

Living the Beatitudes

The Beatitudes are. . .

- A beginners guide to the Kingdom of Heaven
- Christian counter-culture . . . the values of the Kingdom of Heaven
- A call to be different from the religious and irreligious
- Given for living this life now . . . this is how followers of Jesus are supposed to be and act

Matthew 5:8 - "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

- The reward for this kingdom quality . . . the privilege of seeing God
- Easiest beatitude to understand . . . maybe the most inaccessible
- The problem . . . we all have heart troubles

Jeremiah 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Proverbs 16:2 - All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD.

Matthew 15:16-19

"Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them."

Question 1) - What does it mean to be "pure in heart"?

In biblical imagery, the heart is the center of the entire personality. – D.A. Carson

Galatians 5:16-21

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Purity – not being polluted, contaminated, or mixed with adulterated ingredients.
Practicing personal piety, virtues and disciplines.

Psalms 42: 1-2

As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?

Luke 9: 23-24

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it."

Mark 12:29-30 – The Greatest Commandment

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

Purity – 100% pure, one ingredient only.

Purity of heart is to will one thing – Soren Kierkegaard.

Singlemindedness of life and purpose and longing.

Sloughing off the clutter and the distractions of the world to focus on God.

Pursuing holiness in our lives with intensity.

So, a pure heart is one that desires and pursues God above all other things.

Question 2) - What does it mean to "see God"?

1 John 3: 1-3

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

In the future, we will see him face to face, and we will be pure like Jesus.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

In the present, it is a sense of comprehending/understanding God.

Seeing him more clearly in the world.

Understanding the leading of the Holy Spirit, discerning God's will.

Tasting, experience the beauty and goodness of God.

Question 3) - How can we purify our hearts?

Hebrews 12:2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

Ephesians 6

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Hebrews 12: 14 - Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

1st Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Ideas to cultivate a pure heart:

- Fasting – from food, drink or other normal function of your life that tends to control you; unplug from TV, social media
- Meditation – on scripture; focusing on listening to God
- Solitude – planned retreats to step outside of your normal life routines to spend time with God
- Simplicity – give away some of your possessions; break away from materialism
- Service – going beyond ourselves to help others
- Confession – to one another to receive and experience the grace and forgiveness of God
- Prayer - for the fruits of the Spirit

Disciplines do not earn us favor with God or measure spiritual success. They are exercises which equip us to live fully and freely in the present reality of God — and God works with us, giving us grace as we learn and grow. **Renovare.org**

And finally, think of Paul . . .

Galatians 1:13-15

For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being.