

LESSON 3



PURE-MINDEDNESS

Scripture Texts: Proverbs 4:23; Mark 7:15, 21-23; Colossians 3:8; Philippians 4:8; Titus 1:15; 2 Corinthians 7:1

Thoughts determine the direction of life. To please God, thoughts must be pure. The mind derives its nature from the heart. To be pure-minded, we must have our hearts cleansed from sin through Jesus Christ. Changing the mind does not change the heart. Changing the heart changes the mind. We must take ourselves in hand if we are going to have pure minds. Can one sin without outward action? A deed germinates in the heart, takes shape in the mind, and only becomes known to others in the act. The quality of the mind is extremely important.

MEMORY VERSE: *The thoughts of the righteous are right; but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.*

— *Proverbs 12:5*

Individual Responsibility

Proverbs 4:23. **Keep thy heart.** When Jesus commanded, **Watch**, He included the heart. Why? Because **out of it are the issues of life.** All that life is, its work, its influence, its record in God's book, comes out of the heart. To control the heart for good, Christ must be there. We cannot reform the sinful heart, give it a bath, dress it up in new clothes, or make it control itself. It must be made anew by conversion.

Mark 7:15, 21-23. **The things which come out . . . defile the man.** Jesus stated a great truth here. Our standing with God is not built from the outside in, but from the inside out. It does not depend upon material things that we do or do not have or on circumstances we face in life. We are not defiled by the things that we eat, drink, or wear. **For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed . . .** That which comes out of the heart makes the difference. **All these evil things** listed here by Jesus **come from within, and defile the man**, because the heart that produces them is defiled.

The heart is the root. The plant becomes what the root is. Only a purified heart produces thoughts and words pure in God's sight. Every sin begins with a thought within the mind that grows into an attitude or a desire and progresses to action. Each person must respond to each thought that comes into the mind—either to dismiss it if it is evil, or to allow it to remain if it is good. Here the thought becomes sin or righteousness. The mind directs the act. The mind guides the will. A deed germinates in the heart and takes shape in the mind. It is already sin before it becomes known to others in the act. The quality of the mind is very important. Our minds must be centered in Christ. Read Philippians 2:5 and 4:7.

A Standard for Thoughts

Colossians 3:8. **Put off all these.** The people of the Colossian church had once used their mouths to pour out the evils named. Ours will do the same until purified by the blood of Christ (see 1 John 1:7). Let us not think that the heart is evil but our thoughts are righteous. When the heart is impure, the mind is equally impure.

Philippians 4:8. **Whatever things are true . . . honest . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report; if there be any virtue . . . any praise, think on these things.** The life builds from what goes on in the hidden depths of thought. Measure thought by God's standard. Ask if this is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. If so, think on it; meditate on these virtues. Build your plans and ideals on them. It will be fruit to delight the heart of God. Suspicion, gossip, pride, etc. will be shut out. Be careful as to the kind of thoughts you allow each day. Our thoughts create first our moods and then finally our characters. Think well in order that you may live well.

There is no surer way of committing moral suicide and completely ruining one's happiness than by cherishing thoughts

that are contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Think loving thoughts, and you will be loving; think pure thoughts, and you will be pure. Think of your Christian brothers in terms of tolerance and praise, holding them in high esteem, and it will do great good to your own life as well as theirs.

No Middle Ground

Titus 1:15. **Unto the pure all things are pure.** You cannot poison a spring of flowing water. It carries the poison away without allowing it time to do damage. Redeemed ones have a "well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). See John 7:38. They can meet any circumstance without impurity in everything and seek to draw others into it. A mind open to goodness screens out evil impressions, while a mind filled with evil sucks in bad influences from every side. Read Matthew 12:35.

Second Corinthians 7:1. **Having therefore these promises** [the promises found in the preceding verses] . . . **let us cleanse ourselves . . . perfecting holiness.** The heart is cleansed through salvation. This is God's part. We must keep ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and the spirit. This is our part. It is useless to try to make the mind pure while the heart is defiled. A pure heart feeds purity into the mind. The impurity knocking at its door can be turned away by the will.

JUST A THOUGHT

**The best things in life are free. No price tag
hangs on them. God gives them away.**