

BE PURE – READING

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8.

The Jews were so exacting in regard to ceremonial purity that their regulations were extremely burdensome. Their minds were occupied with rules and restrictions and the fear of outward defilement, and they did not perceive the stain that selfishness and malice impart to the soul.

Jesus does not mention this ceremonial purity as one of the conditions of entering into His kingdom, but points out the need of purity of heart. The wisdom that is from above “is first pure.” James 3:17. Into the city of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there will here have become pure in heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste [Page 25] for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner.

But the words of Jesus, “Blessed are the pure in heart,” have a deeper meaning--not merely pure in the sense in which the world understands purity, free from that which is sensual, pure from lust, but true in the hidden purposes and motives of the soul, free from pride and self-seeking, humble, unselfish, childlike.

Only like can appreciate like. Unless you accept in your own life the principle of self-sacrificing love, which is the principle of His character, you cannot know God. The heart that is deceived by Satan, looks upon God as a tyrannical, relentless being; the selfish characteristics of humanity, even of Satan himself, are attributed to the loving Creator. “Thou thoughtest,” He says, “that I was altogether such an one as thyself.” Psalm 50:21. His providences are interpreted as the expression of an arbitrary, vindictive nature. So with the Bible, the treasure house of the riches of His grace. The glory of its truths, that are as high as heaven and compass eternity, is undiscerned. To the great mass of mankind, Christ Himself is “as a root out of a dry ground,” and they see in Him “no beauty that” they “should desire Him.” Isaiah 53:2. When Jesus was among men, the revelation of God in humanity, the scribes and Pharisees declared to Him, “Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil.” John 8:48. Even His disciples were so blinded by the selfishness of their hearts that they were slow to understand Him who had come to manifest to them the Father's love. This [Page 26] was why Jesus walked in solitude in the midst of men. He was understood fully in heaven alone.

When Christ shall come in His glory, the wicked cannot endure to behold Him. The light of His presence, which is life to those who love Him, is death to the ungodly. The expectation of His coming is to them a “fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” Hebrews 10:27. When He shall appear, they will pray to be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.

But to hearts that have become purified through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, all is changed. These can know God. Moses was hid in the cleft of the rock when the glory of the Lord was revealed to him; and it is when we are hid in Christ that we behold the love of God.

“He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the King shall be his friend.” Proverbs 22:11. By faith we behold Him here and now. In our daily experience we discern His goodness and compassion in the manifestation of His providence. We recognize Him in the character of His Son. The Holy Spirit takes the truth concerning God and Him whom He hath sent, and opens it to the understanding and to the heart. The pure in heart see God in a new and endearing relation, as their Redeemer; and while they discern the purity and loveliness of His character, they long to reflect His image. They see Him as a Father longing to embrace a repenting son, and their hearts are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The pure in heart discern the Creator in the works **[Page 27]** of His mighty hand, in the things of beauty that comprise the universe. In His written word they read in clearer lines the revelation of His mercy, His goodness, and His grace. The truths that are hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed to babes. The beauty and preciousness of truth, which are undiscerned by the worldly-wise, are constantly unfolding to those who have a trusting, childlike desire to know and to do the will of God. We discern the truth by becoming, ourselves, partakers of the divine nature.

The pure in heart live as in the visible presence of God during the time He apportions them in this world. And they will also see Him face to face in the future, immortal state, as did Adam when he walked and talked with God in Eden. “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.” 1 Corinthians 13:12.¹

¹ Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association), 24-27.

BE PURE – STUDY GUIDE

1. Have you ever smoked?
2. Have you ever been in a situation where breathing cigarette smoke was unavoidable?
3. Describe your response to the situation.

4. What do you believe to be the current state of the air we breathe?

5. The minds of the Jews were so occupied with these two things that they were blinded to what? {MB 24.2}

6. “In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing _____ for _____, _____, and _____.” Give some 21st century examples of these three things. {MB 24.3}

7. In what way does the world’s concept of purity differ from Christ’s concept of purity? {MB 25.1}

8. According to the author, what principle must you accept in order to know God? {MB 25.2}

9. The author makes a distinction between the way the wicked and righteous hide. Read Exodus 33:21-23 and Revelation 6:15-17; note the differences and similarities and be prepared to discuss. {MB 26.1-26.2}

10. The author gives two last characteristics of the pure in heart; what are they? {MB 26.4-27.1}

Moment of Reflection: Is there any unconfessed sin in your life? Is there any bitterness, resentment, or anger toward others that you need to leave before God? Is there any vice or an addiction that won't let you go? Ask God for: the courage to confess, a forgiving spirit, and the power of the Holy Spirit to remove these things from your heart.

BE PURE – MY NOTES
