



reflecting Jesus

BETA

purity is not an action
but a direction of the heart

18

?

did you know...

24 carat gold

is the purest, softest,
and most expensive
gold

18 carat gold

is 75% pure and has
been mixed with 25% of
a different metal, which
makes it stronger

14 carat gold

is nearly 60% pure, and
quite strong

10 carat gold

in some countries, gold
must be at least 10
carat in order to be
advertised and sold as
"real" gold. It is about
40% pure and very
strong

photo: sxc calcant

what does it mean to be pure in God's sight?



the facts of his story

God gave the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai so his people would know his character and the ways of his kingdom. But by the time Jesus came, many hundreds of years later, he found the people trying do right actions, without being pure in their hearts. Jesus knew that if they were to reflect his character, their hearts must work from pure and true motives.

In the left hand column are the 10 commandments. Read the text in the right hand column. What attitude of the heart do you find in this text that enables us to obey the corresponding commandment?

Living the 10 Commandments from the Heart	
The 10 Commandments (Exodus 20)	Attitudes of the Heart
1. You shall have no other gods before a me.	Deuteronomy 6:4-9.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them...	Deuteronomy 6:4-9.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.	Psalms 148:13
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work...	Isaiah 58:13-14
5. Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.	Ephesians 6:1-3
6. You shall not murder.	Matthew 5:21-22
7. You shall not commit adultery.	Matthew 5:27-30
8. You shall not steal.	Titus 2:9-10
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.	Colossians 3:9-10
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour."	Romans 13:9-10



thinking it through

1. From the texts that you have just read, how would you define purity in God's eyes?

2. How would you describe the heart that follows God's commandments?



habits for reflecting Jesus ~ the purity line

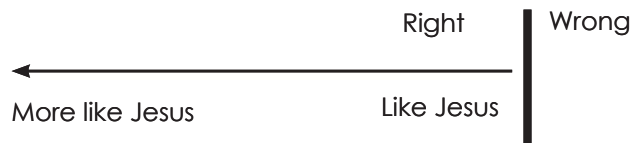
Jeremiah says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) So when we are thinking about living lives of purity before God, it is not our actions that we should think about first, but our hearts. That's where the problem lies. But when the heart is right with God, then the actions will be right towards him and each other also.

the purity line

When we think of purity, we often think of right and wrong on two sides of a line. "Right" is on one side, and "wrong" is on the other. But this can be dangerous thinking because we think that as long our feet are on the right side of the line we are ok. But our hearts can still be on the wrong side. For example, you could never buy a pornography magazine, but you could spend many hours fantasizing about other women.

Right	Wrong
My feet: Never buying pornography	My heart: Fantasizing about women

When we think about purity, it is helpful to think about the direction we are taking, rather than whether we are in the right or wrong place. We will continue to grow in purity for eternity, which means that we will continually find deeper ways to reflect the purity of Jesus. This means that our quest is not simply to "not be wrong" but to "increasingly reflect Jesus".



Remember that Satan and Adam and Eve were living in perfect places—Heaven and Eden—when they sinned. They were in the "right" places, but their hearts were heading in the wrong direction.

Now think about yourself. What areas do you need to think about more carefully when it comes to reflecting the purity of Jesus in your heart? Has your heart been struggling with sexually impure thoughts? Impurity when dealing with money issues? Anger or revenge? Anything else?

how to deal with an impure heart

One day, a man came to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus 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 neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:36-40)

We have seen that breaking the law within our hearts covers many different things. But Jesus says that these laws fall into just two areas, love for God and love for each other. So if we are to live lives of purity towards God and our neighbour, we must learn what it means to truly love God and our neighbour. Our hearts must learn to love with supernatural love. So Jesus says:

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And

if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48)

We become pure, not by trying to stop being impure, but by longing more deeply to love and reflect the one who is pure: God himself. That longing causes us to call on God to fill us with a supernatural love that comes from outside of ourselves.

learning the habit

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the areas in your life where you struggle with purity—is it about sex? Honesty? Your motives? Anger? Something else? Or perhaps you need to pursue purity to the next level.
2. Ask God to give you a clearer picture of his own purity and love, so you can plainly see the sort of person he wants you to become.
3. Pray for purity. Pray for his love to fill you so that you can love him completely, and love the people you have difficulties with. The more God's love fills your life, the easier it will become to continue going down the purity line toward becoming more and more like him.



putting the pieces together

In "the facts of his story" we saw how God longs for our hearts to be changed so that we can truly live lives of obedience that reflect the Kingdom of Heaven. The Ten Commandments are not just about what we do, but who we are inside.

In "thinking it through" you were challenged about your own heart and purity before God.

In "habits for reflecting the heart of Jesus, we saw that to become pure inside, we have to learn to love more fully, and this love can only come from outside of ourselves.



my time with God

Each day this week, think about one of the attitudes of the heart that guides the obedience of the corresponding commandment. Then think about "The Purity Line" What can you do to move further down this line towards an increasing reflection of the purity of Jesus? Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you as you do this.



pass it on!

Can you teach someone the purity line?



extra help

1. Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, by Ellen White.
2. The Divine Conspiracy, chapter 5, by Dallas Willard.