

Detailed Notes: COV006 3.7.20
Pure in heart

Dear brethren,

In my **last sharing** I mentioned, as we go through this period of COVID-19 pandemic, we may ask ourselves and reflect over **several questions**, including:

Should we be satisfied if we manage not to be fearful, anxious, worried, learn to keep ourselves occupied, keep ourselves healthy, survive this pandemic? Should not.

Does Covid19 pandemic threaten personal spiritual health, well-being and the outworking of church life? Should not.

What is vital, essential for spiritual health, well-being and a life truly pleasing to God – at the personal level and for the congregation? My sharing should help answer this question.

I wish now to **add on a few more related questions** for us to ponder over:

How should we face Covid19 pandemic now and how can we be ready to face whatever the Lord may see fit for us to go through in the future?

How can we be better equipped to go through well – the current Covid19 pandemic – and what lies ahead?

What I have been sharing with you during this period can help us see what ought to be the answers to these questions and how to respond well

- on the basis of what God has revealed in the Scriptures
- and live our lives accordingly.

It is feasible to have an abiding sense of true well-being and security.

God does not want us to live in fear, worry and anxiety. At the same time, He warns us against having a **false sense** of well-being and security.

Having a good, wholesome understanding of these issues has become more urgent and significant as we go through the COVID-19 pandemic and as we approach the nearness of the Second Coming of Christ.

What I continue to share with you can help us know how we should face Covid19 pandemic now and how to be ready to face whatever the Lord may see fit for us to go through in the future

- **relevant for our own lives - and can also help us understand and discern what is going on – from the perspective of God's kingdom - and how to be concerned for and pray meaningfully for others.**

I now want to **reflect** together **with you a vital area** which the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul highlighted: **pure in heart**

- we must pay attention to this area if we want to fare well in life, serve the Lord well and live a life truly pleasing to God.

Matthew 5:8

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

1 Timothy 1:5

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

The apostle **Paul** tells us: the **goal of our instruction** is love from a pure heart....

The Lord **Jesus** tells us the pure in heart will **enjoy God's blessings, approval** – and the state of heart important for meaningful appreciation of God and relationship with God

- see God not with physical eyes but **spiritual insight**

- **true knowledge of God – who He is – in the context of meaningful relationship, fellowship with God and worship of God.**

Believers recognise the importance of being pure in heart, but many have **vague notions** of what it means, how they are faring in this vital area, how we can have/attain purity of heart - and the implications.

This sharing is meant to motivate us to pay attention to this crucial area of truth, understand what it means, and move decisively in that direction.

We will see:

Biblical revelation tells us

The **heart** of a person **defines the person**

- not his wealth, status and accomplishments in society, his physical attributes and talents/capabilities.

The outward conduct, words and accomplishments of a person do not define his character.

The quality and meaning in the heart of man **reveal the real character** of the man – his inner life.

The heart is the source and realm of his spiritual, moral, mental and emotional activities

- from which flows his thoughts, words, deeds and service.

The moral and spiritual meaning flows forth from the heart of a person and determines the moral and spiritual meaning of his words and conduct.

The moral, spiritual quality and meaning in a person's heart defines the person

- the moral and spiritual health and stature of the person

- what God looks at, looks for in a person
- what we should all the time be concerned about
- in ourselves and what we look for, look at in a person.

1 Samuel 16:1–7

1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons.”

2 But Samuel said, “How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’”

3 “You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you.”

4 So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, “Do you come in peace?”

5 He said, “In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

6 When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’S anointed is before Him.”

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “**Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.**”

Context: the Lord instructed Samuel to anoint the one whom He would designate to Samuel – to be king over Israel. Samuel looked at Eliab and thought he was the one.

But the Lord said to Samuel:

Do not look at his appearance – man tends to look at the outward appearance – even the godly Samuel

- but the Lord looks at the heart
- because the true meaning, quality and character of a man is in his heart.

To understand the meaning of being pure in heart and how to attain it, it is helpful to understand

The biblical revelation of the meaning of heart

The heart is the source of the negative moral meaning of our thoughts, deeds, words and character

Mark 7:21-23

21 “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,
 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.
 23 “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

The heart is also the source of the positive meaning in a person’s life and ministry of life

- from within the heart flows the springs of life:

Proverbs 4:23

Watch over your heart with all diligence,
 For from it flow the springs of life.

The heart is capable of **reasoning**

Mark 2:6

But some of the scribes were sitting there
 and reasoning in their hearts,

Thoughts and intentions

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Where purpose is formed, decision made and exercise of the will – the core centre of man as a moral being

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Ezra 7:10

For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

How we believe and exercise faith

Romans 10:10

for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

True worship flows forth from the heart

Mark 7:6–7

6 And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.

7 ‘BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.’

Words of our lips cannot express true worship if they do not flow forth from our hearts.

True love for God and man must flow forth from our hearts

Matthew 22:37–39

37 And He said to him,

“ ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’

38 “This is the great and foremost commandment.

39 “The second is like it,

‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’

God speaks, works in our hearts

Acts 2:37

Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?”

As Peter, filled with the Spirit preached, God spoke to the hearts of the hearers and worked in their hearts

- and they were pierced to the heart by Peter’s message.

Peter describing how God worked in the hearts of the Gentiles:

Acts 15:9

and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

The true state of our heart is crucial in our relationship with God:

1 John 3:21–22

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

The heart can **rejoice** and experience true joy.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples they will see Him again

- and their heart will rejoice:

John 16:22

“Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers out of much **anguish** of heart:

2 Corinthians 2:4

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

The true worth and meaning in a person is the hidden person of the heart

- the moral and spiritual state of the person
- what God looks for and appreciates in a person

1 Peter 3:3–4

3 Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;
4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

The emphasis in the teaching of the Lord Jesus and the Scriptures is the reality in the heart and what proceed from the heart

- not external acts, activities but what proceed from pure, clean heart, and good motives.

Mark 7:1–23

1 The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem,
2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.
3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders;
4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.)
5 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?”

6 And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you **hypocrites**, as it is written: ‘THIS PEOPLE **HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.**

7 ‘**BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,** TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.’

8 “Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.”

9 He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

10 “For Moses said, ‘**HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER**’; and, ‘**HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH**’;

11 but you say, ‘If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),’

12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother;

13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”

14 After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, “Listen to Me, all of you, and understand:

15 there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.

16 “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

17 When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable.

18 And He said to them, “Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him,

19 because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.)

20 And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.

21 “For from within, out of the **heart** of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,
22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.
23 “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

1. **True cleansing** is a matter of the heart
 - not merely external acts but within the heart of man.
2. **True worship** must flow forth from the heart
 - not merely external
 - whether personal or gathering for worship, prayer meeting.
3. **The moral, spiritual meaning of man resides in the heart**
 - and the meaning of his words and conduct flows forth from the meaning in his heart.
4. **What God is concerned about is the moral and spiritual meaning in our hearts** – He looks at our hearts, our motives
Proverbs 17:3
The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold,
But **the LORD tests hearts.**
Proverbs 16:2
All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight,
But **the LORD weighs the motives.**

Concluding segment

Summarise and crystallise the meaning of pure in heart

Pure - literally clean

The pure in heart: having a heart washed, cleansed and consecrated to God.

Two major aspects

1. **State of heart:** clean, cleansed, no stain, defilement

2. Direction of heart: what we focus on, immerse our heart in, our intent, purpose, will, what motivates us, what we are committed to:

Positive dimension

God is perfect and absolutely pure and the One who enables us to be pure in heart.

The pure in heart will **focus on and immerse his heart in**

God and His righteousness, love, light and truth

- and sets his heart on God's kingdom, God's will and the fulfilment of His purposes
- oneness of heart with the heart of God
- committed to God, God's will and the fulfilment of God's purposes

- **manifested** in what our mind dwells on, and in word and deed
- **from such a heart will flow forth love, light, and truth** – love, light and truth from a pure heart

- **the foundational basis of a life of spiritual health, growth, witness, fruitfulness, and effectiveness in participation in the fulfilment of God's purposes.**

God will have much freedom to speak to, work in and **transform** the life of a believer who has this kind of commitment, spirit, attitude and receptivity

- and he will become **increasingly conformed to the image of Christ.**

Negative dimension

- no evil, negative or selfish intent
- not harbouring anything contrary to God's will
- the heart not tainted by fleshly motives, intent, purpose.

If we want to fare well, we must continually look to the Lord to help us nurture a heart that is increasingly pure in meaning and quality.

Such a life is feasible under all circumstances

- **for those who love the Lord and walk with Him**
- **whatever the Lord sees fit for us to go through**
- **this pandemic and whatever may lie ahead.**

The Lord willing, I intend to continue in my next sharing on how to have and maintain a pure, clean heart and the importance and implications of being pure in heart.

In fellowship,
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