

Day 32
This way something wicked comes...

Matthew 5:8 (TLB) Happy are those whose hearts are pure, for they shall see God.

There are some prayers that will revolutionize our lives if we are courageous enough to pray them. I would personally term it as “dangerous prayers”. Not dangerous in the sense of harm to ourselves and others, but dangerous to the status quo; dangerous to lukewarm devotion and dangerous to spiritual hypocrisy. One of these prayers is: “Create in me a clean heart...”

Once you have prayed that prayer, get ready, because there might be turbulence up ahead. **When we are willing to come clean, the Refiner comes with His refining fire and begins the work of purifying.** This is undoubtedly a process. A pure heart is not an automatic thing. None of us are born with a pure heart. It is just the opposite. Our hearts are completely and desperately wicked. Our hearts are not only wicked, but there is nothing more deceitful than the human heart. **Nothing and no one can lie to you like your own heart can lie to you.** If you think that making these statements only apply to some, then your heart has just faked you out once again.

If you are asking, “How bad is the human heart,” my answer is simply: No other human truly knows; only God knows. That is why the prophet Jeremiah laments and says, **“The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?” (Jeremiah 17:9 NLT)**

We hear advice all the time that says, “Follow your heart!” I am here to tell you that is the worst advice you can give someone, especially someone who has not yet gone through the process of allowing God to purify their hearts. **The world says, “Follow your heart; it’s the only way to be happy!” Jesus says, “Let me purify your heart; it’s the only way to be happy!”** Who are you going to believe; the world or Jesus? A better question is, who have you been believing? Here’s a hint: Whoever you have been believing, is shown in how you have made decisions in your life. The wisest man that ever lived wrote this: **“A wise man’s heart leads him to do right, and a fool’s heart leads him to do evil.” (Ecclesiastes 10:2 TLB)**

Where is your heart leading you? You cannot first follow your heart; that will always lead you astray. You have to allow God to change your heart and then follow your heart (still with caution). The writer of Proverbs said it like this: **“Truth stands the test of time; lies are soon exposed. 20 Deceit fills hearts that are plotting for evil; joy fills hearts that are planning for good!” (Proverbs 12:19-20 TLB)** Evil comes from a heart that is filled with deceit, but joy comes from hearts that decide to do what is right. None of us want to be known as wicked, bad or evil. But we are! We are capable of anything and everything that is evil. Be careful for the deceit in your own heart. We are so quick to jump on other peoples failures, yet we forget, if it was not for God’s grace and mercy, we are capable of the same or even worse.

Your heart simply does not lead you to God. It is actually the opposite. I want to give you a warning that might sound funny, but it is not. Are you ready? **“Watch out for your heart, especially if you are not watching your heart!”** We learned that we must guard our hearts with all diligence, so our only thought is to guard our hearts from outside influences. We never think of guarding our hearts because of the spiritual plaque that we have allowed to build up. People could die physically of heart attacks because, if they are not careful, plaque could build up and that leads to hardened arteries that cause a lack of blood flow to our hearts. The same can be said spiritually. **We do not pay attention to the**

musings and mediation of our heart, and we allow our hearts to drift away from the only One Who can clean out the spiritual plaque.

I want to warn you about something that can hinder your spiritual progress and actually lead you astray. Here comes something desperately wicked and deceitful, hard to truly know. What or who is this hell-bent culprit? **It's your heart-- your heart and my heart--are the culprits!** Something we all must pay attention to is, what are we allowing to build up inside of us? Is your heart becoming more evil? Is your heart unbelieving? Is your heart being blinded by its own deception as it falls for the allure and glamor of sin? Is your heart becoming more hardened against God? If you don't believe me, then at least believe the writer of the Book of Hebrews which states: ***"Beware, then, of your own hearts, dear brothers, lest you find that they, too, are evil and unbelieving and are leading you away from the living God. 13 Speak to each other about these things every day while there is still time so that none of you will become hardened against God, being blinded by the glamor of sin."* (Hebrews 3:12-13 TLB)**

Guard what comes into your heart and guard what is going on inside of your heart. Heart pollution is not only an outside job, it is mostly an inside job. Don't get attacked by your own heart. Be aware of what's going on inside of your heart. Your spiritual life depends on it! Every one of the beatitudes is a step to where we come closer to a pure heart. **An evil heart is automatic, a pure heart is not.** In order to become pure in heart, we must see our desperate need for God and respond to that need. We must go through the process we have seen in the first five Beatitudes.

Are you willing to pray a dangerous prayer? David prayed this prayer for himself once he recognized his own wickedness. **His heart led him to places his mind never thought it would go.** Sin looked great in his heart, but it led to lies, adultery, murder, fake outrage over someone else's sin, and the eventual death of a baby. Wicked indeed! But notice his courageous prayer: ***"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."* (Psalm 51:10 NIV)**

David asks God to create in him a pure heart once he recognized the depth of his own heart's capacity for evil. Until you acknowledge who you really are, God cannot start the process of purifying your heart. Are you willing to let the Holy Spirit do the perfecting work of creating a pure heart within you?

Let the cleaning and purifying of our hearts continue. May it continue until all of us see Jesus in the reflection and motivation of our own hearts.

Reflection and Prayer:

- **Why do we struggle to admit our own wickedness?**
- **What are you doing daily to guard your heart?**
- **What should we do to limit the potential of a "spiritual heart attack"? Have you paid attention to what is building up in your heart? Is it healthy or are you seeing danger up ahead?**
- **We all need to be in God's process of heart purification. Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to do the deep cleansing that is necessary, or are you still in denial?**
- **Depend solely on the grace of God and not your own wisdom. Let Him give you a clear conscience as you pursue His holiness in everything you do. *"We can say with confidence and a clear conscience that we have lived with a God-given holiness and sincerity in all our dealings. We have depended on God's grace, not on our own human wisdom. That is how we have conducted ourselves before the world, and especially toward you."* 2 Corinthians 1:12 (NLT)**