessed are the pure
in heart, for they will
see God. (5:8)



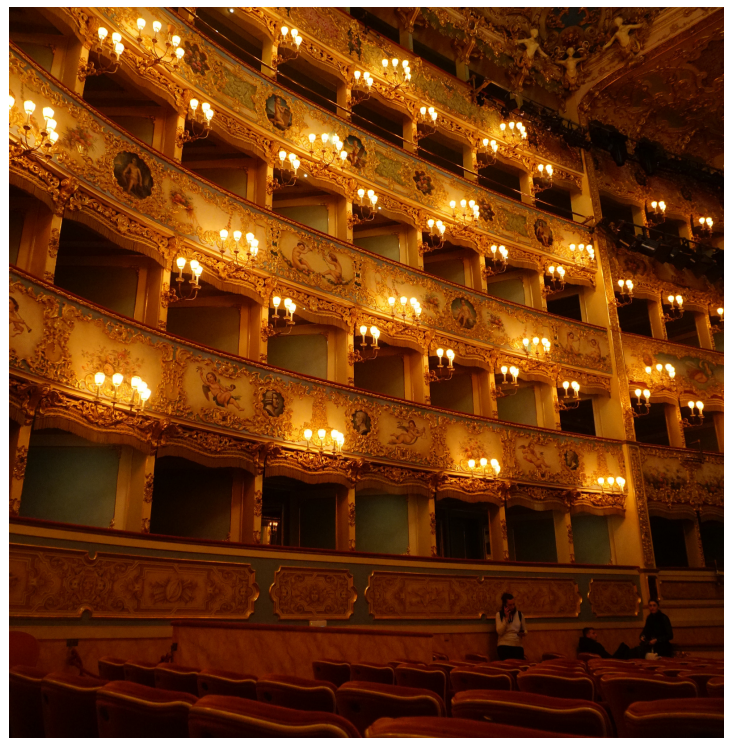
But back to our first question: When is it difficult for you to live out in your actions what you believe in your heart?" Stott asked. Purity of heart is not the same as following the rules outwardly. It's so much more - it focuses on the inward which impacts the moral, but takes the focus off of our outward acts. When Jesus calls the Pharisees "whitewashed tombs," this was a direct address of their dead hearts though their outward deeds looked clean. Where is your heart leading you? To the world for its approval, or to God? Is your heart "sincere" when it comes to loving and living for God?

One scholar asks: "What do you think about when your mind slips into neutral? How much sympathy do you have for deception, no matter how skillful? For shady humour, no matter how funny? What do you want more than anything else? What and whom do you love? Do your actions cover-up for what is in your heart?" These are important questions and we really do want to get to bottom of what our hearts desire. What in the depths of our hearts are we living for?

//PURE IN HEART//

James tells us about a double-minded person - basically someone who is not pure in heart, coming to God in prayer. When we come to God in prayer, we are entering into the presence of God, who sees and knows everything. So what should a double-minded person expect? James says, **"But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do."** (James 1:6-8, NLT). This is what it means to be double-minded - or even "double-hearted," the opposite of pure in heart. The definition of a "hypocrite." We may be able to hide the true intention of our hearts from one another, but we can't hide from God. And God knows what we are really asking of Him when we come to Him in prayer. With other things in the way, we won't see God and we won't really come to Him on His terms. We must be pure in heart - honest and authentic, but also, as it says in James, having faith in God alone and seeking Him over and above the things that this world offers us (riches, health, success, power, popularity).

Pure, unmixed motives for coming to Jesus isn't our default. We really have to come to God "poor in Spirit" and have the Holy Spirit alive in us for us to be able to properly seek God's kingdom and not all the other things of this world. So what about you - what are some of the distractions that keep you from being pure in heart - from having a single-mindedness about living for God rather than a double-mindedness? Come before God, honest, and open to His Spirit to change your heart, because you need Him and He is worth giving up all other desires for.



REFLECT. PRAY. ACT

Reflect:

1. Start with Prayer - Ask God to work in you to make you pure in heart and not double-minded.
2. Think of someone you know who you would describe as "pure in heart." What qualities do you see in them? (Stott)
3. What does sincerity do for relationships? How does insincerity destroy relationships? (Stott, *The Beatitudes*)

Pray: Open up your Bible to Psalm 24. (v. 1-6 specifically)

How does this psalm describe someone who is pure of heart? Pray for these things.

What, when, and how is God calling you to "seek His face"?

John Stott reminds us: "Only Jesus was absolutely pure in heart. Even the ideal person described in Psalm 24 must still be a sinner by nature." What from this passage helps you realize that a sinner can be pure in heart?

Pray for a singleness of mind and heart for God. Pray that all other things will pale in comparison for your longing to come before God with honesty, love, and humility. Pray that God would so capture your heart's longing that nothing else would ever take first place in your heart.

Act: Read God's Word. To have pure hearts, we need God's Word to be acting on us this week - "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Pray this for yourself and for your friends as you read God's Word. Pray that God would make your heart receptive to what He has to say and to desire the life He died for rather than the offer of the world.