

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Pure Motives

Matthew 5:8

¹ Matthew, chapter 5, verse 8, tells you about a character trait God wants to develop in you called a pure motive. ² It reads, **Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.** ³

I. What Does This Mean?

What does this mean? ⁴

The word **pure** ¹ literally means to have physically clean hands. ⁵ Later, the word was used to describe corn that needed to be chucked. ⁶ Then, it referred to an army that had been purged of inefficiency, cowardliness and soldiers who were unwilling to fight.

² ⁷ The Lord's pruning of Gideon's army is a good

¹ καθαρός.

² Judges 7:1-8 - Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.' " So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go." So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." Three

example. ⁸ Then, it referred to metal that had all of its impurities burned out of it. ⁹

Heart ³ here is the physical blood pumper we all have inside of us. ¹⁰ Used in the Bible though, it refers also to the seat of your emotions apart from your intellect. ¹¹ The implication, then, is your whole inner being. ¹²

So, being pure in heart means to have your motives, the intentions of your heart, absolutely genuine! ¹³

II. How Easy is It to Keep Pure Motives?

How easy is it to keep pure motives? ¹⁴

Let me remind you of abuses from very notable Christian leaders in the past. ¹⁵ I believe these people were originally well intentioned but got caught up in

hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

³ καρδία.

their own fame. At the time their fall became very newsworthy to the secular press! ¹⁶

The first was Jim Jones and the Peoples' Temple. The ministry started in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1954. He joined the Disciples of Christ churches in 1960. The Peoples' Temple in San Francisco, California, where he was the pastor, eventually grew to over three thousand members.

The church's benevolent ministry included homeless shelters, soup kitchens, daycare centers, homes for the elderly and foster children. They even provided a forty-acre ranch to raise disabled children. This sounds like the Lord was blessing a very fruitful ministry!

Then, 913 members of the church moved to property they purchased and called Jonestown in Guyana, South America. It was a Christian community in a tropical paradise!

In 1978 media reports surfaced of human rights abuses in Jonestown. On November 18th, when Congressman Leo Ryan was sent to investigate, he, and four members of his delegation, were murdered! Then, the total community committed mass suicide! ¹⁷

The second illustration was Jim and Tammy Bakker and the PTL Television Ministry. Jim and Tammy joined Pat Robertson and the 700 Club in 1966. They started the “Jim and Tammy Show” and published the “Davey and Goliath” television show for children.

When they left the 700 Club to branch out on their own, they became known for preaching “Prosperity Theology”. That’s the concept that if you give sacrificially to the Lord’s ministry, He will make you financially wealthy. In 1980, they built Heritage USA, the third most successful theme park in the United States.

Then, in 1987, sexual and financial scandals sent Jim to prison! ¹⁸

The final illustration I want to use is Jimmy Swaggart and the Jimmy Swaggart Ministries. Again, this became a highly successful ministry! Jimmy founded a four-thousand-member Pentecostal church, a Christian publishing company, a television station and a recording studio. In 1984 he built World Evangelism College and Seminary. During this time he preached sexual purity and living holy lives. In fact, he was the one who exposed Jim Bakker's sexual immorality on the Larry King Show in 1987!

In 1988, on the occasion of being found with a prostitute in a Louisiana hotel, he confessed his now famous prayer, "I have sinned against You, my Lord, and I would ask that Your precious blood would wash and cleanse every stain until it is in the seas of God's forgiveness!" The prostitute, however, admitted he was a regular customer! ¹⁹

Were all of these people just a bunch of hypocritical, money-hungry individuals who were out to fleece the innocent flock? Probably not! These were the

temptations of wealth, popularity and power overcoming the weak, sinful flesh we all have! They got caught up in these temptations and yielded to them. ²⁰ I believe these people were originally well-intentioned servants of the Lord who got their focus off Him and onto themselves! ²¹

What about your motives? Are they always pure and genuine? ²² When you give generously to the church do you secretly hope someone will discover it so you will look good?

An event occurred in the Bible that aptly illustrates this attitude. One of the early disciples sold his property and gave the entire proceeds to the benevolent ministry of the church. Barnabas apparently became extremely popular for doing this. ⁴ So, a husband and wife also sold their property and gave money to this ministry. However, they kept back some of the money, indicating that they had actually given it all. The temptation to have the same

⁴ Acts 4:36.

popularity Barnabas received was too much for them. They received a terrible consequence for their lies! ⁵

Have you ever given completely anonymously so no one would know except the Lord? ²³ Is your work in the church for the Lord or your own prestige? ²⁴

III. How Does the Pure in Heart See God?

How does the pure in heart see God? ²⁵ **Not like some Bible people saw God.** ²⁶

Abraham saw God in the form of three men who told him about Isaac's birth. ⁶ ²⁷ Jacob wrestled with God! ⁷

⁵ Acts 5:1-6 - Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God." When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

⁶ Genesis 18:1-15.

⁷ Genesis 32:24-30.

28 Job saw God in the storm.⁸ 29 Moses saw God in the form of a fiery bush!⁹ 30

At the Lord's Second Coming we will all actually see Him! First Thessalonians, chapter 4, verses 15 through 17 says, **According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.** 31

James tells us, Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made

⁸ Job 38:1ff.

⁹ Exodus 3:1-4.

known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.¹⁰ 32

But how about in this life?

Those who are genuine in their faith will see God more clearly. It is a matter of perspective!

You look into the sky, and you see the stars. A navigator could navigate a ship by those stars and an astronomer could name them. You go into an art gallery and see a bunch of paintings. My friend, Bill Barker, a professional artist, could go in and tell you what each of them was worth! Those who are genuine in their faith will see God more clearly than those who aren't! 33

God wants to develop within you unmixed motives, a genuineness before God and others. 34

As this maturity in Christ develops, God's promise is you will see Him clearer and clearer!

<http://www.biblelifemessages.org>

¹⁰ James 3:2.