

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – March 6, 2022

Theme: The Beatitudes

Topic: Blessed are the pure in heart – Growing in purity

Main Text: Ezekiel 36:25-26; Hebrews 12:12 -17 and Matthew 5:1-8

Key verse: Hebrews 12:14 – *“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord”* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: In the first part of the topic on purity of heart, we looked at the aspect of purity of heart which has to do with being single-minded in our devotion to God. In this second part of the topic, we look at growing in purity. In that first part, the point was made that the “heart” is the epicenter of our being - the very center of our emotions, thoughts, and essence. It is the spiritual center of life; and where thoughts, desires, sense of purpose, will, understanding, and character reside (Proverbs 4:23). Jesus said that what comes out of the mouth - evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander - proceeds from the heart; and is what defiles a man (Matthew 15:18-20). We had also acknowledged that to be “pure” means “not mixed or adulterated with any other substance or material, free of any contamination or wholesome and untainted by immorality.” So, to be pure in heart means to be free from defilements. In Matthew 5:8, Jesus is saying that the heart is a crucial component to human existence and in his relationship with God.

1. (a) Read Ezekiel 36:25-26; Hebrews 12:14-17 and identify the elements of a defiled human heart. (b) How did this defilement manifest in Esau’s life (Hebrew 12:16) and in the life of the Israelites in Ezekiel 36:25-27? (c) How do we see that impurity manifesting in the world today?

Esau’s impure heart resulted in his being described as godless (Hebrews 12: 16). This helps us understand that, when he readily sold his birthright for a bowl of soup, it was not a reflection of the level of his hunger or appetite for his brother’s red stew, but the state of his heart. In Ezekiel 36: 25 & 27, God also gives us an indication of what to expect from an unpurified heart – idolatry (verse 25), hearts that are stony, stubborn, and unresponsive to God (verse 26 NLT). And like the Bible tells us, no amount of outward purification can cleanse the heart. Yet purity is crucial in both our relationship with God and with our fellow man. That is why God says, *“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord”* (Hebrews 12:14 NKJV). Sadly, there is a lot working against purity – our own hearts and those of the world around us, make it quite difficult. No wonder God offers us the special blessing of seeing Him as motivation to pursue purity. *“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2 Corinthians 7:1 NKJV).

2. (a) Read Matthew 5:27-28 and James 1:13-15 and identify ways in which the believer can easily defile his/her heart. (b) What tips do Philippians 4:8 and Hebrews 12:12-17 offer in how a believer can successfully overcome these defiling factors? (c) Does the Church have any part to play in helping believers to maintain a pure heart; or is it solely the responsibility of individuals? Give reason(s) for your answer.

Indeed, without holiness, no one will see God. Esau wanted God’s blessing but didn’t want anything to do with God. So, *‘afterwards when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected...’* (Hebrews 12: 17 NIV). That is an example of what Jesus meant by *‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.’* Esau missed out on God, even when he sought it with tears! One may ask, is it possible to see God? Did Jesus really mean it that the pure in heart will see God? In Exodus 33:11-23, Moses asked to see God, but was told he could not see God. He had to make do with seeing God’s back. Yet in Matthew 5: 8, Jesus says that the pure in heart are blessed because they will “see God.” How then is this possible?

3. (a) In the light of Isaiah 59:2 and Psalm 32:1-2, how is Christ’s death and resurrection a blessing? (b) Read John 1:14,18; 14:9; Colossians 1:15, and 1 John 3:2-3. Discuss what it means to see God. (c) Let participants share one application they will make because of lessons from this study.

Prayer: Father, thank You for purifying my heart with the blood of Your Son, Jesus Christ. May the hope of seeing You face to face motivate me to earnestly pursue holiness. This I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.