

Pure in Heart

The Bible is our reference book for a happy and fulfilled life. Jesus said *Blessed (or happy) is the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matt. 5:6)*. I Peter 1:22b reads *---love one another fervently with a pure heart*. What does the Bible mean when it says to be pure in heart or to have a pure heart? And how do we acquire or develop a pure heart?

In a small book titled *Moments on the Mount*, written in 1963, Ralph Sweet says purity of heart is not simply the lack of sin and evil but the pure in heart are those whose lives are dominated by a love for people. Purity in heart leads one to see the best in people rather than their imperfections. The opposite of pure in heart is an attitude of suspicion and distrust. For example, purity in heart is exhibited by a father and mother who see the best in their children. Love for their children dominates their lives. On the other hand, a father and mother do not close their eyes to their children's shortcomings.

Teaching and ministering to the poor, the ignorant, addicts, and people with seemingly unsolvable personal problems requires a pure heart. Nevertheless, we must deal with any, and sometimes all, of these human conditions when we reach outside of the Lord's body. Sometimes we even face similar conditions with our weak brothers and sisters in Christ. It seems when people experience difficulties or when life's problems come crushing down upon them, they look to God for answers and help. This explains, in part, why we encounter these situations when we get involved in people's spiritual lives. Many times we need to be prepared to help them deal with addiction, marital, and personal problems along with sharing God's word.

A pure heart may be more difficult to develop and maintain than developing the skills necessary to deal with the addiction, marital, and domestic family problems. A person with a pure heart sees every human being as someone made in God's image – and to whom help is due and necessary.

Jesus said the pure in heart shall see God, implying there is closeness to God others do not experience. Perhaps the way we can develop a pure heart is found in James 4:8 – *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, double-minded.*

For the elders (Don Denton)