**INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE**

**Kingdom Living**

**A Study of the Beatitudes**

**Week 7**

**Session Title: *Happy Are the Holy***

**Focal Passage: Matthew 5:8; Psalm 24:1-5**

**Central Teaching/Learning Aim:** Learners will understand that we must have pure hearts if we want to know God.

1. **Hook**
2. **The Daniel Plan – Web Clip**

**Location:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFZE4omem00>

**Start: 3:04**

**Stop: 4:55**

**Synopsis:** The Daniel Plan is not just another diet. It’s a lifestyle based on the story of Daniel, who forsook the king’s food in order to honor God’s best for him and his friends.

**State –** Nobody wants to eat food pumped full of dangerous chemicals and pesticides. All of that extra stuff contaminates our bodies and makes us sick. When we eat food that man has polluted we keep our bodies from functioning as God intended. The same principle applies to our hearts. When we fill our hearts with the impurities of the world we are at risk of spiritual disease. But when we focus our hearts on God’s Word and worship God with our thoughts and actions, He will keep our hearts pure and healthy.

**State** – In today’s lesson Jesus tells us that if we want to know God we need to have pure hearts.

1. **Optional Method – House Cleaning**

**Display** various kinds of cleaning supplies on a table in the front of the room. These items might include dishwashing liquid, paper towels, bathroom and/or kitchen cleaners, a mop or broom, dustpan, window cleaner, toilet bowl brush, etc.

**Ask –** What is the purpose of these items? Why are they important? What motivates you to have a clean home?

**State –** Sometimes our living rooms might be perfectly clean, but we find that our lives are not.

**Ask –** What might motivate you to look within yourself to see those attitudes that you harbor or those habits that you pursue that are not pleasing to Jesus? Do you need to purify your heart?

**State –** In our Bible study today Jesus tells us if we want to see God we must have pure hearts.

1. **Optional Method – “Would You Drink Purified Toilet Water?”**

**Share** the following excerpt from *The San Gabriel Valley Tribune*:

**Would You Drink Purified Toilet Water?**

**Hollywood Residents Will Get the Chance Wednesday**

Hollywood types usually drink bottled water originating from natural springs, exotic islands or, in the case of Perrier, a remote village in the south of France.

At noon on Wednesday, as part of a free bottled water giveaway on Hollywood Boulevard, they’ll have a chance to become the first in the world to chug purified wastewater sourced from home toilets, showers and sinks supplied by the Orange County Water District.

The award-winning water agency is the first in the nation to give away purified wastewater in bottles. The agency is embarking on a yearlong tour carrying about 16,000 commemorative bottles of highly treated wastewater to tourist spots, college campuses and local festivals to convince everyday Southern Californians that water originally flowing from sewage pipes instead of artesian springs is indeed safe to drink once treated — and maybe even cool.

“We are taking our water and our message to the public to alleviate any ‘yuck’ factor,” said OCWD President Denis Bilodeau in a statement.

For nearly 10 years, the OCWD and its partner, the Orange County Sanitation District, have developed a three-stage filtration and treatment process that passes inspection of health and water agencies. Today, it is recycling 100 million gallons per day or 36.5 billion gallons a year – enough water for 2.4 million people – and treating it to beyond state and federal drinking water standards. This water gets piped underground where it joins water stored in the vast Orange County water basin, which is drawn up through wells for drinking water.

The district puts initially treated wastewater through a three-step process: microfiltration, reverse osmosis and ultraviolet light with hydrogen peroxide. The final product is similar to distilled water, the process resembling how space station astronauts reuse their water, the district says.

Steve Scauzillo, “Would You Drink Purified Toilet Water? Hollywood Residents Will Get the Chance Wednesday,” *The San Gabriel Valley Tribune*, Monrovia, CA, June 20, 2017.

**Ask –** Well, what do you think? Would you drink purified toilet water? The Orange County Water District believes they have done enough to provide acceptable drinking water. What do you think?

**State –** In today’s lesson we will be talking about something much more difficult to purify than water. Jesus says that we should have a pure heart!

1. **Book**

1. **Write** the following outline on the marker board.

**Happy are the Holy**

1. Those with Pure Hearts are Blessed (Matthew 5:8)
2. Only Those with Pure Hearts Can Know God (Psalm 24:1-5)
3. **Utilize** the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.
4. **Look**
5. **Provide** each class member with a copy of the “Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God,” handout. Work through it with your class.
6. **Took**
7. **Clean Up Your Heart!**

**State –** D. L. Moody is quoted as saying:

I believe firmly, that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and self-seeking, and everything that is contrary to God’s law, the Holy Ghost will come and fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit, and ambition and self-seeking, and pleasure and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. And I believe many a man is praying to God to fill him when he is full already with something else. Before we pray that God would fill us, I believe we ought to pray Him to empty us.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

**State –** In his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer says:

**Who is pure of heart?**Only those who have surrendered their hearts completely to Jesus that he may reign in them alone. Only those whose hearts are undefiled by their own evil—and by their own virtues too.

**Ask –** Have you surrendered your heart completely to Jesus? Is he, alone, reigning in your heart?Do you need to ask God right now to purify your heart? What specific things do you need to ask God to remove from your life?

**Close in prayer,** asking that God purify our hearts and fill us with his Spirit.

1. **Optional Method – *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice***

**State –** In their book, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, Dallas Willard and Jan Johnson say:

The human heart is the executive center of the human life. This is where decisions and choices are made.

Our lives are a result of what we have become in the depths of our being – what we call our spirit, will, or heart. From there we see our world and interpret reality. From there we make choices, break forth into action, and try to change our world. That is why the greatest need of collective humanity is the renovation of our heart.

When we say phrases such as, “He caught me off guard,” or, “That bad word just slipped out,” we refer to the truth that our outer actions aren’t accidental – they mirror our character within. When regrettable words “slip out,” we didn’t have time to dress up what was in our heart before it came tumbling out of our mouth. Unsavory thoughts leak out in objectionable words and behavior. Such “slips” reveal publicly the private inner workings of our heart. Jesus explained that “out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45 NIV).

If our insides are renovated, what comes out of us will bring about peace and righteousness. We won’t have to try to love. Unloving thoughts and actions simply won’t occur to us, just as loving ones will begin to spring up without our awareness. We’ll smile at an enemy automatically. It won’t occur to us to argue. Instead, we’ll pray inwardly for the disagreeable person in front of us. To cooperate with public greed or dishonesty will offend us to the core, and we’ll find ourselves unable to do it.

Dallas Willard and Jan Johnson, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 15-16, 24.

**State –** Right now I’d like for us to bow our heads and consider our hearts. What do we need to change? What renovations to our hearts do we need to make? What kind of heart would you like to have? As we pray here in just a moment I want you to put the answers to these questions into a prayer. Ask God to help you make these renovations to your heart.

1. **Optional Method – *Purify My Heart***

**State –** Today we’ve learned that both the Psalmist and Jesus have said that we need to have a pure heart. The writer of Hebrews says it this way:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)

**Ask –** How can you go about “purifying your heart?” Do you find it easy to “throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles?” Is it an easy thing to root sin out of your life? Can you do it on your own?

**State –** As we close today I’m going to play *Purify My Heart*. As the song plays remember that Jesus has said that if we are to see God we must have a pure heart. Then consider the things that contaminate your heart and make it impure. And finally ask God to purify your heart. At the conclusion of the song we will be dismissed.

Maranatha! Singers, *Purify My Heart*, 1995.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Teacher Copy

1. Who will see God? (Matthew 5:8)

**[Jesus says the pure in heart will see God.]**

1. What does it mean to be “pure in heart?”
2. According to this beatitude the pure in heart will “see God.” What do you think it means to “see God?”
3. What does the first part of this Psalm tell us about God? (Psalm 24:1-2)

**[The beginning of this Psalm tells us the God is sovereign. He created all things.]**

1. What does this tell us about ourselves and about God?
2. What question did David ask? (Psalm 24:3)

**[David asks “Who can meet God?”]**

1. How does David answer his question? (Psalm 24:4)

**[David says those who enter God’s presence must have clean hands and a pure heart.]**

1. What does it mean to have clean hands and a pure heart?
2. What can we do to insure that we have clean hands and a pure heart?
3. What does it mean to lift up your soul to an idol and swear by what is false?
4. What does a person who has clean hands and a pure heart receive from God? (Psalm 24:5)

**[The person who has clean hands and a pure heart receives blessing and vindication from God.]**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Student Copy

1. Who will see God? (Matthew 5:8)
2. What does it mean to be “pure in heart?”
3. According to this beatitude the pure in heart will “see God?” What do you think it means to “see God?”
4. What does the first part of this Psalm tell us about God? (Psalm 24:1-2)
5. What does this tell us about ourselves and about God?
6. What question did David ask? (Psalm 24:3)
7. How does David answer his question? (Psalm 24:4)
8. What does it mean to have clean hands and a pure heart?
9. What can we do to insure that we have clean hands and a pure heart?
10. What does it mean to lift up your soul to an idol and swear by what is false?
11. What does a person who has clean hands and a pure heart receive from God? (Psalm 24:5)

**Create in Me A Clean Heart, O God!**

Read Psalm 51:10-13 and discuss the following questions.

1. The Request (Psalm 51:10-12)
   1. David makes six requests of God. What are they?
   2. How should we react to our own sinfulness? What should we feel? What should we do?
   3. How do you need to change your attitude about your own sin?
   4. How do these verses compare to the Bible passages from today’s study?
2. The Result (Psalm 51:13)
   1. How did David expect God to respond to his request?
   2. How will God’s forgiveness affect David? How will it affect others?
   3. What do you need to do in response to God’s forgiveness?

**THEE WORD FOR THE WEEK**

**Happy are the Harmonious**

**Matthew 5:9; Psalm 133:1-3**

**Monday - Read Matthew 5:9**

* What is the difference between God's peace and the world's idea of Peace?
* Is peace simply a lack of conflict?
* What are the characteristics of a peacemaker?
* In what areas, can we be peacemakers?

**Tuesday - Read Romans 5:9-10**

* What does it mean that we were God's enemies?
* If we were to ignore that we were God's enemy, would we be at peace with him?
* Are there any areas in your life where you seek peace by avoiding addressing conflict, or "little white lies"?

**Wednesday - Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20**

* Are there people in your life that are still God's enemy?
* What does it mean that we are the "messengers of reconciliation"?
* Are there people in your life that might not know reconciliation to God because you don't want to offend them?

**Thursday - Read Psalm 133:1, and Matthew 5:23-24**

* What does living in unity look like?
* What makes it difficult to for us to go to and be reconciled with someone we know has something against us?
* Can you think of a time in your life where trying to remain comfortable by avoiding conflict has left you less than comfortable?
* Can you think of a time in your life you have enjoyed the comfort of unity?

**Friday - Read Matthew 5:9**

* In what areas are we called to be peacemakers?
* Who would call peacemakers the children of God?
* Why would peacemakers be called the children of God?

**EXEGETICAL ~ THEOLOGICAL ~ PEDAGOGICAL**

**Note**: In Matthew 5-7 Jesus taught the way of true righteousness (see 5:20 with 7:13-14). True righteousness (how to be “right” before the holy God) is not a man centered, works-generated product of following “religious rules” (5:20). Rather, true righteousness requires a change of attitude and behavior that results from God doing a supernatural work in the character of a true believer. And only those in whom God “works out” His supernatural work of salvation can know what it means to be blessed/happy. With God’s help, we can reflect His righteous character in our thinking and doing so as to enjoy the blessings He intends for His Kingdom subjects.

Here is Jesus’ party platform, His administrative insights, His Kingdom manifesto. When we accept His rule, we can be 100% sure of our salvation/ deliverance into His Kingdom – not because we can justify ourselves, but because we realize we can’t; not because we are well, but because we realize we are sick; not because we are rich (materially or spiritually), but because we realize we are spiritually impoverished, and, therefore, humbly receive God’s commands and promises.

Today, in Matthew 5:8 Jesus teaches that Kingdom subjects who live with outward purity and inward integrity will experience intimate fellowship with God. While He demands perfection from all who desire to stand in His holy presence, God’s legal provision of atonement, whether through the Old Testament sacrificial system or the New Testament ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, allows those who come to Him in purity and integrity to benefit from His blessing of legal vindication. And those thus vindicated may fellowship with/see Him.

(**Exegetical**: What it meant to the Jewish believers back **THEN**)

**ONLY THE KINGDOM SUBJECT WHO APPROACHED GOD**

**IN OUTWARD/LEGAL PURITY AND INWARD/MORAL INTEGRITY**

[DEPENDING ON GOD’S PROVISION OF VINDICATION/ATONEMENT]

. . .**WOULD ENJOY INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP IN HIS HOLY PRESENCE**,

(Matthew 5:8; Psalm 24:1-5).

1. **The reason those who were pure/clean in their hearts (inner beings) /holy/acceptable before God would be blessed/happy/ completely whole/in a state of shalom, according to King Jesus’ instruction regarding the character of His kingdom subjects** . . . **was because they would see/ fellowship with God**, (Matthew 5:8).

**Note**: “Purity in heart refers to moral uprightness and not just ritual cleanliness. The Pauline theme of the impossibility of perfect purity in this life should not be imported here. Rather, as with ‘righteousness’ in general for Matthew, what Jesus requires of his disciples is a life-style characterized by pleasing God. . . . The ‘pure in heart’ exhibit a single-minded devotion to God that stems from the internal cleansing created by following Jesus. Holiness is a prerequisite for entering God’s presence. The pure in heart pass this test, so they will see God and experience intimate fellowship with him” (Blomberg, C. [*Matthew*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac22?ref=Bible.Mt5.8&off=4&ctx=ntal+attribute.%0a5:8+~Purity+in+heart+refe), 100).

1. CLAIM: **King Jesus’ claim regarding those who were pure/clean in their hearts (inner beings)/holy/acceptable before God**. . . **was that they would be blessed/ happy/completely whole/in a state of shalom**.

**Note**: “The mass of people in Israel were frustrated by a legal system they could not keep, and it produced in them tremendous guilt and anxiety. . . . The people’s hearts were aching for a sense of forgiveness, the reality of salvation, a sense of tranquility for their troubled souls” (MacArthur, J. *The Beatitudes*, 149). That is exactly what Jesus was promising, tranquility for their troubled souls.

“καθαρός: pertaining to being ritually clean or pure . . . καθαρός may be rendered in some languages as ‘pure in the eyes of God’ or even ‘right in the eyes of God.’

“In a number of languages there is simply no relationship between physical cleanness and ritual acceptability or purity. Accordingly, it may be necessary to render καθαρός in Lk 11:41 and similar contexts as ‘acceptable to God’ or ‘good in God’s eyes’ or ‘good as God thinks’” (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. [*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: based on Semantic Domains*](https://ref.ly/logosres/louwnida?ref=LouwNida.53.29&off=27&ctx=%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B8%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%BF%CC%81%CF%82b%2c+%CE%B1%CC%81%2c+%CE%BF%CC%81%CE%BD:+~pertaining+to+being+) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 535).

“Matthew does not often use the word for *pure* (three times only); it signifies “clean” and thus pure. This is the one place in the New Testament where purity is predicated of the *heart.* With us heart is used of the physical organ and as a way of referring to the emotions, but we must not read that way of understanding the term back into Scripture. There it stands for the whole of our inner state, thought and will as well as emotions: ‘In a psychological sense, the seat of man’s collective energies, the focus of personal life, the seat of the rational as well as the emotional and volitional elements in human life, hence that wherein lies the moral and religious condition of the man’ (G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*). This beatitude thus leads us to purity at the very center of our being. This is no truism. Jesus later said, ‘out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies’ (15:19). The heart is not the place where we naturally expect purity, but Jesus demands purity right there. To be pure in heart is to be pure throughout” (Morris, L. [*The Gospel According to Matthew*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcmatt?ref=Bible.Mt5.7&off=732&ctx=eceive+mercy+on+the+~last+day.%0a8.+Matthew), 100).

1. CHARACTER: **The character trait demonstrated in the lives of Jesus’ Kingdom subjects** . . . **was purity/cleanliness of heart (the inner being) /holiness/acceptability before God**.

**Note**: “Purity begins in a ‘heart sprinkled from an evil conscience,’ or a ‘conscience purged from dead works’ (Heb 10:22; 9:14; and see Ac 15:9); and this also is taught in the Old Testament (Ps 32:1, 2; compare Ro 4:5–8; Is 6:5–8). The conscience thus purged—the heart thus sprinkled—there is light within wherewith to see God. ‘If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not [Speak?] the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other’—He with us and we with Him— ‘and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us’—us who have this fellowship, and who, without such continual cleansing, would soon lose it again— ‘from all sin’ (1 Jn 1:6, 7). ‘Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him’ (1 Jn 3:6); ‘He that doeth evil hath not seen God’ (3 Jn 1:11). The inward vision thus clarified, and the whole inner man in sympathy with God” (Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, 18–19).

**“**Commentators are divided on ‘pure in heart.’ 1. Some take it to mean inner moral purity as opposed to merely external piety or ceremonial cleanness. This is an important theme in Matthew and elsewhere in the Scriptures. . . . 2. Others take it to mean single-mindedness, a heart ‘free from the tyranny of a divided self’ (Tasker; cf. Bonnard). Several of the passages just cited focus on freedom from deceit. . . . This interpretation also prepares the way for Matthew 6:22. The ‘pure in heart’ are thus ‘the utterly sincere.’

“The dichotomy between these two options is a false one; it is impossible to have one without the other. The one who is single-minded in commitment to the kingdom and its righteousness (6:33) will also be inwardly pure. Inward sham, deceit, and moral filth cannot coexist with sincere devotion to Christ. Either way, this beatitude excoriates hypocrisy” (Carson, D. A. “[Matthew](https://ref.ly/logosres/ebcrev09?ref=Bible.Mt5.7&off=763&ctx=%E2%80%99+who+are+also+%E2%80%98the+~merciful%E2%80%99.+For+to+be)” In T. Longman III & D. E. Garland (Eds.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew–Mark (Revised Edition)*, 164–165).

1. CAUSE: **The reason Jesus’ Kingdom subjects, being pure/clean in their hearts (inner beings)/holy/acceptable before God, would be blessed** . . . **was because they would see God**.

**Note**: “The consequence of this kind of purity is that *they will see God* (cf. Ps. 73:1). There is a sense and a measure in which this is true of life here and now. The pure in heart see God in a way that the impure never know. But the main thought is surely eschatological; it points us to a vision too wonderful to be fully experienced in this life but that will come to its consummation in the world to come” (Morris, 100).

“‘Such is the generation of those who seek him’ (Ps. 24:6), and they receive the promise that *they shall see God*. This can only fully be realized in heaven, when ‘we shall see him as he is’ (1 John 3:2); then ‘we shall be like him’, and the longings of v. 6 will be finally satisfied. But in a lesser sense the vision of God is already the experience of his true lovers on earth, who persevere in his service ‘as seeing him who is invisible’ (Heb. 11:27)” (France, R. T. [*Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tntc61mtus?ref=Bible.Mt5.8&off=267&ctx=n+(cf.+Isa.+29:13).+~%E2%80%98Such+is+the+generat), 116).

1. CHARGE: **The implied charge to/expectation of Jesus’ Kingdom subjects** . . . **was that they live holy lives – clean and pure in their inner beings, and thus acceptable before God**.

**Note**: “*Pure in heart* should not be restricted to moral, still less sexual, purity; it denotes one who loves God with all his heart (Deut. 6:5), with an undivided loyalty, and whose inward nature corresponds with his outward profession (cf. Isa. 29:13)” (France, 116).

1. **The necessary qualification for those who would fellowship with/ worship the sovereign LORD of creation** . . . **was clean hands/outward actions of obedience and pure hearts/inward thinking with integrity**, (Psalm 24:1-5).

**Note**: “From the detailed analysis of the psalm we can suggest a reconstruction of the occasion and setting of the piece. The internal evidence suggests that the Israelites had just returned from a victorious battle with the Canaanites. They were proceeding to the sanctuary to give praise to the LORD for the great and mighty victory in battle, carrying with them the glorious ark of the covenant, the symbol of the LORD’s presence with them. As they approached the gates they were met by the Levitical gatekeepers. It was the worshipers’ part to ask who could enter the sanctuary of the LORD; and it was the gatekeepers part to answer with the standards set down in the Law—perfect righteousness. The worshipers in this case did not claim to be qualified to enter; rather, they responded that they were simply seeking the LORD’s favor—a response that indicates that they wanted to meet the LORD’s requirements but had to bring sacrifices to do that” (Ross, A. *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 579-580).

1. The reason, the psalmist claimed, YHWH owned/controlled everything and everyone on the earth/in the world . . . was because He had founded/ established the earth/world and everything/everyone in it upon the water (seas/rivers) [see Genesis 1:6-10], (1-2).

**Note: “**The acclamation refers to both the territories and the inhabitants as belonging to the LORD. ‘Earth’ and ‘world’ [inhabited land] refer to territory, because the additional expressions add all the things that live in them. The prepositional phrase that begins the verse, ‘To the LORD [is] the earth,’ expresses possession—it all belongs to the LORD. He may be the God of Israel, but he is also the God of the whole world—all races belong to him.

“Verse 2 then provides the explanation of the LORD’s sovereign possession of everything: he created it all.

“In general, we find an emphasis in the Old Testament that the LORD establishes his sovereign creation by victory over the waters of chaos” (Ross, 581-582).

1. The claim of the psalmist regarding the ownership/control of the earth/world . . . was that YHWH owned/controlled everything and everyone on the earth/in the world, (1).
2. The reason, the psalmist claimed that YHWH owned/controlled everything and everyone on the earth/in the world . . . was because He had founded/established the earth/the world and everything/ everyone in it upon the water (seas/rivers – see Genesis 1:6-10), (2).
3. The question posed by the psalmist . . . asked who was qualified/able/ acceptable to go up to the hill [Jerusalem] of YHWH/to stand in His holy place [the temple/tabernacle – the place of fellowship/worship], (3).

**Note: “**There is an abrupt change in the psalm now to what may be called a liturgy at the gate, a ritual designed to prepare people to enter the sanctuary and enjoy communion with the LORD. Many of the Levites were assigned to be gatekeepers; their task was to make sure the people who came into the sanctuary met the requirement of holiness and had the proper sacrifices. As the worshipers heard each time the standard for entrance into the presence of God, they would have to acknowledge their need of God’s gracious provision of cleansing and atonement through the ritual prescribed in the Law. . . . Only when people sought the LORD’s favor through the sanctifying ritual would they be able to enter his courts with praise” (Ross, 583).

“To *ascend* and *stand* presents a fine picture of worship, balancing the other main expression, to ‘bow down’. It is to make a deliberate quest (cf. Mark 9:2), to mount to a vantage-point (cf. Gen. 13:14ff.; 19:27f.), to converge on it with other seekers (Isa. 2:2f.), and finally to stand before the throne (Rev. 7:9)” Kidner, D. [*Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/totc19psaus?ref=Bible.Ps24.3-6&off=80&ctx=the+comments+there.+~To+ascend+and+stand+), 131–132).

“Who is acceptable to the Creator-King? How may people prepare themselves for fellowship with him? The psalmist expresses the nature of fellowship with God in OT terms (e.g., ascending ‘the hill of the Lord’ and standing in ‘his holy place’). ‘The hill of the Lord’ is a reference to Mount Zion (cf. 2:6), also known as ‘your holy hill’ (15:1) and ‘his holy place’ (24:3). Because God is the great Creator-King (vv. 1–2), whose residence on earth was symbolized in Jerusalem’s temple (vv. 7–10), those who seek his favor need to prepare themselves not only ceremonially but also by sanctifying their lives” (VanGemeren, W. A. “[Psalms](https://ref.ly/logosres/ebcrev05?ref=Bible.Ps24.3&off=2&ctx=COMMENTARY%0a3+~Who+is+acceptable+to+the+Cr)” in T. Longman III & D. E. Garland (Eds.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms,* 259–260).

1. The one who is qualified/able/acceptable to go up [to Jerusalem] and stand/fellowship/worship in YHWH’s holy presence . . . was the one with clean hands [outward/legal purity] and a pure heart [inward innocence], the one who has not lifted up his hand to falsehood [false oaths or false worship]/sworn deceitfully [taking God’s name in vein], (4).

**Note**:“Only those who are without sin in thought and deed may enter God’s presence and receive his blessing.

“Verse four provides the answer to the question in a summary statement and then gives a specific example. The impact of the summary statement would have been overwhelming because of its scope and finality: ‘the one who has clean hands and a pure heart.’ ‘Hands’ and ‘heart’ are figures, the hands are the instruments for doing things and so refers to actions, and the heart is the localization of the will and refers to intentions and choices. In other words, to enter the presence of God and commune with him the worshipers must be perfect—there can be no sinful acts and no improper motives, choices or thoughts, and they must be ‘clean’ in what they do (literally, innocent, free from guilt) and pure in what they think or plan (literally, clean, clear, pure). On the face of it this standard would have eliminated everyone from entering God’s presence without some divine provision. Its purpose was to remind people of just how holy the LORD is and how they were not qualified to enter his presence without the purification ritual first” (Ross, 580, 584).

“The second half of the verse is a relative clause that provides a specific example of the kind of purity in thought and deed that was required. . . . It is referring to a violation of the law concerning false swearing, i.e., swearing an oath to achieve a deceptive end. . . . one clause would be describing a person who does not take [the name of] the LORD in vain, that is, to a false purpose, and the parallel clause would be explaining further it was a person who does not swear deceitfully. One part looks at the improper use of the divine name in the oath, and the other looks at the intended deceit. This couplet, if it has been interpreted correctly, would make a fitting elaboration on the introductory summary: one who did not raise his hands in a false oath (so clean hands) and one who did not swear deceitfully (so pure hearts)” (Ross, 584-585).

“The meaning of *lift up his soul* is illuminated by 25:1, where it is a parallel to ‘trust’. This false (i.e. empty) object of trust may be an inadequate helper (e.g. an idol, or ‘the help of man’, 60:11) or an unworthy stratagem such as the lies of 12:2 (Heb. 3), for which this word is also used” (Kidner, 132).

“Only those who do not worship an **idol** can be true worshipers, and can walk by faith in integrity” (Ross, A. P. “[Psalms](https://ref.ly/logosres/bkc?ref=Bible.Ps24.3-4&off=424&ctx=+attitude+and+will.+~Only+those+who+do+no)” in J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 812).

“God expects, in addition to loyalty to the Lord in heart and life, a *singleness* of devotion. The godly do not dishonor the Lord’s name by idolatry or by falsehood. . . . Godly people are ‘pure’ and not ‘false’ (or hypocritical). This excludes, of course, idolatry in any form. Their ‘yes’ means ‘yes’ and their ‘no’ means ‘no’ (cf. 15:3–4; Mt 5:37)” (VanGemeren, 260).

1. The result of anyone outwardly and inwardly pure fellowshipping/ worshipping YHWH in His holy presence . . . was that s/he would receive the blessing of YHWH/the righteousness [vindication] of the God of her/his salvation, (5).

**Note**: Verse 5 “makes a promise that those who qualify to enter the courts of the LORD will receive a blessing. The initial verb (here translated ‘he will receive,’ but literally ‘lift up, bear, carry’) does double duty for the line: ‘He shall receive a blessing from the LORD, // and righteousness from the God of his salvation.’ The key terms in the line are clearly ‘blessing’ and ‘righteousness,’ what the true worshiper hopes to receive from the LORD.

. . . To receive the blessing in the sanctuary would mean that all was well between the worshiper and God” (Ross, 585-586).

“*Vindication* is lit. ‘righteousness’, and is here akin to justification, the judge’s pronouncement in favour of one’s claim or plea. Whatever is functioning as it should is ‘righteous’: in court, the man in the right; in character, the honest man; in the run of affairs, success. Probably all three are present in this context. This man has the smile of God upon him: he is accepted, he is helped to live an upright life, his affairs under God’s *blessing* will run as they should” (Kidner, 132).

(**Theological**: What it means for God’s people **ALWAYS**)

**APPROACHING THE HOLY, CREATOR GOD WITH**

**EXTERNAL OBEDIENCE AND INTERNAL INTEGRITY,**

**VINDICATED BY HIS OWN RIGHTEOUS PROVISION** . . .

**SANCTIONS INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM**,

(Psalm 24:1-5; Matthew 5:8).

1. **Approaching the holy, creator God with external obedience and internal integrity, vindicated by His own righteous provision** . . . **sanctions intimate fellowship with Him**, (Psalm 24:1-5).
2. **Holiness** [attained God’s way]. . . **allows for intimate fellowship with God**, (Matthew 5:8).

(**Pedagogical**: What it means for us **TODAY**)

**TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY**,

(Psalm 24:1-5; Matthew 5:8)

1. The only way to experience intimate fellowship with the one-and-only Creator God is by being holy, (Psalm 24:1-5).
2. God is your Creator and Sustainer; the one-and-only holy God, (24:1-2).
3. You may approach God only when living in external obedience and internal integrity [trusting in His provision of righteousness], (24:3-4).
4. By living in obedience and integrity you can enjoy intimate fellowship with the Lord, your God, (24:5).
5. Experience intimate fellowship with God as you live in obedience and integrity, (Matthew 5:8).
6. CLAIM: Kingdom subjects are blessed, happy, whole, in shalom.
7. CHARACTER: Happy Kingdom subjects approach their holy God with pure hearts.

[God demands moral perfection [see 5:20], yet His provision makes us righteous [see 5:6.]

1. CAUSE: Intimate fellowship is promised to those who approach God with pure hearts – confessing sin and claiming His provision.
2. CHARGE: **TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY**.
3. Acknowledge God as the one-and-only Holy One.
4. Agree with Him about your sinning ways.
5. Accept the righteousness He has provided.
6. Approach Him in intimate Fellowship.
   1. Praise Him for His mercy, grace, and love.
   2. Tell Him about your fears and failures.
   3. Tell Him about your joys and successes.
   4. Immerse yourself in His promises.

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;  
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.  
Make friends of God’s children, help those who are weak,  
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;  
Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.  
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;  
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide;  
And run not before Him, whatever betide.  
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,  
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.

Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,  
Each thought and each motive beneath His control.  
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,  
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

– William D. Longstaff