

Music Prayer **Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."**

What does "Blessed are the..." mean? The Beatitudes are a declaration of blessedness. A guide to blessings that only _____ can give. These blessings go beyond our _____. The world can neither give them nor take them _____. They are available every moment of your life. These characteristics form the path of the blessings God wants us to _____.

What does to be "pure" mean in a biblical frame of reference? It means living without compromise...seeking purity and singlemindedness. Here it means to have _____, to be consistent, and to be of one mind. It is to choose to have a single purpose in your life. A pure heart is a reflection of doing what God wants us to do, the highest good is knowing God.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 Chaotic World View

Not everyone believes you can do this. Many believe that life has no real purpose or meaning. One philosopher, Martin Heidegger, says you're an actor on a stage with no script, director, audience, past or future. Courage is to face life as it is. Many in our modern culture say there is no absolute truth. Life has no real purpose, just what you make of it. Life is chaotic, random dots produced by the coincidence of evolution and the chance occurrences of life.

*Biblical definition of Purpose: Purpose declares why you exist. It captures the heart of why you are on this earth and why Jesus died for you. It defines your life not in terms of what you think, but what God thinks. It anchors your life in the character and call of God. **Romans 8:28-29** tells us "We know (according to Divine Scripture) that in all things (our sin, failures, trials) God works for the good (that which conforms us to the likeness of his Son) of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those who he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son. He is making and shaping us! We are to be Christ-centered, not self-centered. What is your life "purpose"? _____*

*Heart: In the biblical mindset, "heart" refers to the mind, will, and emotions. **Mark 7:21-23***
*"For from within, out of men's hearts come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'." **1 Timothy 2:3-4** "This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." **Ezekiel 36:26***
*"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." **How can we grow in purity of heart?***

1) Make sure we're saved. Only the pure in heart will see God. These blessings are only true of the born again **Heb 12:14-15** 2) Follow the greatest commandment in God's Word **Matt 22:36-38** 3) Love the Lord "with all your heart" by walking in the will of God. **2 Ti 2:22** Flee evil, pursue righteousness. 4) Guard and protect our hearts **Pr 4:23, Matt 19:16-22** confessing anything displeasing to God **Ps 139:23-24** 5) Love the Lord "with all your soul" by worshipping him. **Ps 86:11** "Give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name." 6) Love the Lord with "all your mind" your intellect and thinking, by knowing the Word of God. **1 Peter 1:22** Know and obey the truth of God's word. **Phil 4:8-9** What do you need to give up in order to do this?

What does it mean for us to pursue being "pure in heart, for they shall see God."

1) *having an inner moral righteousness.* When Christ speaks of "*heart*" he is speaking of the *mind, will, and emotions*. (See drawing) When you are born again God changes your heart. To hold onto ungodly attitudes or behaviors hinders our relationship with God and the ability to see him. He starts ridding us of jealousy, anger, pride, selfishness and unforgiveness. He replaces these attitudes and behaviors with selflessness, humility, love, patience and other virtues. We want to believe that people, in their hearts, are essentially good and that they must be coerced or victimized or provoked into bad behavior. *Jesus says the opposite. These sins originate in the heart.* **Mark 7:21-23.** *Humanity has a heart problem and needs a heart transplant.*

Last week we talked about how unforgiveness causes us to be "*in darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.*"

1 John 2:9-11 This week we will look at another of those ungodly attitudes or behaviors that hinder our relationship with God and with others. The topic is Anger. Here is the personal testimony of June Hunt regarding anger. Turn to your pages from June's book as she addresses the "heart" with regard to the impact on us Physically, Emotionally, and Spiritually. Also, the impact of Unrealistic Expectations to develop right thinking (Biblical viewpoint).

2) be sincere—free of hypocrisy. Do not be like the Pharisees who did their acts of righteousness to be seen by men—then they have received their reward from men, but will not be rewarded by God. **John 10:10** tells us the "thief's" interest is only in himself. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy". But, Christ's interest is in his sheep whom he enables to have life to the full. "...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." **Matthew 23:27** Christ describes the Pharisees as drawing near to God with their mouths while their hearts were far from him.

3) single-minded in devotion. In the army it means to cleanse or purge the discontented, unwilling, cowardly and inefficient, leaving only the first-class fighters. **Matt.6:24** Also, an example of metals that have been refined until all impurities are gone—leaving only pure silver or gold. Leaving many Christians stunted in their spiritual growth. **Matthew 13:22** Paul tells us in **Phil. 3:10-14** how we can know Christ. A life focused is full of strength—an unfocused life is weak and ineffective. We must intentionally and whole heartedly seek knowing God.

4) We cannot see God with our physical eyes. **Exodus 33:20** But we can "see" God spiritually. **Hebrews 11:27** "Without holiness no one will see the Lord" **Heb. 12:14.**

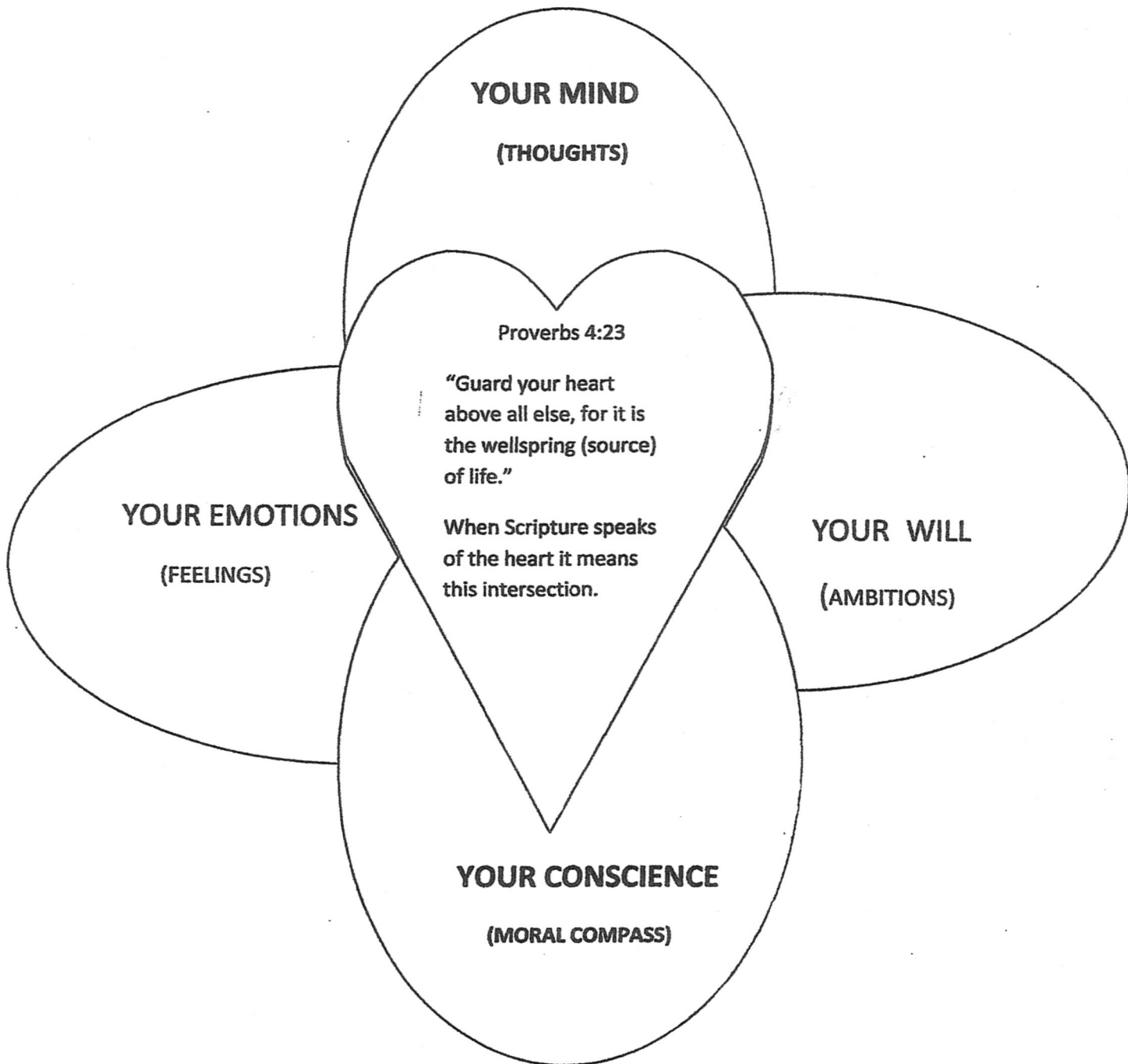
Seeing God **1) Seeing God has a present aspect to it.** Believers will see God in creation.

Ps 29:7-10 David describes seeing and experiencing God in a thunder storm. Christ saw creation as revealing God's love and providence **Matt 6**

2) Seeing God in difficult circumstances. **Job 1:21, Ac 7:56** Are you seeing God's hand in your trials?

3) Seeing God has a future aspect. **1 Cor 13:12** "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

4) Love the world as God does. Francis of Assisi suggested preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words. **Matt 22:39** "Love your neighbor as yourself."



Your soul is what makes you a unique individual. It's your personality and internal nature; it's made up of your mind, will, emotions, and conscience. The heart is the centerpiece of the soul.

► Physical Symptoms

- Blurred vision
- Headaches
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Insomnia
- Intestinal disorders
- Overeating
- Stomach disorders

► Emotional Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Bitterness
- Compulsions
- Depression
- Fear
- Insecurity
- Phobias
- Worry

► Spiritual Symptoms

- Loss of confidence: Feeling insecure about your relationship with God and your ability to respond wisely to difficulties
- Loss of energy: Lacking strength for your service to God and others
- Loss of faith: Failing to believe that God is working in your life
- Loss of freedom: Becoming a prisoner of your emotions and unable to serve God freely
- Loss of identity: Becoming like the person toward whom you are bitter rather than becoming like Christ
- Loss of perspective: Allowing your emotions to distort your thinking
- Loss of sensitivity: Failing to hear the Spirit of God speaking to your heart
- Loss of vision: Losing a sense of God's purpose for your life

DO YOU Have Hidden Anger?

Most volcanic craters are about as deep as a football field is wide—*100 yards*. They are dark, mysterious places with deposits tracing eruptions from hundreds, even thousands, of years before. One of the most well-known volcanoes in recent history has been Mount St. Helens in Washington State. The rumbling and raging mountain sent a pyrotechnic blast of ash and molten rock over more than 230 square miles and, in May of 1980, killed 57 people.¹⁰

Other eruptions of Mount St. Helens have since occurred, but not with such catastrophic results. Actually, they have served to clue scientists in to an interesting fact: The magma driving the most recent volcanic activity was likely left over from the 1980s eruption.

In similar ways, the hidden anger from childhood hurts can *directly* affect present-day outbursts. Many people live life unaware that they have hidden anger—suppressed anger that only occasionally surfaces. While this hidden anger is usually rooted in past childhood hurts, the underlying effects are always ready to surface and can sizzle up an already simmering scenario. For example, when someone says or does something “wrong,” the one with suppressed anger often overreacts. When someone makes an innocent mistake, the magnitude of anger is out of proportion to the mistake.

If you have hidden anger, you can find yourself at one extreme or another—from feeling hopeless to feeling hostile—and yet be totally unaware of why you are experiencing these feelings. The Bible makes it clear that some of our motives and emotions are hidden

- ▶ **Chemical depression** can develop when medications interfere with the production of certain neurotransmitters.
- ▶ **Postpartum depression** occurs in some mothers when their hormone levels drop following the birth of their babies.
- ▶ **Situational depression** is caused by painful situations in which the heart is grieved (for example, death of a loved one, divorce, job loss).

Regardless of the cause of a person's depression, hope and praise are effective antidotes.

"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."
(Psalm 42:11)

DO EXPECTATIONS Lead to Anger?

When it comes to anger, *unrealistic expectations* can be harmful—much like trying to put out a fire with gasoline. When it came to battling the Canadian landfill blaze, any expectation of quickly extinguishing the fire proved futile.

A thick haze of smoke choked out the fresh air and sunlight for miles. Of greater concern was a gas pipeline dangerously close to the billowing flames, posing a serious threat to life and property. Even the water supply was threatened by the pooling of leachate (the liquid drainage from the landfill).

After consulting with firefighting specialists, authorities decided to excavate the burning material

and transport it to another area where it could be fully immersed in water.²⁴

How easy to adopt the unrealistic expectation that we have the power to determine what people should do or how situations *should* be. "My destiny should be *this*; therefore, people should do *that*." Typically, we pray and *expect* God to do everything we ask. We want to be the fire chief, when in reality He alone is the One in charge.

The primary problem with unrealistic expectations centers around the simple word "pride." We would be wise to ask the Lord, "Do I act as though I am the center of my world and everything revolves around me?" The Bible describes angry reactions resulting from unmet expectations.

"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. ... 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'" (James 4:1-3, 6)

Unrealistic Expectations

Anger toward circumstances

"I expected good things would always come my way—but my life is clearly not what I had expected."

Anger toward others

"I expected you to always be here for me, to love and support me—but now I feel alone and lonely."

Anger toward yourself

"I expected to always excel—but now I am struggling and feel like a failure."

Anger toward God

"I expected God to protect me from pain and provide health and wealth as He promised—but He hasn't answered my prayers."

The more we expect God and people to do what we want, the angrier we become when they fail us. Truth is, the more we try to control others, the more control we give them over ourselves. The more demands we put on others, *the more power we give them* to anger us. Instead, we need to humble ourselves and submit to God's sovereignty over our lives and over the lives of others. We need to leave our desires and our destiny in His hands—where they rightly belong.

The Bible says we are to lay our hopes and expectations before the Lord and allow Him to determine what we should receive.

"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him." (Psalm 62:5)

Anger over Unrealistic Expectations

QUESTION: "Since the Bible says, 'Ask and you will receive,' I was told that all I had to do was name and claim what I wanted—in Jesus' name. If I would sincerely 'believe,' I could expect to 'receive,' which clearly hasn't happened! I'm angry with God. Why hasn't He answered my prayers?"

ANSWER: Your anger at God is based on *unrealistic expectations*. While you were completely sincere,

those who taught you this expectation were sincerely wrong. The *Name It-Claim It* theology is not biblical.

When you look at the *whole counsel of God*—reading all Scriptures on the same subject in their accurate context—you will see that the "believe and receive" doctrine doesn't measure up as biblically accurate.

► Consider the apostle Paul, whose pedigree was impressive, yet he knew what it was to lack health and wealth. Although 100% in the will of God, he was also weak and "*in want*." He said, "*I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*" (Philippians 4:12-13)

► Jesus tells us that whatever we ask in faith, we will receive: "*I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours*" (Mark 11:24). At face value, this verse appears to back up the belief that God will give us whatever we ask—as long as we believe, we will receive it. Yet the apostle John gives us clarification: If your desire conforms to God's will, He will look upon your request with favor and allow it to come to pass. The Bible says ...

"If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And ... we know that we have what we asked of him."
(1 John 5:14-15)

Anger over Loss

QUESTION: "How can I handle my anger over the losses in my life?"

ANSWER: When you experience significant loss in your life, you will go through a time of grieving.

- ▶ **Admit your feelings**—your hurt, sense of injustice, fear, or frustration.
- ▶ **Release to God** all the pain you feel, along with the situations beyond your control.
- ▶ **Trust God** to give you the grace and insight to deal constructively with each loss.
- ▶ **Release your expectation** that life must go your way.

Pray, "Lord, thank You for being sovereign over my life. Whatever it takes, I want to respond to You with a heart of gratitude and to accept the unchangeable circumstances in my life. I choose to stop making myself and those around me miserable by being angry over something none of us can change. Instead, I thank You for what You are going to teach me through this loss. And thank You for Your promise that somehow You are going to use this loss for good. In Your holy name I pray, Amen."

Repeatedly remind yourself to ...

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is
God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

WHAT IS the Root Cause of Anger?

The root cause of extended anger is typically based on a "wrong" premise about "rights." The root cause of the nearly catastrophic Canadian landfill blaze was also based on a wrong premise about rights: Unscrupulous business owners chose to operate their landfill in their own illegitimate way rather than yielding to the official permit requirements for landfills.²⁵

When we feel that our real or perceived "rights" have been violated, we can easily respond with anger.²⁶ But what are our legitimate rights? One person would answer, "Happiness." Another would say, "Freedom to live life my way."

Yet this was not the mind-set of Jesus. He yielded His rights to His heavenly Father. Based on the Bible, *we have the right to live in the light of God's will as revealed in His Word*. Other than that, we are to yield our rights to the Lord and let Him have His way in our hearts. We are told to ...

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean
not on your own understanding; in all your ways
acknowledge him, and he will make your paths
straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

▶ WRONG BELIEF

"When I am hurt, fearful, frustrated, or treated unfairly, *I have the right* to be angry until the situation changes. It is only natural for me to be angry about the disappointments in my life and to express my anger in whatever way I choose."

▶ RIGHT BELIEF

"Since I have trusted Christ with my life and

Love God and Love People Chap 7 Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God

The characteristics Jesus describes throughout these verses are often countercultural and counter to our inherent sin nature. Thus, these qualities are not likely to develop in us without a conscious and intentional effort. So, either we focus on appearing clean and well put together for those looking on, or we spend our time trying to make sure our hearts are right with the Lord. The Greek word for "see" is *horao*, and implies an experience or sense of perception. When Jesus promised that the pure in heart would see God, he promised that they would know the indwelling presence of the Lord in an intimate and personal way. This eternal presence of our holy God can be part of our lives every minute of every day. And should be.

If our focus is on looking like a good Christian rather than taking the necessary steps to become one, we will not see God because we've fixed our eyes on ourselves instead.

Scriptures used:

Pure: Jer 9:23-24 _____

Heart:

Exe36:26: _____

Mark: 7:21:23

Eze 36:21 _____

1Jn 1:5-10 _____

Acts 13:22 _____

1Tim 2:4 _____

1 Jn 2:20 _____

Pr 3:5 _____

Purpose: Romans 8:28-29 _____

1) "inner moral righteousness"

Jas 1:7-8 _____

Jas 4:3-4 _____

Pr 3:3 _____

Pr 4:23 _____

2) be sincere—free of hypocrisy

Jn 10:10 _____

Matt 23:27 _____

Matt 15:8 _____

Ps 23:3-4 _____

3) single-minded devotion

Matt 6:24 _____

Jas 4:8 _____

Matt 13:22 _____

Php 3:10-14 _____

Love God and Love People Chap 7 Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God

4) "See God spiritually"

Ex 33:20 _____

Heb 11:27 _____

Heb 12:14 _____

How can we grow in Purity of Heart?

1) Make sure we're saved

Heb 12:14-15 _____

1 Cor 2:9 _____

2) Follow the greatest commandment Matt 22:36-38

3) by walking in the will of God

Tim 2:22 _____

4) Guard and protect your hearts

Pr 4:23 _____

Matt 19:16-22 _____

Ps 139:23-24 _____

1 Jn 1:9 _____

5) by worshipping God

Ps 86:11 _____

6) by knowing the word of God

1 Pe 1:22 _____

Heb 4:12 _____

Phi 4:8-9 _____

7) Love the world as God does

Matt 22:39 _____

Seeing God "for they shall see God"

1) has a present aspect to it

Ps 29:7-10 _____

Matt 6 _____

2) in different circumstances

Job 1:21 _____

Acts 7:56 _____

Acts 7:30-34 _____

3) has a future aspect

1 Cor 13:12 _____