

Be Pure

Matthew 5:8

INTRODUCTION

There's something in the human heart that longs to see God.

*Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

What Does it Mean to Be "Pure in Heart"?

I want to suggest this simple definition: *To be holy on the inside.* Being pure in heart is more than an external purity, but rather an internal purity. A purity of the soul.

In Matthew 23:23-28, Jesus said to the religious leaders: ²⁵ *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! ...You appear to people as righteous but on the inside are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."*

The apostle John in the book of Revelation records these words of Jesus to the church in Sardis:

I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. (Revelation 3:1)

In other words, external piety without internal purity is dead.

There is No Intimacy Without Purity

Blessed are those who are pure in heart, *for they will see God.*

Now this actually introduces a difficult concept. Because on the one hand this seems to plainly promise that those who are pure in heart will see God, however, there are many other verses in the Bible that seem to point to the idea that no one can see God (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15-17; 1 John 4:12; Exodus 33:20; Deuteronomy 4:12).

So that's the one side. You can't see Him. He is invisible and holy. And we are tangible and sinful.

But then... you have these other verses like our main text for the day that seem to indicate that we CAN see Him. So which is it? Can we see God or not?

There are two principles that we see in both the Old and New testaments:

Principle #1—We cannot know God unless He reveals Himself to us (John 6:44).

Principle #2—Without holiness no one will see God (Hebrews 12:14b).

Why?

- Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2)
- Sin darkens our ability to truly know God (Romans 1:21; 2 Corinthians 4:4)
- Other related texts: Psalm 24:3-4; Psalm 15

But Who Can Be Pure in Heart?

But who can be pure in heart? Now here's the third principle:

Principle #3—God wants to be seen and known.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

And what is that eternal life? Jesus answered that question in John 17:3: ³*Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

How? Paul in his letter to the church in Rome teaches that now a righteousness from God, apart from the Law, has been made known (Romans 3:10-26). So, no one can see God and live—and yet... we will! Such is the purity that God has granted to us in Christ. We have become the very righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21)

And the apostle John would later write, that in light of this great hope, we purify ourselves (1 John 3:1-3)

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!... ³All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Above All Else Guard Your Heart

²³*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Proverbs 4:23*

SO...

- Never Stop Fighting Sin (Romans 6:15-16)
- Actively Love righteousness and Despise Wickedness (Psalm 101:1-4)
- Make a Strong Pledge Toward Righteousness (Job 31:1)
- Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; John 4:13-14)

CONCLUSION

“Are my hands clean? Is my heart pure?”—story of the Welsh revival