

"BE PURE? I'M SURE"

2 Timothy 2

OBJECTIVES

- To establish some biblical action-steps towards becoming pure in heart.
- To list specific events where purity can be applied in everyday life.

OVERVIEW

I was sitting in Taco Bell the other day and one of the students from my ministry came in and threw his backpack down on my table. He appeared to be excited that I was there. We spent a few minutes talking and then he got up and said, "I'm going to get something to drink." He reached into his backpack and pulled out an old Taco Bell cup. The condition of the cup gave me the impression it had been used many times. He brought the cup into Taco Bell so he could use it at the all-you-can-drink refill station without paying for a new one. At first I thought he might be a little embarrassed about doing this in front of his youth pastor, but that wasn't the case at all. He gave me no impression that he saw anything wrong with this free-drink routine.

When he returned, he quickly jumped back into our previous conversation. At a breaking point I played "dumb" and asked him, "Chris, do you get a special discount for re-using their cups? Do you only have to pay half price or something?" He said, "No, it's free. I bring in an old cup so I don't have to pay anything at all." I said, "Now, excuse me if I'm wrong, but isn't that stealing? The cup has directions printed on it that read: 'free refills at time of purchase only.'" Chris was shocked! Not shocked because he had been caught, but shocked that I would think his actions were wrong. He quickly moved to a new angle: "I do this because I'm trying to save money for church camp." Perfect! A rationalization of sin for godly purposes. Now I had heard everything!

Purity or the lack of purity reveals itself in almost everything we do. Purity shocks people. It should. It's a rare quality. But it characterizes the new lifestyle to which Jesus calls those who submit their lives to Him. By God's standards, purity isn't foreign; it's normal.

"God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8 NLT).

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OUTLINE

In the *One Minute Bible* there is an action plan for remaining pure based on 2 Timothy 2:22. This action plan is worthy enough to be taught and discussed.

A “Pure” Action Plan

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22 NIV).

Here’s the plan:

1. RUN from the things that give you evil thoughts.

It seems like a strange strategy to run from evil. Some wonder if this is literal or figurative. Literally running from evil may seem weird, but when Christians fall to evil they usually regret they didn’t “lace ‘em up” and run away from the influence that brought them down.

We need to identify the things that give us evil thoughts and draw us away from God’s will. Once we make these identifications, we will be better prepared to run when we see evil coming.

2. STAY CLOSE to anything that makes you do right.

This seems like such an obvious action step, but too many Christians believe that faith in Christ is all they need to steer them from evil. Faith in Christ is all we need for salvation but we must support our faith by staying close to God’s Word. By doing this, we are directed and encouraged to do right on a DAILY basis.

3. Have FAITH and LOVE.

Two of the strongest biblical principles are mentioned as action steps in this verse: FAITH and LOVE. They are good reminders. Many times we try to identify new strategies and ideas to remain pure in heart, yet this passage brings us back to the core of the Christian life—love and faith.

4. ENJOY the company of others who love God and LIVE by this plan.

Too many young Christians believe that Christianity is an isolated, individual faith—“you have your belief and I have mine.” The scriptures are clear that the word “family” is a powerful description of how we are to relate to one another as believers. It indicates that we need fellowship, accountability, and Christian friendships.

He made no distinction between us and them, for he also cleansed their hearts through faith (Acts 15:9 NLT).

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

Open

- When you hear the word "purity," what thoughts or words immediately come to your mind?
- Which words best describe your feelings about becoming a person who is pure in heart?

impossible	challenged	ready to change
confused	hopeful	other _____
- How would you rate yourself on a purity scale of 1-10? Explain.
- In what setting does purity seem impossible?

Dig In

1. You might begin by saying, "It's probably safe to assume that we all have a common desire to be happy." In Matthew 5:8 Jesus says: *"God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God"* (NLT). Jesus connects happiness with having a pure heart. How do you think "purity" and "happiness" are related to one another?

2. Read Psalms 24 and 51. Prior to your reading, ask students to listen for examples of purity and underline or mark them in their Bibles.

Here are some examples:

- DO NOT: (1) practice dishonesty and (2) lie (Psalm 24:3-5).
- BE FILLED WITH (3) clean thoughts and (4) right desires (Psalm 51:10).

3. Write out a "working" definition of purity that students can easily remember and relate to.

4. Describe a hypothetical situation or have students create one and ask them to identify how a pure-in-heart student would respond. An example might be:

How would "Pure-in-Heart-Patty" respond if she needed an "A" on her final exam to get an "A" in the class? This "A" was crucial to her getting accepted to the college of her dreams. She didn't study hard enough for an "A", but her friend, "Anything-Goes-Amy," said Patty could cheat off her. What's the consequence of remaining pure in heart?"

Remind students that a pure-in-heart response may have negative consequences in today's valueless world. But cheating, lying, stealing, and similar choices also have consequences.

CLOSE

1. In what three areas do students today most need to be pure?
2. Do you know anyone who strives to live a pure life?
3. How can this person help you be pure in your lifestyle?
4. What do you need to do in your life to perform "heart surgery" so you will respond in purity?