

Purer In Heart - Verse 1

Song number 580 in our songbook contains many quotes and allusions to scripture. It makes an excellent outline to teach what a worshiping child of God should be. We can look at the words of the song and the verses they call to mind without copying the lyrics here. Several websites offer complete lyrics to the song.

The song begins with thoughts from one of the beatitudes (Matthew 5:8), *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."* The opening lyrics request God's help, **"PURER IN HEART, O GOD, HELP ME TO BE."** This verse is often used in sermons and studied in classes but seldom is the Greek word translated "pure" explained. It is a word the Jews would be familiar with from the Septuagint scriptures used by Jesus and the apostles. In that Greek translation of the Hebrew Torah, *katharos* is translated as "clean." Applied to the Law of Moses, the word refers to the pure, clean, and holy state of the individual who can approach God's temple to offer sacrifice. The Hebrew writer makes this comparison as he draws upon the cleansing washings of the law to the cleansing obtained in the blood of Christ. *"For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* (Hebrews 9:13-14). Therefore, *"let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water"* (Hebrews 10:22).

The request for God's help continues with the words **MAY I DEVOTE MY LIFE WHOLLY TO THEE.** Jesus taught that we could not share our devotion between conflicting wants. *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other"* (Matthew 6:24). We have God's assurance that He will help us. First, He gave His Son to save us (John 3:16). Second, He provided the Gospel to change us (Romans 1:16-17). And third, He will continually offer assistance to us on our journey. *"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it"* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

He has already provided light for our way before we ask Him to **WATCH THOU MY WAYWARD FEET.** The Psalmist said, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path"* (Psalms 119:105). Through God's Word, we learn where to go and how to conduct ourselves in our daily life. But we continually pray to be led; as the song continues, **GUIDE ME WITH COUNSEL SWEET.** The Psalmist said that he kept the ordinances of God and walked in them. *"I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, For You Yourself have taught me"* (Psalms 119:101-102). And Jesus told Thomas, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me"* (John 14:6).

Paul's writing to the church at Ephesus describes the journey of a pure heart on its way to heaven. Paul first mentions Christ Jesus's work to purify and remake us into acceptable children, loving and doing what the Father directs us to do. He says, *"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10). Paul also lists the way we are to live in purity and holiness by referring to the good works or "walks" that Jesus

has directed. First is the walk that shows we are called to be a follower of Christ and a child of God. *"Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called"* (Ephesians 4:1-3). The second is a warning to not return to former sinful walks. *"Walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind"* (Ephesians 4:17-19). Third, we are to walk in love. *"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma"* (Ephesians 5:1-2). Forth, since you are the *"light of the World"* (Matthew 5:14), *"walk as children of Light"* (Ephesians 5:8). And fifth, Paul encourages, *"Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil"* (Ephesians 5:15-16).

Do we walk as the world walks? Or do we walk according to the pure light of God's word, remembering that *"we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7)?