PURE IN HEART

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I. Introduction

"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." (Romans 8:29)

II. Purity Defined

Purity is an orientation of the faith-filled heart that flees the pleasures of sin and pursues the pleasures of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. - Garrett Kell

A. Purity isn't a status. Purity is a pathway.

*"discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you, delivering you from the **way** of evil, from men of perverted speech, who forsake the **paths** of uprightness to walk in the **ways** of darkness, who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, men whose **paths** are crooked, and who are devious in their **ways**. So you will be delivered from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words," (Proverbs 2:11–16)*

B. Purity isn't a straight-jacket. Purity is freedom.

"Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin…So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:34, 36)

"Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God." (1 Peter 2:16)

"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." (Galatians 5:13)

C. Purity doesn't exist in a vacuum. Purity is affected by other sins and choices.

Indulging in sexual sin is often encouraged, preceded, or influenced by other sins of the flesh.

- Laziness (2 Sam. 11:1-2)
- Pleasure seeking (Prov. 5:3)
- Boredom
- Self-pity
- Anger
- Worldliness
- Unbelief
- Ungratefulness (Rom. 1:21-25)

D. Purity can't be pursued in isolation. Purity thrives in community.

"Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment." (Proverbs 18:1)

"The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out." (Proverbs 20:5)

E. Purity isn't self-generated or self-sustained. Purity is a gift from God.

"And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."" (1 Corinthians 1:30–31)

"Grant that I may never trust my heart, depend upon any past experiences, magnify any present resolutions, but be strong in the grace of Jesus; that I may know how to obtain relief from a guilty conscience without feeling reconciled to my imperfections." (*Valley of Vision*, "Self-Noughting")

F. Purity isn't the goal. Purity is a means to treasuring Christ and seeing God.

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

"For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:2–3)

A passion for sensual pleasure must be replaced by a greater passion. (Mt. 12:43-45)

III. A Caution

If you have no desire to pursue Christ, it's worth examining your spiritual state.

"But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." (Ephesians 5:3–5)

IV. Three Distinctions

A. God has delivered us from the **punishment** for our sins but not the **consequences** of our sins.

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace," (Ephesians 1:7)

What kind of forgiveness have we received?

1. Complete (Col. 2:13-15)
2. Final (Heb. 10:12)
3. Wholehearted (Heb. 12:2)
4. Undeserved (Titus 3:5)

"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having ***forgiven us all our trespasses,*** *by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him." (Colossians 2:13–15)*

We have been delivered from the eternal consequences of sin, but not necessarily the temporal consequences. We avoid them to our peril and to our pain. We welcome them for our joy and transformation.

- embarrassment and shame
- damaged relationships
- loss of trust or position
- imprisonment
- harm to God's people

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ***training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions****, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us* ***to redeem us from all lawlessness*** *and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." (Titus 2:11–14)*

God disciplines us not simply to make us stop sinning but to make us look, think, and act like Jesus.

"For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11)

B. God has delivered us from the **power** of sin and temptation but not the **presence** of sin and temptation.

"We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin." (Romans 6:6–7)

But we still have inner and outer enemies intent on our misery and destruction.

"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." (Romans 8:13)*

*"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.**" (Romans 13:14)*

C. God has delivered us from our **blindness** but not our **stupidity**.

"For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

But God hasn't delivered us from our stupidity. He hasn't removed the need for means, strategy, planning, effort, and wisdom in our battle against sin.

1. Purpose to feed your faith, not your flesh.
2. Know your peculiar temptations and guard against them.
3. Set a strong wall against temptation 1000 yards out, not 3 feet out.
4. Seek to confess as soon as possible in a way that is clear, complete, consistent, and sorrowful.
5. Envision sinning at the foot of the cross.
6. Pray consistently against sin and for a passion for Christ.

Give me discernment and resolve to see, hate, and flee from all temptation and sin that would bring dishonor to your name and harm to me and to those I love.

Give me perseverance and joy in pursuing eternal pleasures over temporary ones so that Jesus would be exalted in my life.