

Pure in Heart--*Matthew 5:8*

A pure substance, like honey, is unmixed, it is 100% honey. A pure person is without contamination. A pure heart unites both of these qualities. In 2 Chronicles 16:9 Jehovah looks for people "whose heart is loyal to Him"; it is the pure heart, uncontaminated with other gods.

Consider Psalm 24:3-4 – "Who may ascend into the hill of Jehovah, or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart." The cleanliness of hands spoken of here does not refer to physical dirt, but to moral dirt. Whoever has clean hands is not practicing sin. "Stand in His holy place" refers to being in the presence of God. Hebrews 12:14 declares that without holiness "no one shall see the Lord". James 4:8 states the matter as an order: "Sinners, cleanse your hands! Double-minded, purify your hearts!" These are the prerequisites for God to draw near to us.

Now then, to actually see God is a devastating experience, but it leads to a higher spiritual level. Consider the case of Job: "I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye see you. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). Hearing about it is one thing, seeing it is another! And also that of Isaiah: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of Hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5). Both men, Job and Isaiah, improved spiritually as a result.

Now consider the exhortation in 1 John 3:2-3—"We know that when He is revealed we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is—everyone who has this hope upon him purifies himself, even as He is pure." I take it that 'purifying oneself' means being careful about one's own holiness, to lessen the shock when we meet the Owner face to face.

Is the zeal for purity something we should develop on our own? 2 Timothy 2:22 implies that it is not: "pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart". We should look for others who have the same spiritual purpose, to give and receive help and encouragement. Hebrews 3:13 is to the point—"Exhort yourselves every day, while it is called 'today', so that none of you be hardened through sin's deceitfulness."