

Question: How can anyone be morally pure in these immoral times?

Picking up where we left off last week, one must first “belong to Christ” or be a Christian to be pure. Stated another way, a person must be a true disciple of Christ to be cleansed from the moral impurity of sin (Jn 8:31-32).

The gospel teaches us that the blood, which Jesus Christ shed in His death on the cross of Calvary, has the power to remove the sins of the whole world (Ep 1:7; 1Jn 2:2). However, man must avail himself of the power of that blood by becoming a Christian. Saul of Tarsus became a Christian when he believed the gospel message and obeyed the command to be baptized to have his sins washed away (Ac 22:16). At that point in time, God activated the power of Christ’s shed blood and purified Saul from all of his past sins (Ro 6:3; 1Pe 1:22). We see, in Saul’s conversion to Christ, an example of how man’s faith works together with God’s grace in salvation (Ep 2:8). In this way, we too may “belong to Christ.”

Once we become Christians, we are obligated to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2Co 7:1). Jesus taught His disciples, saying, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Mt 5:8). To Timothy, Paul wrote, “keep yourself pure” (1Ti 5:22). Christians are not perfect, only forgiven – and when they sin, they have the right and duty to repent of that deed, confess it personally before God in prayer and ask His forgiveness (Ac 8:22; 1Jn 1:9).

There can be no mistaking it: God desires - yes demands, that His people keep their minds and bodies pure from sin. John said, “sin is the transgression of the law” (1Jn 3:4). It is God’s law to which John refers. Thus, for one to know what sin is, one must know the law of God. Conversely, for one to know how to be pure, one must know God’s law. James warned his brethren to “lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (Js 1:21-22). This means that Christians must read the Bible, which contains God’s law; they must listen carefully to the teaching of Jesus and His apostles; and then they must “receive” (believe) it and be a “doer” of it, in order to purify and save their souls.

But that is no easy task, since we live in such a morally bereft society. Paraded before us every day is a constant barrage of spiritual contaminants and pollutants. Christians find themselves continually fending off the “fiery darts of the wicked one” (Ep 6:16). Satan is a formidable and cunning adversary, and the Christian must be on guard every moment to resist his temptations.

The key to prevailing in this matter is the control of one’s thoughts. Jesus warned, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts...these are the things which defile a man...” (Mt 15:19-20). No wonder Solomon admonished, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life” (Pro 4:23). What better way is there to “keep” one’s heart pure than to make certain that good thoughts run through it at all times.

“Whatever things are true,
Whatever things are noble,
Whatever things are just,
Whatever things are pure,
Whatever things are lovely,
Whatever things are of good report,
If there is any virtue
And if there is anything praiseworthy –
Meditate on these things” (Phil 4:8)