

**Russell Kelfer**

**The Pure  
in Heart:  
What is  
the Heart?**

**536-A**

**Series: The Beatitudes**

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Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

# The Pure in Heart

## What is the Heart?

This lesson begins with the sixth Beatitude, found in Matthew 5. I have avoided this Beatitude for as long as possible because of its propensity to convict. It goes like this,

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

(Matthew 5:8)

It is as though God has been handing to us a series of packages to open. On the front of each package it says: Happiness Is. The first package, you recall, said: "Happiness is Poverty of Spirit". We unwrapped it and looked inside. As we did this, we saw a picture of God and we were humbled. As we opened the second package, it said: "Happiness is Mourning." We unwrapped it, and inside we saw a picture of the sins of the world. We were broken. Opening the third package, we saw that "Happiness is Meekness." Enclosed was a picture of a gentle spirit. We were convicted. The fourth package said: "Happiness is to Hunger and Thirst After Righteousness". We were motivated to pray. As we opened the fifth package we saw that "Happiness is Mercy". We looked inside, and there was a picture of a world full of needs, needs for compassion. We were moved to get involved.

It is as though God were saying to us at this point, "You have seen Me, and you have seen what you should become. Now open this box and see yourself." As we open the sixth package, we see that "Happiness is A Pure Heart". As we open the package and lift out its contents, we see a heart-shaped mirror. Lo and behold, when we look into that mirror, we are mortified with what we see, because it is our own hearts.

Another way to put it is that the Beatitudes are God's "Heart Attitudes". To be poor in spirit is to teach us humility of heart. To mourn is to teach us tenderness of heart. To be meek is to teach us responsiveness of the heart. To hunger and thirst is to teach us hunger of the heart. To be merciful is to teach us to

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exercise the heart. To be a peacemaker is to teach us uniting of the heart. To be persecuted is to teach us testing of the heart. But in the center there is to be a pure heart which teaches us the motivation of the heart.

In other words, what God is saying to you and to me is, “How would you like a God’s-eye view of yourself? How would you like to see yourself like God sees you? Would you like to look realistically at who you are and where you are in the Christian life?” God says, “This is what I am looking for. I’m looking for a transparent, holy life to reveal Myself through. I’m looking for a man or a woman with a pure heart. When I look down at you, I’m not impressed with your spiritual accomplishments unless they come from a pure heart. I’m not overwhelmed with the awe that others might have of your ministry, unless that ministry emanates from a pure heart.”

In a familiar passage in I Samuel, God explains how it works. Samuel had been commissioned by God to appoint a new king. Using human standards, he chose Eliab first and said, “Surely this is the one.” He had to go on down the line as God told him that was not the one.

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees;[a] for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”  
(I Samuel 16:7 NKJV)

It literally says that we are not to be impressed by how someone looks. We are not to be impressed by what someone can do. God looked at Eliab and was disappointed. God doesn’t look for the same things we do. Man looks at appearance and behavior, but God looks at the motives of the heart. That is what we must do in these next few lessons. We may feel the need to cry out for mercy at the end of them. The result, if we are sensitive, ought to be a spirit of deep soul searching. It could be a revival if you don’t mind the use of the word. It could result in a change of heart.

What is the heart? I suppose if I were to ask everyone, starting with the theologically elite right down to the humble listener, I would assume that most of you would say, “Well, the heart is...” You would go off into what you would consider the

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heart to be. Out of 200 people we would probably come up with about 125 different answers. But if the heart is what God sees when He looks at us, we had better be sure what it is. We had better be sure what it is He sees. In Proverbs we read,

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.  
(Proverbs 4:23 NKJV)

In other words, that's where the issues of life are.

What, spiritually speaking, is the heart? There seem to be around 550 references in Scripture to the heart of man. Less than two percent of them have to do with the pumper, the physical heart. The heart is the most commonly used, powerfully charged expression used by God to express what it is in man that God is interested in. Religion and even modern Christianity, to a large degree, have missed the point entirely. It is the heart of man that God is after. When the heart is right, everything else follows suit.

What is the heart? Some more excitable Christians will answer that the heart is the seat of man's emotions. You can even look at some commentaries, and that is the description you will get. They will quote from Proverbs and I Peter.

Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful.  
(Proverbs 14:13)

love one another fervently with a pure heart,  
(I Peter 1:22 NKJV)

In II Samuel 6:16 we read,

...Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.  
(II Samuel 6:16 NKJV)

In these three verses you see sorrow, love and hate which are emotions that spring from the heart.

There are others who are more doctrinally oriented and will say this is not true. If you read their writings, they will say that the heart is the mind of man, his thinker. They will quote verses such as Hebrews,

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a

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discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

(Hebrews 4:12 NKJV)

Thoughts and intents, they say, is exercise of the mind that defines the heart. But then along come the doers of the crowd and they say, "Yes, but the heart of the man is his will, what he chooses to do." They will quote from Romans 10 and II Corinthians,

For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

(Romans 10:10 NKJV)

So let each one give as he purposes in his heart,

(II Corinthians 9:7 NKJV)

They will say that these are choices, so that it is an exercise of the will that defines the heart.

The truth of the matter is that they are all correct. Your heart is your soul with all the veneer stripped away. It is the secret, inner chamber of your soul where the real you lives. Just like the physical heart is the seat or the center of physical life, your soul is the heart of man. It includes your mind. It is what you *really* think when you think it will never be known. It includes your emotions, and how you *really* feel about God.

I don't care about the smile you paint on your face, do you *really* feel in your heart that God is unfair to put you in the situation you are in? If so, that's how you feel about God in your heart. This is what God sees in your heart about your feelings. No matter what kind of saccharine, "sweet" smile we might paint on yourselves, how we feel in our hearts is what God sees.

The heart, also, includes your will. What would you really like to do if there were no restraints and no consequences? If nobody ever knew and if there were no consequences, what would you do with your life? "That's what you *do*," Jesus said, "in your heart." The heart is you. Remember that is what God looks at when He looks at us. He's not even awed by our legalistic accomplishments. He is not awed by the external manifestations of faith. The only thing that impresses God is a pure heart.

On the surface, it seems like God is teasing us when He tells us in Jeremiah,

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“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV)

The word “deceitful” means it is the most unreliable communicator you have. “Desperately wicked” when traced back in a concordance means terminally evil without hope of recovery. “Who can know it?” means it is impossible to find this out. So the heart of man is the most unreliable thing he has. It is terminally evil, and it is impossible to understand. It goes on to say,

I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind,  
(Jeremiah 17:10 NKJV)

Not only is the heart of man crafty and terminally diseased with evil, its evil manifests itself sooner or later in the life. Matthew 12 says:

Brood of vipers! *(that’s a nice way to start a phrase)* How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. (Matthew 12:34,35 NKJV)

This is why Jesus so devastatingly stripped away the veneer on the Sermon on the Mount. He looked down on these pious saints who were commanding everyone, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Jesus said, “If you look at a woman with lust in your heart, you have already committed adultery with her in your heart.” The real you is guilty? He looked down at these religious big wheels who condemned violence. Jesus asked, “Do you hate your brother? If so, you have committed murder in your heart.” This is the real you.

The question to ask is, “Is God playing games with us”? Is He calling on you and on me to have a pure heart and to acknowledge that our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked?” No, God isn’t in the game playing business. He never teases His saints. That’s the reason when you ask Jesus to save you, you ask Him to come into your heart. Now this heart that is deceitful and desperately wicked has hope because in a corner of it at least, there lives the living Son of God. Anytime someone tells you, “I’ve had an experience and all at once I have

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a pure heart,” scratch them off your list, because they have just proved how deceitful the heart really is. While they were telling you they had a pure heart, they were lying. We see this in I John 1:8 which says,

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (There’s that word “deceive” again.)  
(I John 1:8 NKJV)

The heart of the Christian is designed to be progressively cleansed and continually changed so that as you progress in your Christian experience, the purity of your heart should manifest itself in a larger and larger and larger percentage of your inner man. It is possible to progressively develop a pure heart. When you do, three things will happen.

### Change 1- It will change your entire view of life.

To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. (Titus 1:15 NKJV)

### Change 2- It will determine your ability to see God.

Blessed are the pure in heart, they are the ones who have the vision to see God. (Matthew 5:8 paraphrased)

I don’t know how many of us are driving a car with a dirty windshield that we haven’t bother to get cleaned. It is difficult to find a gasoline station with all of the equipment and soapy water needed to clean a windshield. Even when we do, most of us don’t want to get our little pinkies dirty. We drive in and we drive out and hope that it will rain. So we continue driving along, looking through a dirty windshield. When it is raining, we turn on the windshield wipers and can see pretty well. Then the rain stops, and all of the dirt hardens on the windshield again. We are still trying to look around those big splotches. We say to ourselves, “It is a messy world out there.” The sun has come out. The flowers are blooming. It is dry. It is a beautiful day. But we are looking through a mess of a windshield and can’t even see it. This is an example of what it means for the pure in heart to see God progressively. The purer your heart, the greater your vision of God.

Change 3- It will determine your godliness. The more you see of God, the more pure your heart becomes. The more you



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see of God, the more Godlike you become. You may ask, “How do you know that?”

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, (*why?*) for we shall see Him as He is. (I John 3:2 NKJV)

The more of Him we see, the more like Him we become. John goes on,

And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (I John 3:3 NKJV)

So we have concluded three things:

1) The heart of man is the real man. This is what God sees when He looks at you and at me.

2) The heart is so deceptive in nature, that apart from God and His Word, we would be so self-deceived that we would never really know how impure we are. That is why we need the Word of God which is able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

3) It is possible to have the heart changed and to become progressively like God. All we need is a pure heart.

What is a pure heart? We now realize that the heart is the “real” us. It is what we think in our minds, what we feel in our emotions, and what we decide in our will apart from any external effects. That’s us. That’s the heart of man. But what is a pure heart? The word “pure” can be defined by taking the root word and doing some digging. We can find five shades of meaning. The whole idea is that we need to understand that the word “pure” has five connotations. In those five connotations there are literally five evidences of a pure life. They are horribly convicting as we consider the chart.

| <b>To be pure is to be:</b>      | <b>Evidence of a pure heart:</b> | <b>It literally means:</b>                                |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1- Free from external adornment. | A transparent life               | Increased sensitivity to hypocrisy with an eye to change. |

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| <b>To be pure is to be:</b>                        | <b>Evidence of a pure heart:</b> | <b>It literally means:</b>   |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| 2- Free from a mixture which diminishes value.     | Clear motives                    | Increased sensitivity to heart motivation with an eye to change.   |
| 3- Free from restriction that prevents usefulness. | A clear conscience               | Increased sensitivity over having grieved either the heart of man or the heart of God.   |
| 4- Free from useless stain or color.               | Singleness of purpose            | Increased sensitivity to compromise or double-mindedness.  |
| 5- Free from that which decays or corrupts.        | Moral purity in the thought life | Increased sensitivity to holiness and increasing faithfulness in rejecting immorality until it becomes disgustingly objectionable. |

1- To be pure is to be free from external adornment. It is the difference between having a Timex watch and then trying to change it by putting a Seiko face on the front of it. The first evidence of it is a transparent life. This literally means an increased sensitivity to hypocrisy with an eye to change. The man with a pure heart cannot stand to be hypocritical in and of himself.

2- To be pure is to be free from a mixture which diminishes value. The evidence is clear motives. This means increased sensitivity to heart motivation with an eye to change.

3- To be pure is to be free from restriction that prevents usefulness. God's evidence of a pure heart is a clear conscience. This literally means an increased sensitivity over having grieved either the heart of man or the heart of God.

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4- To be pure is to be free from useless stain or color. The evidence is singleness of purpose. This literally means an increased sensitivity to compromise or double-mindedness.

5- To be pure is to be free from that which decays or corrupts. The evidence is moral purity in the thought life. It means an increased sensitivity to holiness and increasing faithfulness in rejecting immorality until it becomes disgustingly objectionable.

What are the five evidences of a pure heart? They are a transparent life, clear motives, a clear conscience, singleness of purpose, and moral purity in the thought life.

Evidence 1- A pure heart has a transparent life. It is a life free from playacting or pretending to be someone we are not. To a degree, this is symptomatic of all five, but it must be dealt with separately. The two kinds are as follows:

1) There are those who pretend to be less of a sinner than they really are. Their goal is self-exaltation. They leave the Bible out on the coffee table hoping that the people who come into their home consider them to be spiritual when in reality they haven't opened the Bible in days. The goal of the heart is self-exaltation. They want others to think they are somebody they are not.

2) These pretend to be more of a sinner than they really are. Their goal is self-preservation. When they are in a group and are asked, "What do you think of this movie?" They know in their hearts that it was rotten to the core morally, but they don't want to say a word, because they don't want to be a square. That's hypocrisy, too.

Look at Jesus as He dealt with the woman at the well. Look at Jesus when He dealt with the woman found in adultery. Then look at Jesus as He dealt with the scribes and Pharisees. When you compare the difference, you will find out how God feels about hypocrisy. He said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrite!" Look at how God dealt with Ananias and Sapphira. The problem was not the money, the problem was that they were hypocrites. They were pretending to be doing something they were not doing. In the next lesson, we will see God's gallery of hypocrites. Hopefully, there will be no one you know.

Turn to Matthew 23. We will look at this entire passage more

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closely in the next lesson, but for now, we will look at only verses 25-28 to get a picture of a hypocrite in the Amplified Version.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, pretenders-hypocrites! for you clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion-prey, spoil, plunder-and grasping self-indulgence. You blind Pharisees! First clean the inside of the cup and of the plate, so that the outside may be clean also. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees-pretenders, hypocrites! for you are like tombs that have been whitewashed, which look beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and everything impure.

(Matthew 23:25-28 Amplified Bible)

I think the thing we need to realize is that we are hypocrites when we put our Bible packet on our desk so that the people coming in think that we are memorizing Scripture, when in reality we haven't looked at it in a week. We are hypocrites when in our conversation we casually ease up and say, "Well the Lord told me," with the emphasis on the "me." I was trying to define what a hypocrite was in my mind, and I came up with a picture of a pig in a tuxedo. He is all cleaned up but is still a dirty pig underneath.

Hypocrisy is opening the door for your wife when there is somebody looking, but the rest of the time not bothering. Hypocrisy is when you tell your children the value of having a quiet time, but you don't have one yourself. Hypocrisy is when you tell your children how important it is to study, then you leave church and never look again at what God laid on your heart in Sunday School or in the sermon. Hypocrisy is when you are reading a gossip magazine like The Star in our local newspaper on Sunday afternoon with all of its pictures and articles. This is called paper garbage. Your children come in the room, and you slide it underneath the financial page and go on reading.

A friend of ours told us this story a few weeks ago. He was in his library studying to teach a lesson. While he was studying, a basketball game final was on television. He turned the television volume down low in case something exciting happened, so that he wouldn't miss it. He had the television on and his Bible open. He was pretending to study the Bible, but his eyes kept looking

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over the Bible to the television. His son stood at the door looking into the room. Finally, the son said, "Daddy, you know I see you. I know what you are doing." Hypocrisy! The Scripture says that hypocrisy is the opposite of a pure heart.

Evidence 2- A pure heart has pure motives. While the first evidence of impurity, deliberate hypocrisy, has to do with deceiving others, the second is more subtle because it has to do with deceiving yourself. Somebody gives a missionary plea and out of the goodness of your heart, you give \$300. You are pleased as punch with yourself. First you convince yourself that you are spiritual, because you gave. Then you convince yourself that you gave, because you are spiritual. Why did you give? Scripture says:

So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

(II Corinthians 9:7 NKJV)

Our giving needs to come out of the abundance of the heart. Why do we give? Here are four reasons why I have given:

- 1) Out of guilt. Sometimes I give because I feel like I have to do away with my guilt problem.
- 2) Because of peer pressure.
- 3) Out of pride.
- 4) As a trade-off with God.

Jesus gave the perfect illustration of a right motive in giving when he showed the widow's mite. He said, "I'm not interested in the magnitude of your contributions, but in the purity of your motivation."

Key 1- Examine your life daily. "Why am I doing this? Why am I teaching? Why am I witnessing? Why am I helping? Why am I giving? Why am I doing this activity? Why am I doing that?" This is not that we should cease doing these things while we examine ourselves, but while we do these things, examine the motivations of our heart.

Key 2- We should ask God to give us higher standards of motivation the longer we are Christians.

Evidence 3- A pure heart has a clear conscience, free from restriction. How many of you have been desensitized to

something by an allergist? I have. They took what I was allergic to and put it in small doses. They gave me a needle and told me to put a little of the substance under my skin, and then watch for a reaction. I kept increasing the dosage until I reached the point that I reacted to it. When this happened, I was to drop back down to half the dose, and then gradually work my way back up, I kept taking more and more until I was desensitized. I was then put on a maintenance dosage to take once a week or so. When you go through this process, you can come up against that very thing you were allergic to and nothing happens, because you have been desensitized.

Now Dr. Satan, D.P.Q., that is his degree that stands for Doctor of Perfect Quackery, has a program of Christian desensitization of a clear conscience. Here's the way it works. You do something that offends your conscience before God. Satan says, "Wait a minute, that wasn't so bad, back off and give yourself some slack." So you back off and wait awhile, and then something bigger happens. This goes on and on. Over a period of time, the things that made you sick at first as a Christian, you begin to tolerate. God's program is exactly the opposite. As the years go by, the sin that used to cause you to itch a little ought to make you sick to your stomach.

The same is true in a marriage. You learn what offends your partner, then you don't do that anymore. That's one perspective. You find out that your wife doesn't like it when you throw your socks on the floor. You have two choices. Either you don't throw your socks on the floor anymore, or you see what happens when you throw your greasy clothes on the bed. The whole idea is that you either see how far you can go, or you sensitize your conscience and shrink back in order to please. You need to ask yourself, "How tender is my conscience?"

Evidence 4- A pure heart has single-mindedness. There are two ways to get to Boerne, a town north of San Antonio, Texas. You can get on the freeway and go straight to Boerne, or you can take one of the side roads which is more scenic. You may make a lot of stops along the way. The road is winding, and you may get lost. You may have to make too many choices. It may take too much time, but it can be more fun. The whole decision is, "What is your goal?" If your goal is to get to Boerne as quickly as possible, you get on I-10 and go straight there.

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The Scripture says,

A double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways.

(James 1:8)

To be single-minded and clear in direction is to have such a vision for the purposes of God, such a hunger for the Word of God and such a desire for the mind of God that the detours of life are seemingly harmless side trips of life you don't want to take. When you rise in the morning, you have one thought, "Jesus!" When you are confronted with a test, you have one thought, "Jesus!" When blessed or prospered, you have one thought, "Jesus!" That's the evidence of a pure heart.

Evidence 5- A pure heart has a morally pure thought life. It involves at least three major tests.

1) What do you think about when the lights are out? Do you walk into church quoting verses and lusting as you go?

2) How long does it take you to change the channels in your head when an impure thought comes into your mind? Does it take one micro-second to change channels, or do you wait until the program is over and you have enjoyed it all?

3) What level of impurity does it take to turn your stomach?

In the movie systems today there are four ratings, G, PG, R and X. Christians really ought to rename them. The G rating is supposed to stand for good. This really means the best the world has to offer. PG ought to stand for pornography that is gracious. We went to a PG and it was dignified filth. The R ought to stand for rotten. It is openly Satanic. The X ought to stand for extra obvious because it is blatantly Satanic. The signs say that these are for mature audiences, but I don't think so. I think they are for adults with immature minds. The Scripture says,

...whatever things are pure, think and meditate these things.

(Philippians 4:8 paraphrased)

When you think about it God has witnessed and observed, everything that goes on in your head, even from the time you got up this morning. He has done this, not with an eye for judgment, but with a broken heart. The person we pretend to be around our children, around our wives, around our husbands,

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around our friends and around our Sunday School class as we walk with our pious, self-righteous looks is not at all what God looks at. God looks at the heart. We look in the mirror and are totally convinced that the man in the mirror is really us, but it is not.

This is a preview of where we are headed in these next few lessons. We are going headlong into a look into our own hearts. We are not going to revel in our sinfulness, God forbid. We are, however, going to marvel at our Savior. He desires to give us, day by day, a new heart filled with Godlikeness. This heart is a pure heart that is so pure that we can see God. As we see Him, we can become like Him. Isn't that what life is all about? The Scripture says,

Blessed are those with cleansed, transparent hearts  
because a vision of their God belongs to them.

(Matthew 5:8 paraphrased)

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