

ON-THE-GO  
DEVOTIONALS

# purity

*a godly woman's  
adornment*

LYDIA BROWNBACK

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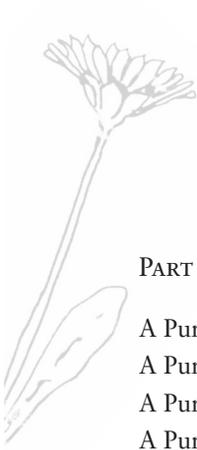
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# Part One

## *A Pure Heart*



*W*e don't hear the word *purity* much today except in descriptions of cleaning agents and snow-covered landscapes. We do hear the word spoken more frequently in the Christian community, but usually only as it applies to sexual purity. We have lost sight of all it means to be pure as God intended. So what does it mean? Purity is much more than moral behavior. Purity is first and foremost a matter of the heart. To be pure is to be single-minded. It is to have a single goal, a single focus, and a single purpose for ourselves and our lives. That is biblical purity, and from it springs moral behavior—the good we do with our bodies. At its core, purity is having a heart for the Lord that isn't watered down or polluted by lesser things.

The apostle James wrote, “Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” According to James, a double-minded woman spends her passion going after what this world offers. In contrast, Jesus describes a very different sort of passion: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment” (Matt. 22:37–38). Elsewhere Jesus attaches a promise to purity: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt.

5:8). To see God is to know the joy of living in close relationship with him. To see him is also to enjoy Spirit-filled, biblically guided direction and guidance for all of life. A woman who is pure in this way realizes an ever-increasing ability to rightly apply God's Word to the little day-to-day things.

Putting Christ first is the essence of purity. That is why Jesus' words in the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," are the starting point for any woman who is serious about being pure. But the beatitude is not only our starting point; it is also the place to end. Jesus' words form the basis for the kind of purity that will endure for a lifetime. Viewing purity from a biblical perspective takes our understanding of what it means to be pure beyond mere outward conduct to a whole new level—a deeper level. And if we approach purity as Jesus describes it, we will discover that our battle to be pure in body, as well as in mind and spirit, comes much more easily.

We women struggle, often with little success, to master particular sins—outward displays of impurity. Perhaps that's because we have been trying to clean up our act while failing to see the impurity in our heart. What are we to do? We can't clean our own heart. Besides, the extent of its dirt and sin is beyond our comprehension. A heart is made pure as Christ washes and cleans it. I once heard someone pray, "Lord, wash my heart." That's a good prayer. But becoming pure in heart doesn't end with prayer. It comes as we lean on the purity of Christ, on his perfect work for us. It comes as we lean on grace. It comes as we acknowledge our utter inability to become pure women and our need for Christ to make us clean and to purify us through and through. Putting Christ first takes care of everything else.

## A Pure Woman Is Clear-sighted

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

MATTHEW 5:8



*J*esus chose to begin his great sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, with a list of blessings. There are nine, to be exact, and each blessing is given to a specific sort of person. All too often we are quick to pass over this initial part of the sermon, which is called the Beatitudes. We want to get on to the practical parts of Jesus' teaching, where he talks about things like marriage and money and dealing with difficult emotions (Matthew 5–7). Perhaps we are quick to skim over the Beatitudes because we don't quite understand exactly what Jesus was getting at. The sixth beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," is a case in point. What does it mean to be pure in heart? And how can we actually *see* God?

When we think of purity, sexual purity is usually the first thing that comes to mind. But that's not Jesus' emphasis here in his sermon. He emphasizes heart purity. Not for a minute is Jesus diminishing the importance of sexual purity and all we do with our bodies, but he emphasizes heart purity because it is the root from which all other purity springs. If we are pure in heart, we will be pure in body too. A pure heart is an

undivided heart, one with a single purpose. A pure heart is one so set on God that it isn't watered down by lesser things. Does that describe your heart? It does if your driving passion in life is to know God and live in close fellowship with him.

To the pure in heart Jesus promised the blessing of sight. But he wasn't talking about a visual image; he was talking about comprehension. The more focused on God we are, the more of him we will know; and the better we know him, the more blessed we will be, because we will see that the most awesome, powerful being in the universe is also kind, loving, and relational.

The purer we are, the more we will see. But we miss out on the blessing of sight because we don't have pure hearts. Our hearts are divided. We want God, but we also want the comforts and pleasures that the world offers. The things of this life will ultimately never satisfy us because we were designed to find real fulfillment in God alone. A woman who is pure in heart is able to enjoy the good things God puts in her life, but those things don't hold her heart. God alone has that place because her view of his goodness, love, and wonder is much less cluttered up with the junk of the world.

If we are missing out on this blessedness, it doesn't have to be that way. We don't have to spend our lives running after lesser and short-lived ways of feeling satisfied with life. If this weren't true, Jesus wouldn't have given the beatitude. But he did give it, and he holds it out to us today. Do we really want it? That's the question.