



## TRINITY CHURCH ROCKY HILL

*Bible Study – July 30, 2020*

***“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” (Matthew 5:8)***

Please read Psalm 51 before the class.

***Purity*** (Heb. niqqayon [/y'Qln]; Gk. hagneia [aJgneiva]).

### **The Old Testament**

**In the Old Testament, the basic sense of the Hebrew word for purity is probably an emptying out or being clean. The verb appears about forty times, most occurrences with an ethical, moral, or forensic sense. Purity is opposed to being guilty.** It stands over against such conduct or attitudes as unfaithfulness to God's covenant (Hosea 8:1), rebellion against God's law (v. 1), and idolatry (vv. 4-6, 11). Purity consists of "clean hands" (Gen 20:5), innocence (Psalm 26:6 ; 73:13), and an "empty stomach" (Amos 4:6).

**Purity is related to guiltless, blameless, or innocent behavior.** In Exodus 23:7, an innocent person is portrayed as someone who is righteous as measured by the demands of the law. Purity is not a cultic term; in fact, it does not appear in the rules for holiness detailed in Leviticus. Yet the idea of purity does surface in a number of instances. Before they can engage in any cultic or ceremonial activity, God's people must be consecrated or had to sanctify themselves (Exodus 19:10; Exodus 19:14 ; Joshua 7:13 ; 1 Sam 16:5 ; Job 1:5).

### **The New Testament**

**In the New Testament, there is little emphasis on ritual purity. Rather, the focus is on moral purity or purification:** chastity (2 Cor 11:2 ; Titus 2:5); innocence in one's attitude toward members of the church (2 Cor 7:11); and moral purity or uprightness (Php 4:8 ; 1 Tim 5:22 ; 1 Peter 3:2 ; 1 John 1:3). Purity is associated with understanding, patience and kindness (2 Cor 6:6); speech, life, love, and faith (1 Tim 4:12); and reverence (1 Peter 3:2).

Paul as God's servant commended himself through his sufferings and his moral and spiritual qualities. His ministry was enhanced and accredited because of the kind of person he had shown himself to be. Paul encouraged Timothy to set an example in his lifestyle and his purity (1 Tim 4:12), as well as in his relationships with other believers (5:2).

**Purity is freedom from anything that contaminates.** Purity is the quality of being faultless, uncompromised, or unadulterated. Pure water is free from any other substances. Pure gold has been refined to such a degree that all dross has been removed. And a pure life is one in which sin no longer determines the choices one makes.

**Purity is important to God,** who alone is truly pure. Purity is often used in Scripture as a means to communicate holiness or perfection. When Moses was building the tabernacle, God specified that the lampstand and other items inside the Holy Place be made “of pure gold” (Exodus 25:31; cf. 37:2, 16). The oil used in the tabernacle was to be pure, as was the frankincense (Leviticus 24:2, 7). The Lord has “pure” eyes (Habakkuk 1:13) and speaks “pure” words (Psalms 12:6). The New Jerusalem is described as a “city of pure gold, as pure as glass” (Revelation 21:18).

## **Heart**

The center of the physical, mental, and spiritual life of humans. This contrasts to the normal use of kardia (“heart”) in Greek literature outside the Scriptures. The New Testament follows the Old Testament usage when referring to the human heart in that it gives kardia a wider range of meaning than it was generally accustomed to have.

**First, the word heart refers to the physical organ** and is considered to be the center of the physical life. Eating and drinking are spoken of as strengthening the heart (Genesis 18:5; Judges 19:5; Acts 14:17). As the center of physical life, the heart came to stand for the person as a whole.

**The heart became the focus for all the vital functions of the body; including both intellectual and spiritual life.** The heart and the intellect are closely connected, the heart being the seat of intelligence: “For this people's heart is waxed gross lest at any time they should understand with their heart, and should be converted” (Matthew 13:15). The heart is connected with thinking: As a person “thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). To ponder something in one's heart means to consider it carefully (Luke 1:66; Luke 2:19). “To set one's heart on” is the literal Hebrew that means to give attention to something, to worry about it (1 Samuel 9:20). To call to heart (mind) something means to remember something (Isaiah 46:8). All of these are functions of the mind, but are connected with the heart in biblical language.

**Closely related to the mind are acts of the will, acts resulting from a conscious or even a deliberate decision.** Thus, 2 Corinthians 9:7: “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” Connected to the will are human wishes and desires. Romans 1:24 describes how God gave them up “through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies.” David was a man after God's “own heart” because he would “fulfill all” of God's will (Acts 13:22).

**Not only is the heart associated with the activities of the mind and the will, but it is also closely connected to the feelings and affections of a person.** Emotions such as joy originate in the heart (Psalm 4:7; Isaiah 65:14). **Discouragement or**

**despair is described by the phrase “heaviness in the heart” which makes it stoop (Proverbs 12:25).**

Again, Ecclesiastes 2:20 says, “Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labor which I took under the sun.” **Another emotion connected with the heart is sorrow.** John 16:6 says, “because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.” Proverbs 25:20, describes sorrow as having “an heavy heart.” The heart is also the seat of the affection of love and its opposite, hate. In the Old Testament, for example, Israel is commanded: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear sin because of him” (Leviticus 19:17 RSV). A similar attitude, bitter jealousy, is described in James 3:14 as coming from the heart. On the other hand, love is based in the heart. The believer is commanded to love God “with all your heart” (Mark 12:30; compare Deuteronomy 6:5). Paul taught that the purpose of God's command is love which comes from a “pure heart” (1 Timothy 1:5).

Finally, the heart is spoken of in Scripture as the center of the moral and spiritual life. The conscience, for instance, is associated with the heart. In fact, the Hebrew language had no word for conscience, so the word heart was often used to express this concept: “my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live” (Job 27:6). The Revised Standard Version translates the word for “heart” as “conscience” in 1 Samuel 25:31 (RSV). In the New Testament the heart is spoken of also as that which condemns us (1 John 3:19-21). All moral conditions from the highest to the lowest are said to center in the heart. Sometimes the heart is used to represent a person's true nature or character. Samson told Delilah “all his heart” (Judges 16:17). This true nature is contrasted with the outward appearance: “man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7 RSV).