

★ THE ★ Value of PURITY

Purity is something we all value, even if we hadn't really given it any thought. We only realize it's important to us when we're offered something impure – for example, a plate of food with a hair in it, or a half-drunk bottle of water... What about people? We draw conclusions about people within seconds of meeting them – often leaning towards judging them. Jesus moves towards the impure, whoever they may be and regardless of what they have done.

Purity: the condition of being pure. Freedom from anything that debases, pollutes, contaminates etc.

THINKING POINTS

1. How do you feel about impure things? What kind of reaction might you have to the scenarios that Wes listed?
2. What kind of people were Matthew and his companions? (See Matthew 9:9-13)
3. When we see impurity in our everyday life, it feels natural to create a barrier. And most of the time these barriers keep us safe, e.g. we wouldn't eat rotting food. What happens when we apply those same barriers to 'impure' people?
4. Take another look at verses 12-13. Does Jesus create barriers? How does He view the impurity of Matthew and his companions?

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰ Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. ¹¹ But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?"

¹² When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do." ¹³ Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

MATTHEW 9:9-13

Jesus is implicit in His intention not to call the righteous, but to call sinners - the kind of people that everyone else is disgusted by. He moves towards them instead of away from them. He doesn't try to expel them, He tries to help them. He models grace.

John 8:1-11

¹ but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴ and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" ⁶ They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷ When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

⁸ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

¹¹ "No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

NEXT STEPS

1. Read John 8:1-11. Who are you in this story? Are you the impure woman in need of grace? Or are you the 'pure' Pharisee that condemns the woman?

Woman:

Know that God isn't looking down on you ★ Jesus isn't like the pharisees, condemning you for your actions. Rather, He moves toward us first. He kneels down beside you. He defends you. He looks you in the eye. He offers you grace and a better way forward.

Realise that purity isn't a destination, it's a process ★ No one can achieve purity on their own. We all have defective hearts. It is only through God that we are made pure. Because of His mercy.

Pharisee:

Realise that we are all sinners ★ Jesus says that the one who hasn't sinned may throw the first stone. He is the only one who is qualified to throw the stone, and yet He doesn't throw the stone. He offers grace.

Get in contact with the impure ★ Jesus moved towards those in need. He is our model. We should try to expel impurity. Rather we should extend mercy, provide a grace-filled way forward for people to move closer to God.