

## Maintaining Purity of Heart (1 John 2:15-17)

Too often, if we are honest with ourselves, we find ourselves loving this world.

For those of us who are Christians, where do we begin fighting this battle against a love for the world that is outlined in 1 John 2:15-17?

**Battle of the Flesh** – We are fighting a daily battle between our souls and our flesh. (1 Pet. 2:11; Gal. 5:17)

- We need to acknowledge and recognize that we are in warfare!
- If we have the wisdom to recognize this daily battle, then we can begin to take action and make changes in the following ways in order to conquer through the Spirit.

**Battle of the Heart** – Although this is not mentioned in 1 John 2:15-17, it is the focus and title of our lesson and it is important to emphasize the battle we fight against the flesh for the possession of our hearts.

We allow too much of the world to enter our hearts (Facebook, twitter, Instagram, vine, snapchat, movies, TV shows, our friends, etc.) If we allow that in, it will come out! (Matt. 15:19-20; Matt. 7:20-23; Luke 6:45)

- Have you ever been around someone who just talks about dirty things a lot or uses filthy language? That person did not get that way because they read their Bibles every day and meditate on spiritual things. They have filled their minds with this world!
- Col 3:1-2 -- This passage sets before us a challenge and that is to **consciously** change what we put our minds on every day.
- Rom. 8:5-8 -- If we are living by the Spirit, we are constantly putting spiritual things into our hearts and minds.
  - This is a very important point: *we can not put our minds on worldly things and spiritual things and think that we are pleasing God!* (Rom. 8:7-8)
    - It is **impossible** to please God with a worldly mindset. We must ask ourselves if we want to be friends of God or enemies of Him, because we can only be one or the other. (James 4:4)
- Gal. 5:16-17 -- Someone might ask, “How do I stop doing the things that I don’t want to do?” Paul gives us the answer to that in this passage -- “*walk by the Spirit.*”
  - If we are daily putting our minds on practical, physical actions we can take to serve God and serve others, then we are walking by the Spirit! If this is where our minds are set, then we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (vs.16; Rom. 8:13)

**Battle of the Eyes** -- If we strive to control what our eyes observe, we have won half the battle of purity. (Matt. 6:22-23; Luke 11:34-36)

- I know some of you might be asking the question, “How do I just stop looking at things I shouldn’t when it is all around me?”
- Others of you might be thinking, “I have accepted the fact that I can’t control what I look at.”
- I am here to tell you that God has answers and solutions to both of those mindsets/questions and many more in regard to our lusts.
- **1 John 2:16** specifically mentioned the “lust of the eyes.” Young men, we must get control of what we look at!
  - **Matt. 5:27-30** -- there are a few lessons I want to point out from this passage...
    - 1) We must learn to draw the line at what we look at! (**Job 31:1**)
      - If we stop there, then it should not go any farther.
      - If you see an immodest girl in public that you like to look at, look away!
    - 2) We need to learn that what we look at is affecting our heart, and that’s what really matters. (remember **Matt. 6:22-23**)
      - If we learn to look upon good things, then we will be trained to notice the bad things and stay away from them! (**Luke 11:36; Eph. 5:8-13**)
    - 3) We have to recognize the cost. (**Matt. 5:29-30**)
      - No matter what we gain from our lusts of the eyes, it is not worth eternal torment.
      - Jesus acknowledged this by essentially saying, “Do whatever it takes to stay out of hell.”
  - To address some common mindsets that you may fall prey to, I want to mention quickly that:
    - 1) God will not give you more than you can handle. (**1 Cor. 10:13**)
    - 2) Others are going through this with you. (**1 Pet. 5:9**)
    - 3) You CAN do this. (**Eph. 6:11**)
  - We must be willing to do whatever it takes to stop sin. We need to hate it! (**Rom. 12:9**)
  - We need to train ourselves to stop sinning and to start doing good. (**1 Tim. 4:7; Rom. 12:21**)  
This is VERY important in order for us to improve in this area!
  - We need to rely on the strength and power of the LORD. (**Eph. 6:10-11; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Pet. 5:6-7, 10; Phil. 4:6-7**)
  - Your battle against the lust of the eyes is not always easy, but it is not impossible. It takes a conscious decision to stop looking at evil things and start looking at good things, while trusting God through every battle.

**Battle of Pride** -- What are some things that people your age tend to have pride about? (grades, sports, girlfriend, friends they hang out with, looks, etc.)

- In the coming years you will also face temptations to be proud of other things such as:
  - University you attend
  - Grades in school
  - College you play sports at
  - Your girlfriend
  - Your job title
  - How much money you make
  - The kind of car you drive or house you have
  - Amount of education you have
  - Your wife
- Guys often want to be the best. We are competitive!
- It is a “youthful lust” to want to be the best.
  - Paul tried to redirect Timothy’s heart to more important things. (2 Tim. 2:22)
  - We need to remember that “selfish ambition” is mentioned among the works of the flesh! (Gal. 5:20)
  - If we give half the energy we often give to sports or school or whatever other worldly pursuit we might pursue to spiritual things, people will notice. (1 Tim. 4:12-16)
- Let’s not focus on being the best, but being a servant.
  - The more we work on service and lowering ourselves instead of raising our social status, the better off we are. (James 4:6)
- Those whose hearts are hardened by pride often:
  - Are not willing to admit their sins (Pharaoh of Moses’ time)
  - End up being humbled by God Himself (Daniel 4:28-36)
- Our aim should be to build others up, not ourselves. This was Jesus’ purpose! (Matt. 20:25-28; John 13:12-17)
- Make it your aim to “outdo one another in showing honor.” (Rom. 12:10 ESV) Make this the focus of your competitive nature!
- We need to battle this age old problem of the heart, because it is a humble heart that truly pleases God. (Ps. 51:16-17)

### **Conclusion:**

In order for us to maintain the purity of our hearts, we must fight for it!

- We need to fight the worldly influences around us and consciously choose to set our minds on things above.
- We need to recognize the importance of keeping our hearts pure by controlling our eyes.
- We also need to keep our hearts pure from the influence of pride and strive to display humility towards one another and before God.

We need to keep fighting the battle for the purity of our hearts! **“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)**