

## THE TRADITION OF PURIFICATION

### Christmas Traditions, Part 1

November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Purity was an important part of the first Christmas  
Luke 2:21-24 (NLT) "Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, He was named Jesus, the name given Him by the angel even before He was conceived. Then it was time for the purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. The law of the Lords says, 'If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord.' So they offered a sacrifice according to what was required in the law of the Lord – 'either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.'"

Through Jesus' birth, life and death on the cross, He changed forever what it means to be pure

Purity is no longer about following strict rules, it is about having a heart made pure by God

Psalm 24:3-4 (NLT) "Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies."

Matthew 5:8 (NLT) "God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God."

If you feel God is far away or you don't feel His presence in your life, examine your heart

#### 4 Steps to a Pure Heart This Christmas

##### 1. Examine my heart for impurities

Proverbs 20:9 (NIV) "Who can say, 'I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?'"

An important way to measure the purity of your heart is to examine the words that come out of your mouth

Matthew 12:35 (NLT) "A good person produces good words from a good heart, and an evil person produces evil words from an evil heart."

When we are under pressure, the Real us comes out

Being pure in Christ's eyes is more than what we do, it's also about our motives  
Proverbs 16:2 (NLT) "People may be pure in their own eyes, but the Lord examines their motives."

You can fool others, and maybe even yourself, but you can't fool God  
Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT) "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."

##### 2. Protect my mind from impure thoughts

Luke 11:34 (NLT) "Your eye is a lamp for your body. A pure eye lets sunshine into your soul. But an evil eye shuts out the light and plunges you into darkness."

What we listen to is huge and affects the purity of our hearts

We are mistaken & naïve to think the things we watch don't change the way we think, act, and live

Make a decision to go on a diet from negative words & sexual images we can be bombarded with  
Psalm 101:3 (NLT) "I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar."

### 3. Fill my life with God's presence

Matthew 12:43-45 (NLT) "When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, seeking rest but finding none. Then it says, 'I will return to the person I came from.' So it returns and finds its former home empty, swept, and clean. Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before."

The key to having a pure heart isn't emptying your life of bad habits. It's replacing the bad habits with godly ones

Where there is a void in our life, an emptiness where God should be, garbage and sin soon step in and fill it up

Where God is not, sin and impurity will be

We must spend time with God – make a commitment to:

- daily spend time with God Reading the Bible and praying
- be at church with your spiritual family each week
- get in a small group to surround yourself with godly friends who can help you

### 4. Receive complete forgiveness from Jesus

We are to strive for purity & at the same time realize we are not perfect

No matter how hard we try, we can't make ourselves pure; only God can do that  
Psalm 51:7 (NLT) "Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow."

Romans 3:22 (NLT) "We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done."

Christ died for all our sins – past, present, future

"The Balance" – we strive to have pure hearts and to honor God with every facet of our life, but we understand we can't be made pure by our own efforts. Only God can do that. And He wants to, but we must Receive Him into our lives.

Psalm 51:10 (NLT) "Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me."

#### My Next Step Today Is:

- I want to ask Jesus to come into my life and purify me from sin for the first time
- I will ask God to search my heart & help me see any impurities in my life
- I will memorize Matthew 5:8
- I plan to attend the "first anniversary" luncheon on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>