

Rising Above Impurity

- Nothing seemed more refreshing on a hot summer day as a kid than drinking from the hose. But as an adult, I'd have to be pretty thirsty to want to drink that unfiltered and over-chlorinated municipally-sourced hose-water. My wife's also somewhat of a "water snob," with particular brands of bottled water she won't tolerate. "Water should just taste like water," she'll say, refusing to drink anything that hasn't been filtered from those unexpected chemical and mineral additions.
- But even more important than what we drink is how we live. Are we ["Rising Above"](#) the world's evil influence on us today? Living with integrity as Christ's disciples, how do we filter out impurity from our hearts?

Pure or Defiled

- The Greek word translated as "pure", "clean", and "innocent" is *katharos* (καθαρός) — meaning clear of dirt, clean, spotless, and unsoiled (BDAG). Like a glass of water you'd want to drink, purity doesn't happen when there's a bunch of unwanted add-ins. So when Jesus said, "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*" (Matt. 5:8), he's describing those with a spotless and unsoiled inner-life. And he's uniquely qualified to inspect and detect even the tiniest defect within us (Heb. 4:12-13).
- And the Greek word translated as "defile", or "common" is *koinoō* (κοινώω) — meaning to cause something to become unclean, profane, or ritually unacceptable (Louw-Nida). If you wouldn't want to drink a glass of water with a single drop of sewage, why would God want even a drop of sin in our lives? Jesus warned, "*what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander*" (Matt. 15:18-19). So purity starts with guarding our hearts — through God's word (Ps. 119:9-11) — from the filth that leads to sinful actions.
- Remember when God said to Satan, "*Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason*" (Job 2:3)? Purity is a unique characteristic among people, and only those with integrity will keep themselves "*unstained from the world*" (James 1:27). When we commit to walking with integrity and purity, we set an example for others to follow (1 Tim. 4:12).

Choosing Purity

- Fill your mind with pure thoughts. Direct your thoughts toward "*whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is **pure**, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable*" (Phil. 4:8).
- Treat even "minor" sins seriously (Mark 9:42-48). Remember that the devil is the father of lies (John 9:44; cf. Gen. 3:4). Proceed with caution, and realize the poisonous effect that "little" sins can have.
- Catch impurity early, noticing unhealthy attitudes and ungodly impulses. We'll struggle to rid ourselves of habitual sin after it takes root. Like a weed, sin is easiest to uproot when it's small.

"See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no 'root of bitterness' springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled" (Heb. 12:15).

Purity Toolbox

- **Read** — Mark 9:42-48; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Dan. 1:5-21
- **Reflect** — Ask yourself, "When am I most susceptible to impure thoughts?"
- **Request** — Pray to the Lord, "*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me*" (Ps. 51:10).
- **Respond** — Do a "purity check" on yourself, using a close friend for support.
- **Reach Out** — Ask someone, "What have you courageously done to keep yourself pure?"

Conclusion

- No one may ever see the impurity in your life — those secret sins and attitudes hiding from the public eye — but make no mistake that the Lord sees!
- Take action today to rise above impurity, filling your mind with wholesome thoughts, taking even the "smallest" sins seriously.