

Introduction

We are looking at the goal of love. The launch pad for this series is 1 Timothy 1:5, which says the “goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. In the first message, we looked at why we should have the goal of love. Love should be our goal because it is the greatest command, and second, because we represent God, and God is love. We also saw that love is greater than all the gifts. We are to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, but we are to pursue love.

(1 Ti 1:5) "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

In the second message we looked at understanding love, which is the goal. We saw that God's perfect agape love is intentional and sacrificial. John wrote that we know love by this, that Jesus laid His life down for us, so we should lay our lives down for one another.

(1 Jn 3:16) “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

We saw in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 that Paul gave fifteen different characteristics of love, so that we would have a better understanding of what agape love is. Love is patient, kind, and is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not arrogant, and it does not act unbecomingly. Love does not seek its own, and is not provoked, nor does it take into account a wrong suffered. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

(1 Co 13:4-7) “Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, {5} does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, {6} does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; {7} bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

This morning we will be looking at love that flows out of a pure heart. In the context of Paul's statement about the goal of their instruction was love, there were people in Ephesus who were teaching false or strange doctrines. They had strayed from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. When people have an impure heart, or a seared conscience, the teaching can be compromised, destructive, and harmful.

(1 Ti 1:3-6) "As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines... {5} But the goal of our instruction (*command or charge*) is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. {6} For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion."

The problem was not just an isolated incident in Ephesus. In Paul's letter to Titus, he said that he left him in Crete to set in order what remains. There were false teachers in Crete also, and they had left a path of destruction. Then Paul said, “for there are many rebellious men, empty talkers, and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.” Notice, they had impure motives; it was for the sake of sordid gain. When people do not have pure hearts and pure motives, their instruction may be corrupt and destructive.

(Tt 1:10–11) “For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, {11} who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain.”

Paul’s heart was pure; he had no selfish motives. He and his team were laying down their lives for the kingdom. Their desire was to see the kingdom of God established in the churches. The goal of their instruction was not money, power, control, or position; it was love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.

Today, we are going to define the heart. Many people do not understand what the scriptures are referring to when they use the word heart. In order to have the goal of love from a pure heart, we need to understand what the heart is, and how to have a pure heart. Second, we are going to look at the significance of having a pure heart. Third, we will look at how to gain a pure heart. Fourth, we will look at how to maintain a pure heart.

Love from a Pure Heart

1. Defining the Heart
2. Significance of a Pure Heart
3. Gaining a Pure Heart
4. Maintaining a Pure Heart

1. Defining the Heart

What is the heart that Paul is referring to? We know that the heart is the central organ in our body that pumps and supplies all the blood to all the body. It is a muscle that we need to keep in good shape. But what is the meaning of heart in Scripture?

The word for heart in the Old Testament is LEB and in the New Testament, it is KARDIA. Both words are almost identical in their meaning and usage. The word heart is used over 900 (955) times in Scripture and almost never is it used literally. The exception is in Exodus 28:29-30, which speaks of the breastplate of decision over the heart of Aaron.

A. The Heart Represents the Seat of our Affections.

The heart is regarded (as in the modern usage) as the seat of the affections. An example is in Psalms 62:10, which says that if riches increase, we are not to set our heart upon them. Heart is used as the seat of affections.

(Ps 62:10b) "If riches increase, do not set your heart upon them."

B. The Heart Represents the Seat of the Intellect.

The heart is also used as the seat of the intellect. In Genesis 6:5 it says, “every inclination of the thoughts of his heart.” Here, the word heart is speaking of the place where our thoughts come from, the seat of our intellect. In Luke 2:19, Mary treasured and pondered in her heart all the things that the shepherds had told her that the angel had told them.

(Ge 6:5) "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

(Lk 2:19) "But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart."

We find in Proverbs 6 that the plans of the heart belong to man; God gives us that responsibility. In Proverbs 16:9, Solomon wrote that the mind of man plans his way. We see that the heart and mind are used interchangeably.

(Pr 16:1) "The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD."

(Pr 16:9) "The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps."

We find that the heart is where beliefs are made. In Romans 10, Paul wrote that with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness. In Luke 24:25 Jesus said, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. The heart is where we form beliefs.

(Ro 10:10) "for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

(Lk 24:25) "And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!"

Our hearts are also where we gain understanding. When Solomon became king, he prayed that the Lord would give him an understanding heart to judge God's people, and to discern between good and evil. God gives wisdom and understanding, and He puts it in our hearts.

(1 Ki 3:9) "So give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Thine?"

C. The Heart Represents the Seat of the Will.

The heart is also used to speak of the seat of our will. We find in Hebrews 4:12, that the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword... and it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The heart is where we make our will or our intentions.

(He 4:12) "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

D. It Represents the Seat of Emotions.

Often the heart refers to the seat of our emotions or our innermost being. In Genesis 6, God saw the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Their will was set on evil, not on doing God's will. Then, we find that the Lord was grieved in His heart. Grieving is an emotion. We have been created in God's image, and just as His heart grieved, we can grieve in our hearts.

(Ge 6:5-6) "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. {6} The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart."

In Psalm 34, we find that the Lord is near to the brokenhearted. That is another emotion. When someone experiences a disappointment or loss, they can be brokenhearted. We find in Psalm 69 that David was broken in his heart because of reproach.

(Ps 34:18) "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

(Ps 69:20) "Reproach has broken my heart, and I am so sick. And I looked for sympathy, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none."

In Psalm 147, we see that God heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds. In Isaiah 61, which Jesus quoted in Luke 4, we read that the Spirit of the Lord God is upon us to bring good news to the afflicted and to bind up the brokenhearted. The good news is that God is near to the brokenhearted, and He heals and binds up their wounds.

(Ps 147:3) "He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds."

(Is 61:1) "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners;"

We find in Numbers 32 that our hearts can become discouraged. In this case, Joshua and Caleb gave good reports, but the ten other spies gave bad reports, and it discouraged the hearts of the sons of Israel, and they did not enter the Promised Land.

(Nu 32:7) ""Now why are you discouraging (the heart of) the sons of Israel from crossing over into the land which the LORD has given them?"

In 1 Samuel 17, David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of him, referring to Goliath. Our hearts can fail.

(1 Sa 17:32) "And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.""

Our hearts can also faint, become anxious, become fearful or tremble. In Genesis 45, Jacob's heart fainted. In Isaiah 21, his heart panted and fearfulness affrighted him. In Isaiah 35, God told him to tell those who had anxious hearts to "Take courage, fear not." Then, in Philippians, Paul exhorts us not to become anxious, but to pray with thanksgiving, and God will surround our hearts with peace that surpasses understanding.

(Ge 45:26) "And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not."

(Is 21:4) "My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me."

(Is 35:4) "Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you.""

Similarly, our hearts can be weighed down, or become heavy. Solomon wrote that anxiety in a heart of man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad. When I am in a stressful situation, I often will speak a good word to myself, and these are most often, promises out of God's word.

(Pr 12:25) "Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad."

In Proverbs 15, we find that a joyful heart makes a cheerful face. We also see that a cheerful heart has a continual feast. In Proverbs 17, we find that a joyful heart is good medicine. Since I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, I have tried to maintain a joyful heart, because it is good medicine.

(Pr 15:13) "A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken."

(Pr 15:15) "All the days of the afflicted are bad, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast."

(Pr 17:22) "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones."

E. The Heart Refers to the Character of a Person.

Sometimes the word heart is referring to the character of a person, whether good or bad. It is referring to his nature, character, or reputation. In Luke 8, in the parable of the soils, the good soil represented those with an honest and good heart. In Psalm 24, David wrote about those who could come into God's presence; it was those with clean hands and a pure heart.

(Lk 8:15) "And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."

(Ps 24:4) "He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, and has not sworn deceitfully."

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

(Mt 5:8) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Just as a pure heart refers to a righteous person, a wicked or deceitful heart can refer to an unrighteous person. In Jeremiah 17:9, the prophet wrote that the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick. He is not referring to the pure in heart that will see God; he is referring to those who do not know God.

(Je 17:9) "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?"

A person can have a forward heart, a proud heart, a perverse heart, a stubborn, rebellious, and wicked heart. In Jeremiah 5:23, he prophesied about those with a stubborn and rebellious heart. These are descriptions that speak to the character of the person.

(Je 5:23) "But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and departed."

F. The Heart Represents the Core, Center Or Middle

In Psalm 46:2 we are told that we should not fear even if the earth should change or the mountains slip into the heart of the sea. The heart of the sea means the middle of the sea. It is not talking about the coast, but into the depths of the sea.

(Ps 46:2) "Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea;"

2. The Significance of a Pure Heart

Paul says that the goal of his instruction comes from a pure heart. What is the significance of having a pure heart? We are going to take a look at some reasons why a pure heart is so significant.

A. To See God.

Jesus said in the sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." We want to see God. We want to enter into His presence. We want an intimacy with God. We desire fellowship with Him. If we are not pure in heart we are not going to see God.

(Mt 5:8) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

David says the same thing in Psalms 24. He asks a question about who can ascend the hill of the Lord. He asks who can stand in His holy place. The answer was those who had clean hands and a pure heart. In order to be in the presence of the Lord, we need a pure heart.

(Ps 24:3-4) "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? {4} He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, and has not sworn deceitfully."

B. To Teach Sound Doctrine.

We saw in the introduction that there were false teachers who were teaching for sordid gain. They had impure motives, and impure heart. The church needs leaders with pure hearts so that sound doctrine will be taught. This is why Paul wrote that the goal of their instruction was love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

(1 Ti 1:5) "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

C. For a Sincere Love of the Brethren

We are told in 1 Peter that we need to purify our hearts for a sincere love of the brethren. Without a pure heart, we cannot love our brothers and sisters in Christ like we are supposed to. If there is selfishness in our heart, we cannot love our brothers and sisters with agape love. Love is not selfish; therefore, we cannot sincerely love our brothers. If we are full of pride, we cannot love our brothers, because love is not arrogant. If we are impatient or unforgiving, we cannot sincerely love our brethren. We must have pure hearts in order to love our brothers.

(1 Pe 1:22) "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,"

D. For Stability in Life

We are told in James that if we lack wisdom, we are to ask from the Lord and He will give generously to us. If we ask with doubt, we are told that we are like the waves of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind, being unstable in all our ways, being double minded. A double minded man does not have a pure heart, resulting in an unstable life. The remedy for those who are double-minded is to purify their hearts.

(Jas 1:5-8) "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. {6} But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. {7} For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, {8} being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

(Jas 4:8) "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

E. For an Effective Prayer Life

James also tells us that the double-minded man should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. An impure heart will result in an ineffective prayer life. I am one that is for getting rid of any and all hindrances to my prayer life, including being double-minded. I want to get rid of all doubt, unbelief, bitterness, pride, and sin so that I will have an effective prayer life. I want this for all of you so that your prayers will be effective.

(Jas 1:7-8) "For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, {8} being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

Paul exhorts Timothy in his second letter to flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. If we are going to call on God and see God, we must come to Him with a pure heart.

(2 Ti 2:22) "Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

We find in Psalms 66:18 that when we regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not hear. God knows our thoughts and our words. He knows them before we say them, but He does not respond to those prayers, when we are unrepentant of sin in our lives. If we want to see God, we must come to God in repentance, and with a pure heart, so that He will hear and consider our requests.

(Ps 66:18) "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;"

F. To Keep from Defiling Yourself

Jesus taught the disciples in Matthew 15 about what defiles a man. He made it very clear that it is not what we eat that defiles a man. The Pharisees got mad that the disciples did not wash their hands before eating. Jesus gives them a very important Scriptural principle.

(Mt 15:11-20) "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.... {17} "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? {18} But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. {19} For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. {20} These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

Notice that it is the things which come out of the heart that defile a man. A man's words can defile him, and a man's thoughts can defile him. A man's actions can defile him. All these words, thoughts and actions begin inside the heart. It is important to keep our hearts pure so that we do not become defiled. You are fighting a losing battle when you constantly try to put out forest fires. You need to catch the arsonist that is setting them.

3. Gaining a Pure Heart

Now that we have defined the heart, and looked at the importance of having a pure heart, we will look at how to gain a pure heart. Why do I say gain a pure heart? It is because we are born with a heart problem. Jeremiah said that we have a stubborn and rebellious heart. He said it is more deceitful than all else and desperately sick. Paul wrote that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We are born in sin, and have a sinful heart,

(Je 5:23a) "But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart."

(Je 17:9) "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

(Ro 3:23) "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

For us to have a soft heart, rather than a hard, rebellious, and stubborn heart, we must be born again. For us to have a good pure heart, rather than an evil heart, something must change. The prophet Ezekiel wrote about this in chapter 11. He wrote about people coming to the Lord in repentance, and that the Lord would take out their heart of stone out and give them a heart of flesh. He said that God would put a new spirit within them. I believe this is a picture of what happens at salvation. God forgives us of our sins and He gives us His Holy Spirit. We are spiritually born again. We become His people; and He becomes our God. We enter into a covenant relationship with him.

(Ez 11:18-20) "When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. {19} "And I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them. And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, {20} that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God."

Notice that Ezekiel says that when they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. He is speaking about coming to God in repentance. There is not much said today about repentance, but when someone confesses Jesus as Lord, they are confessing that Jesus is the master and ruler of their life, and they are yielding and submitting their lives to the rule and reign of Jesus. I think that many people in the church go to church, but they have never yielded their lives to Christ. They have never come in repentance.

This principle of coming to God in repentance reverberates throughout the Bible. Jesus taught repentance as a pre-requisite of following Him. He told the rich young ruler to go sell his possessions, give to the poor, and then to come follow Him.

(Mt 19:21) "Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.""

Peter, when preaching at Pentecost, was asked, what shall we do. Peter responded by telling them to repent.

(Ac 2:37-38) "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" {38} And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

When we receive Christ, God forgives, sanctifies, and justifies us. In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul wrote about, saying, "but you were washed, but you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. We are washed of our sins, or forgiven of our sins. Second, we are sanctified, which means to be set apart or made holy. Third, we are justified, which means to be declared innocent. All of that happens when we place our faith in Christ and are born again.

(1 Co 6:11) "Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

Then, just as Ezekiel prophesied, God seals us with His Holy Spirit.

(Eph 1:13) "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,"

4. Maintaining a Pure Heart

A. Be Committed to the Process of Transformation

Once we have received Christ, there are several steps in maintaining a pure heart. The first step is to be committed to being transformed. Although we are declared righteous and sanctified, our lives may not reflect that. We may still have a mind full of worldly ways, thoughts, and ideas that need to be transformed. Paul wrote that if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation and that the old things have passed and new things have come. This is a process called sanctification or progressive sanctification. Positionally, we are holy or sanctified, but we need to work out our salvation. We need to continue to repent and purify our hearts.

(2 Co 5:17) "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

Paul taught in Romans 12, that we are not to be conformed to the world, but we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We have to renew our hearts and minds by filling it with God's word. We must fill our minds with the Word of God, and apply it in our lives "so that we can prove the will of God, that which is good, acceptable, and perfect." This is an ongoing process that will continue throughout our life in the flesh.

(Ro 12:2) "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

B. Continually Cleanse your Heart

The second step in maintaining a clean heart is to continually be cleansed of our sins. We must confess and repent of our sins before God, who forgives and cleanses our hearts. In 1 John 1:9, God tells us "if we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

(1 Jn 1:9) "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

When we confess our sins before God, we are agreeing with God that what we did was wrong, which is the first step in repentance. The Greek word for repent is *metanoia* (Strong's G3341), which means to do an about face. It is to change direction and go the other way. If we are lying; we start telling the truth. If we are stealing; we give back what we have stolen and stop stealing. We must do more than ask forgiveness for our sins; we must repent.

Notice what John the Baptist says to the Pharisees and Sadducees who were coming to him to be baptized. He says to bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance. A public action, like a baptism of repentance, should be confirmed by a change in behavior. This is what John is telling them.

(Mt 3:7-8) "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? {8} "Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance;"

C. Watch over your hearts

Third, we must watch over it with all diligence. We must be very careful what we allow into our hearts and minds. In the book of Proverbs, Solomon tells us to watch over our hearts with all diligence. The wisest man on earth knew some things. He knew that our heart was the key to our actions and words. Whatever a man put in his heart or allowed into his heart was going influence his actions. He says that from it flow the springs of life.

(Pr 4:23) "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life."

That is exactly what Paul is saying in 1 Timothy 1:5. Love is going to flow out of a pure heart. If the heart is not full of love, if the heart is not pure, then what flows or springs out of it will not be pure. Love cannot flow out of an impure heart. How are we to watch over our heart? What are some ways that we can do this?

Think in terms for a minute of the water that comes into your house. When we moved to Rome, Georgia, our builder suggested that we think about a whole house filter. The water quality in Rome has a lot of chlorine in it, which is not the best for your skin, or inner organs. Therefore, we need to have a good filter that will filter out the chlorine and other contaminants. In the same way, we cannot allow contaminants to come into our hearts, or our hearts will be impure. We must filter out the things that we allow to come into our hearts and minds. We must filter everything through the Word of God.

When we become a believer, we are not of the world, but we are still in the world. Paul exhorted us not to be conformed to the world, which is what we were before Christ. If we continue to feed our hearts with the things of the world, what comes out of the heart will be the things of the world. We must fill our minds with the Word of God, but we also need to filter out the things of the world, so that we do not have both sources filling our hearts. James calls that person a double-minded person. A double-minded person is trying to follow God and the world.

How do we filter out the things of the world with the Word of God? We filter everything by checking questioning it against Biblical principles. Does this TV show promote righteous living or is promoting promiscuous behavior? Are the people dressed appropriately and modestly? Is the theme and plot righteous? Is the language pure, or are there defiling words being used?

If we are in the grocery store line, and we see the magazine covers have scantily clad women, we should not continue to stare at the picture; we should turn away. We should remember the covenant that Job made with his eyes, that he would not gaze at a virgin.

(Job 31:1) "I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?"

If the conversation that you are in is not wholesome, then change the conversation, or leave. Don't participate and listen to unwholesome things. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, Paul tells us to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. We have to run every thought through the word, and if it does not line up with God's Word and principles, we don't allow that thought to continue; we replace it with thoughts that are true, honorable, righteous, pure, excellent, of good repute, and worthy of praise. Watching over our heart means that we are not going to allow impurities to keep flowing into our hearts.

(2 Co 10:5) "*We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,"

In Psalm 119:9-11, we find that a young man keeps his way pure by keeping it according to God's word. Then, it goes on to say in verse 11, "Thy word I have hid in my heart that I may not sin against Thee." It is critical that we obey the word of God. The Scriptures promise that we can keep our way pure if we will keep it according to God's word.

(Ps 119:9, 11) "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word.... Thy word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee."

The only way that we can keep our way according to the word is to meditate on the word day and night. Joshua 1:8 says, "This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it, for then you shall make your way prosperous and then you will have success." When we meditate on the word of God day and night, when we run everything in our life day and night through this filter of God's word, we can be assured that our hearts will stay pure.

(Jos 1:8) "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."

In Proverbs 4, when the Lord tells us to watch over our hearts with all diligence, He prefaced that by saying to give attention to His words, to incline our ears to His sayings, and not to let them

depart from our sight. We are to keep them in the midst of our heart. It will bring life and health to our whole body. We are given the primary way that we are to watch over our hearts before we are given the command to watch over our hearts.

(Prov 4:20-23) "My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. {21} Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart. {22} For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their whole body. {23} Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life."

Conclusion and Applications

Today, I hope that you have first of all been given a better understanding of the heart. If we are going to love the Lord with all our heart, we have to know what that means. It has also been my goal you to see and understand what the heart is, and how to have a pure heart. It is vitally important in our relationship with God, with others, and for an effective ministry to others,

It has also been my intention to give some understanding about how to gain and maintain a pure heart. This morning, the Holy Spirit may have convicted you of some impurities in your heart that have not been cleared up. You may have a need to be cleansed again. You need to confess to the Lord and to others your sins. You need to repent and forsake your sins. You need to install some filters in your life so that the water springing up out of your heart is pure.

There may be someone today listening or watching and you have never received Christ into your heart. He has been drawing you to Himself. God is wanting to take out the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. He is wanting to give you His Holy Spirit. God is wanting to forgive you and cleanse you from all sin. If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died for our sins, and was raised from the dead, you simply need to yield your life to Him and confess Him as Your Lord. I encourage you to pray right now, and tell Him that You want to turn your life over to Him and make Him your Lord. You can pray something like this:

Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God and that You died for our sins and were raised from the dead. I ask You to come into my life and to forgive me of my sins. I submit my life to You, and confess You as my Lord. I want to follow You with all my heart, and live my life for You. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for giving us Scripture. Thank You for giving us understanding of Scripture, and in particular today, an understanding of our hearts. Lord, we want to have pure hearts, and we want everything that we do to be done in love out of a pure heart. Help us to maintain a pure heart. Help us to fill our minds with Your Word. Help us to know Your Word and to filter everything that we see and hear through Your Word. Holy Spirit, help us to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and to carefully watch over our hearts with all diligence. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- What is the difference between our hearts and our souls?
- Why is it important to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength?
- What are things that you have found helpful in renewing your mind and being transformed?
- Why is it critical for leaders and pastors to have pure hearts?
- According to James 3:1, what happens when they err in their teaching?
- Why is it important for us to have a pure heart to be effective in our prayers?
- What are some things that you do to maintain a pure heart?

Love from a Pure Heart

Introduction (1 Ti 1:3-6, 1 Jn 3:16, 1 Co 13:4-7, Tt 1:10-11)

1. Defining the Heart

- A. The Heart Represents the Seat of our Affections. (Ps 62:10b)
- B. The Heart Represents the Seat of the Intellect. (Ge 6:5, Lk 2:19, Pr 16:1, 16:9, Ro 10:10, Lk 24:25, 1 Ki 3:9)
- C. The Heart Represents the Seat of the Will. (He 4:12)
- D. It Represents the Seat of Emotions. (Ge 6:5-6, Ps 34:18, Ps 69:20, 147:3, Is 61:1, Nu 32:7-9, 1 Sa 17:32, Ge 45:26, Is 21:4, 35:4, Pr 12:25, 15:13, 15:15, 17:22)
- E. The Heart Refers to the Character of a Person. (Lk 8:15, Ps 24:4, Mt 5:8, Je 5:23, 17:9)
- F. The Heart Represents the Core, Center or Middle. (Ps 46:2)

2. The Significance of a Pure Heart

- A. To See God (Mt 5:8, Ps 24:3-4)
- B. To Teach Sound Doctrine. (1 Ti 1:5)
- C. For a Sincere Love of the Brethren (1 Pe 1:22)
- D. For Stability in Life (Jas 1:5-8, 4:8)
- E. For an Effective Prayer Life (Jas 1:7-8, 2 Ti 2:22, Ps 66:18)
- F. To Keep from Defiling Yourself (Mt 15:11-20)

3. Gaining a Pure Heart (Je 5:23a, 17:9, Ro 3:23, Ez 11:18-20, Mt 19:21, Ac 2:37-38, 1 Co 6:11, Eph 1:13)

4. Maintaining a Pure Heart

- A. Be committed to the process of transformation (2 Co 5:17, Ro 12:2)
- B. Continually cleanse your heart (1 Jn 1:9, Mt 3:7-8)
- C. Watch over your heart (Pr 4:20-23, Job 31:1, 2 Co 10:5, Ps 119:9, 11, Jos 1:8)

Conclusion and Applications