



Jenna van der Westhuizen shared a challenging word titled, **'Pursuit of a Pure Heart.'**

The most important thing to prepare for this year is your heart.

"Above all else guard your heart, for EVERYTHING you do flows from it." Pro 4v23

Three examples of things that are purified are: gold, oil and water. Gold and water are purified by heat. Oil is purified through crushing and external pressure. We need to stop running away from heat and pressure because there is so much in you that God wants to use.. God wants to extract the purest form of goodness out of you by developing a **pure heart** within.

What does a pure, refined heart look like?

Mark 2v1-12: Jesus looks at the Pharisees and asks: *'why are you thinking these things?'* There is no need to attempt to hide what is in your heart from Jesus. Jesus saw the malice in the hearts of the Pharisees, instead of love and compassion for others. **A pure heart looks like a heart that is undefiled by selfish intentions.**

Why do we want a pure heart?

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' Matt 5v8

This year we are after the face of God - to behold him and know him. We cannot look our Savior in the eye and not be changed. We look at him as one looking in the mirror and it changes us. We do this by:

1. Reading the word: Fill yourself with the word: reading about God and his love and who he is. The word is a seed we plant in our hearts that grows and comes alive. For a pure heart we need the word.

2. Rid yourself of offense: When offense is in your heart, it will come out of your mouth. Forgiving others is key to allowing God to develop a pure heart in us.

'Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!' Eze 18v31-32

3. Receive forgiveness: Before we can give forgiveness, we need to receive forgiveness, knowing that Jesus Christ paid the full price for us.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.' Heb 4v15

Reflection:

1. Ask God to search your heart and reveal any offense in your heart. Ask him to help you forgive.
2. What is a practical step you can take this week to allow God to develop a **pure heart** within you; one that is ready for 2024?