

Day 33
Time for Examination!

Matthew 5:8 (PHILLIPS) Happy are the utterly sincere, for they will see God!

The pure in heart will see God! I want to have the sight that Jesus talked about; a spiritual sight that leads to insight and brings God's light into my life; **living our lives in the light, not having any aspect in the darkness**; refusing to twist God's Word as to suit me, but allowing God's Word to actually change my impure heart into a completely sincere, pure and honest one. **A heart that is not divided into so many different compartments and places that I cannot keep an honest, spiritual inventory of what is going on within me.**

As the Holy Spirit shines Christ's light within our hearts and cleans out every chamber of our hearts, we then begin to know the glory that is seen in the face of Jesus. Paul writes: ***"For God, who said, 'Let there be light in the darkness,' has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves." (2 Corinthians 4:6-7 NLT)*** Something incredible happens when we allow God's light to shine in our hearts; darkness gets displaced and glory takes its place. But this glorious light shining in our hearts is not in any way self-produced or manufactured. It is God's power that brings God's light within our hearts. Paul calls it, "A great treasure"!

As Jesus purifies our hearts, the light of His glory becomes more evident and we no longer walk in darkness. **So, we carry this incredible treasure in fragile containers.** Why is this so great? Because it is completely contrary to the world we live in. The reality of the world we live in, is that many of us are trying to keep these fragile clay jars looking good. We eat right, we exercise and we go on diets. We pay lots of money for gym memberships and spa treatments. We get tucks and lifts all in the name of looking younger and trying to hold onto some resemblance of our youthful selves. Yet, no matter how much time, effort, energy or currency we invest in our bodies, in the end, it is nothing but a fragile clay jar that will eventually fall apart. **Paul says, for us as believers, we make an investment in something that can and will forever payoff.** We invest in that which is not being held by us, manipulated by us, propped up by us, or even accomplished by us. **Although we have fragile jars on the outside, God is putting glory on the inside because of the light of Jesus shining in our hearts.**

The world is trying to keep the outside glorious, but Jesus encourages us to let the Holy Spirit keep our hearts glorious. We might be falling apart on the outside, but you have to see how pretty we are on the inside. And it is the inside (our hearts) that matter to God. Remember Jesus' words to the Pharisees: ***"Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness." (Matthew 23:28 NLT)*** So, we must allow the Father to continue to do His work in us; the work of purifying our hearts. **That work of purification does not happen within a spiritual vacuum or an unmeasurable spiritual euphoria.** We might say things like, "I feel I am becoming more holy" or "I sense I have grown in my purity." We might even pull out the big spiritual gun that ends all discussion; "God told me I am pure..." **Here's the good news: You don't have to feel your way, guess your way, or even assume your way, that you are developing a pure heart you can actually know.** So, how do we know? The Father loves us enough to let us in on our progress. Here's how: through testing and examination!

You see, the only way to get to purity is through testing. Just like earth's minerals are tested and purified through fire, so our hearts will be tested and purified through examination. Purity cannot come without

the necessary heat to purify the metal. **So, through the fire of adversity, difficulty, opposition and even success, God examines our hearts and helps us to measure our progress.** This is not about being evaluated by people or even applying self judgement; it is simply trusting that, whatever testing is necessary for refinement, we would be willing to grow through the process. ***“Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful. 3 As for me, it matters very little how I might be evaluated by you or by any human authority. I don’t even trust my own judgment on this point. 4 My conscience is clear, but that doesn’t prove I’m right. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide.” (1 Corinthians 4:2-4 NLT)***

Paul says that, even if our conscience is clear, we don’t use a clear conscience as proof that we have passed the test. **We leave the final verdict of our lives in God’s Hands and know that He is the only One that can examine and decide about the purity of our hearts.** Our willingness to embrace and learn from the testing we go through, helps us to see if we have actually allowed our hearts to change. And a changed heart will always affect our behavior. Purity is the work that the Holy Spirit does in our hearts that will always translate to a change of life. What does testing do for us?

Testing produces purity. Purity is all about pleasing God. It is not an outward-looking, jump-through-the-hoops religious game we are playing. It is a heart completely set on embracing God’s change and then doing things God’s way. **A pure heart only wants to please God. A pure heart is not confused or divided in any way. It does not have a God compartment, a work compartment, a relational compartment, or even a deep hidden secret compartment.** A pure heart receives the Word, embraces the Word, and then allows the Word to expose all things. A pure heart allows the light to shine in, and even expose, the hidden motives of the heart. Purity is not about a superficial, temporary life adjustment, but a complete renewal of a crusted, selfish heart, into a tender, kind and selfless heart; a selfless heart that seeks praise only from the Father and not in any way from man. ***“For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of circumcision. 29 No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.” (Romans 2:28-29 NLT)***

A pure heart is a heart that understands what needs to be done and why it is doing it. It deals with both the motives of the heart, as well as our behaviors. Having a pure heart means that I am being perfected by the Holy Spirit. That perfecting happens through the testing of my heart. ***“But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve.” (Jeremiah 17:10 NLT)***

Without testing and examining there is no purity. The Lord searches all hearts. No human heart goes unexamined. If we desire to have a pure heart, we will receive testing and examination. **God’s testing is not a superficial evaluation to see if we know the right information. It is an examining of the very secret motivations of our hearts.**

If you desire a pure heart, then your loving Heavenly Father will shine His light in every part of your heart. God’s testing is to make you more like Jesus, and there is no darkness in Him. So, allow His light to shine in your heart and carry His glory, even if it is in a fragile jar of clay.

Reflection and Prayer:

- **God uses testing to purify our hearts. Keep the following principles in mind:**

- Understand that small things matter, and we will be tested in the small and big.
- Remain in the arena of truth. Truth will set you free.
- Learn that sincerity is the true foundation for a humble heart.
- Understand that nothing is hidden from your Father.
- Be willing to change what needs to be changed.
- Do a regular spiritual inventory of your heart's values and pursuits.
- Always keep your relationship with Jesus as the principal thing.