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Beverly E.C.C., Chicago, IL

“FROM THE INSIDE OUT”
Matthew 5:8

Do I love the LORD God?

Do I love the great I AM with my actions, words, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes?

{Mt 22:37} Do I love the Father, Son and Holy Spirit with **“all [my] heart and with all [my] soul and with all [my] mind”**? What about you?

{Jude 6; Rev 20:13} Someday the Almighty will bring the kingdom of the world to an end. On that **“great Day”** each of us – every human being who has ever lived – will be **“judged according to what they have done.”**

The exact procedure has not been revealed. Sifting through the biblical images it is not a stretch to say that it will come down to one question: Do you love God?

{Mt 25:34} To those who love his Father the King will say, **“Come, you who are blessed... take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”**

{Mt 25:41} To those who do not love his Father the King will say, **“Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire.”**

❓ Do we love God? Do we love God with our whole being? Do we love God from the inside out?

▣ That brings us to Matthew 5:8: **“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”**

The crucial Greek terms are οἱ καθαροὶ [hoi katharoi] (**“the pure”**) and καρδιά [kardia] (**“in heart”**). **“Blessed are οἱ καθαροὶ τῆ καρδιά.”**

📖 Καθαροὶ is clean, unsoiled, uncontaminated or undiluted.

If Jesus had gone only as far as **“Blessed are the pure,”** formalists could claim that God values ritual purity most. **“The pure”** would eat only clean foods, strictly avoid unclean people and objects, and perform the right purification ceremonies.

Moralists could contend that God values ethical purity above all. Thus, **“the pure”** would be those who obey rigorous codes of conduct governing sexuality, money, holy days, and so forth.

Isn't this what religion is all about? Securing divine blessing through material and/or ceremonial and/or moral purity?

It makes sense. After all, there is some truth in it. Moral and ceremonial purity can be very good and, to the extent that they are, God affirms them.

Not only so, since these approaches emphasize externals they are measurable. They make for a tidy, black-and-white religion. In such a system I can determine in an instant precisely where I stand (or, for that matter, where *you* stand!) And if I *am* impure there is a step-by-step process to correct the problem.

Externalized religion is an easy sell. It appeals to our desire for absolute certainty, for cut-and-dried rules, for unmistakable boundaries between good and bad people, and for self-reliance.

As a recovering legalist, I testify to this terrible truth: a primarily external religion does not bring us closer to God and his life; it drives us away from him and toward death.

Thank God, Jesus does not stop at καθαροι! He adds τη καρδια: **“Blessed are the pure *in heart*.”**

📖 {Eph 4:18} The καρδια is the center of emotion, desire and passion, thought and understanding; and the will. It is to our καρδια that God reaches out, and it is in our καρδια that we are united with or **“separated from the life of God.”**

“Blessed are *the pure in heart*.” By modifying οἱ καθαροι with καρδια Messiah shifts our focus from the outside to the inside.

It's not that God does not care what we say and do. A quick glance at Scripture proves that outward speech and action are exceedingly important.

★ However, he abhors a veneer of purity that conceals a rotten heart. It is God's intent for purity to be who we are as well as what we do.

{Mt 5:27} That is why the Son accentuates the necessity to be pure from the inside out. He declares, **“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”**

He teaches, {Mt 15:11, 18-19} **“What goes into your mouth does not defile you.... the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these defile you. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder,**

adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile you.”

He strongly critiques those who excel at outward purity even while they neglect inward purity.

{Mt 23:25-26} **“Woe to you...! You clean the outside of the cup and dish but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.... First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside will also be clean.”**

{Mt 23:27-28} **“You are like whitewashed tombs which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”**

{Ps 51:10} Lord, have mercy! Save us from an external religion of ritualism and moralism! **“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a [right] spirit in me.”**

? We began by considering our love for God. What is the connection between a pure heart and love for God?

📖 Remember that, in addition to clean and unsoiled, καθαροι also has the sense of uncontaminated or undiluted.

{Mt 22:36-40} When the Savior was asked, **“which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”** he replied, **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And**

the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Wholehearted love is pure love. To love **“with all [one’s] heart and...soul...and mind”** is to give undiluted love from an uncontaminated heart.

{1 Ti 1:5} **“All the Law and the Prophets hang on these”** love **“commandments.”** It follows that **“the goal of”** God’s commands is *αγαπη* [agapē] **“love, which comes from a pure heart.”**

Paul had a particular directive in mind when he wrote this. Even so, it describes biblical Law in its entirety. It is true even of ceremonial ordinances that have no application in the New Covenant, and civil statutes that have no weight in a secular society. They were designed to facilitate love for God and neighbor.

{1 P 1:22} Peter reinforces the connection between *αγαπη* love and purity. **“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.”**

{1 Jn 4:20-21, 5:2-3} As does John:

If we say we love God yet hate a brother or sister, we are liars.... he has given us this command. Those who love God must also love one another.... This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands.

{1 Ti 1:5} Words and deeds of love performed with **“a good conscience and a sincere faith”** in obedience to God are the outward manifestation of a pure heart.

▣ **“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”**

★ **“The pure in heart” “are” “blessed.”** That is their current reality. In the present they are favored to see the Son of God in his purity, to share in his life of purity, and to participate in his mission of helping others to love with a pure heart.

★ {1 Jn 3:2-3} And **“the pure in heart” will be “blessed.”** That is their assurance for the future. When Messiah returns he will forever favor them with his bodily presence, and he will complete the purification of their hearts: **“When Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.”**

{Ro 3:23; Is 64:6} Please, hear my confession: I **“have sinned and”** I **“fall short of the glory of God.”** As a legalist I was measurably “better” than a lot of people; but put side-by-side with Holy God who is perfectly pure, I was – and still am – **“like one who is unclean.”** **“All [my] righteous acts”** my conscientious efforts for ritual and ethical purity were – and still **“are”** – **“like filthy rags.”**

☹ {Ro 7:15, 18, 21} **“What I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do”!** **“I have the desire to [be pure],**

but I cannot carry it out.” Part of me is not **“pure in heart.”**

My Old Creature does not **“see God”** now and he never will. In the end, he will **“depart from”** the Holy Trinity and go **“into the eternal fire.”**

But that is not all there is to it. There is also a New Creature in me, and he is different! By the grace of God, I see Messiah’s countenance of purity, share his life of purity, and participate in his mission of purity.

Are you hearing the pronoun “I”? Of the two people inside this is the real me, the substantial, eternal me!

★ The key thing is that the New Creature is not “just” me; it is **Christ in me**. For (Galatians 2:20) **“I”** (the old creature) **“have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me”!** By his power I have a new, pure heart. I love God with my whole being, and my neighbor as myself.

LORD God, cause us to love you!

Great I AM, make us to love you with our actions, words, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes!

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, empower us to love you with our whole being from the inside out!

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Matthew 5:8 is the Word of the LORD.