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The Pure in Heart: Spiritual Surgery

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Series: The Beatitudes

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The Pure in Heart: Spiritual Surgery

In the last three lessons we have been looking at the last evidence of a pure heart: a clean or undefiled thought-life. We looked at the issues, and more recently, we looked at the answers. We found that there were at least five.

Area #1- Prevention which is the case for innocence. This is the protecting of the minds of children from the intrusion of satanic impurity from the time that they are very, very small.

Area #2- Precaution. The main point was that what you see is what you get. We recognized that the Scripture says that the eye is the lamp of the body and the lamp of the soul. What we look at is what we ultimately become.

Area #3- Decision. We discussed the ten-second moment of truth that comes to us day in and day out. We saw that lust when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin. The principle is that you and I have continuous decisions to make moment by moment.

Area #4 - Substitution or spiritual breathing or meditation. We looked at this fourth answer in the last lesson. This is the day-by-day replacement of the old thought patterns with the mind of Christ. We do this by breathing the Scriptures. I want to quickly review the basic principles regarding meditation.

First of all, meditation is not an option. It is a divine command. The second principle is that proper meditation demands memorization. The Scripture must be on the tip of your tongue. The third principle is that meditation is not wallowing in your inner thoughts, rather it is breathing the Word of God. The fourth principle is that it is not a weekly assignment. Meditation is a minute-by-minute experience, day and night, night and day. The fifth principle is that it will lift you from depression and give you unspeakable wisdom. It prepares you for suffering and persecution. Meditation gives you the capacity to obey, and it guarantees you spiritual success. The Scripture teaches these principles. The sixth principle is that it requires a continual response on your part.

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The principle of meditation carries with it at least four steps. These are the principles of 1) engraving, 2) examining, 3) exploring and 4) experiencing the Word of God. Engraving it means memorizing it and asking ourselves, "What does it say?" Examining it means paraphrasing it or putting it into everyday words and then visualizing it and asking ourselves, "What does it mean?" Exploring it means to personalize it by asking ourselves, "What does it mean to me?" Experiencing it means entering into the passage with response.

I wonder how many of you took the time this past week to meditate on the Word as we discussed in the last lesson. I would pray that each of you in the weeks to come would take the time to try to learn the principle of meditation experientially.

You may remember in the last lesson we discussed that meditation really is translating the character of God by relating it to the circumstances or trials of men. We see that love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control can be applied by meditating on the Word. The Spirit of God then takes the character of God and, in the Word, applies it to the needs of man.

For instance, we can look at the principle of goodness. This is the moral attractiveness of character that reflects God. You can see this in the Scripture as you meditate on a need in your life and in your marriage. There is a need to relate well to your enemies. God can take the spirit of goodness and translate it through meditation into your life so that you know how to respond to your enemies and to your family with goodness. We can also see faithfulness in having a consistent expression of faith in the details of life and in your ministry.

In this lesson we will explore together the final aspect of cleansing the heart. This is spiritual surgery. What is it? Spiritual means that which pertains to the spirit or to man's relationship with God. What is surgery? If you are a doctor, please bear with the extremely, non-technical, layman's definition. Surgery is the cutting away of that which is diseased, or the cutting into to rejoin that which is broken. So then, spiritual surgery is the process of seriously dealing with disease or deformity that does not seem to heal through treatment with the normal spiritual disciplines or spiritual diet.

In this study, we are talking primarily about the thought life.

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Normally, we deal with it through protecting the eye-gate. We reject temptations in a ten-second moment of truth. We accomplish this through developing the process of continuously meditating and breathing the Word of God. But, for some of us at times, there are attitudes, thought patterns, habits and desires that do not dislodge easily. They are, in a sense, more than besetting sins. They represent latent impurity. These impurities that remain lodged in the crevices of the heart and surface so frequently until we begin accepting it as the best we can do so far as holiness is concerned. It is like letting lime deposits develop in a pipe. Even though you turn on the faucet and there is a huge flow of water coming into one end of the pipe, there is just a drip on the other end. We think that this is all it is capable of doing, because there is no more power left in the water lines. The problem is that the deposits have blocked and corroded the inside of the pipe.

For example, we become addicted to sensual thoughts. We become addicted to food. We become addicted to self-pity. We become addicted to bitterness. We become addicted to mind-controlling substances. We become addicted to these things, until at best, the heart is controlled by these addictions and we feel like some kind of a spiritual schizophrenic. We need to ask ourselves these questions:

1- How desperate are you to be pure in heart?

2- How satisfied are you with your present level of holiness?

3- What is your standard of comparison for holiness: the mind of God, your past thought-life or what you think others think?

4- Do you believe God has called some to a higher level of holiness of thought? I don't. I believe that some just obey. We can turn to I Peter 1 where it says,

But as He who has called you, all of you as holy, so all of you are to be holy just as He is

because it is written, "You are to be holy because I am holy."
(I Peter 1:15,16 paraphrased)

5- Can you differentiate between the miracle of God's grace and the standard of God's holiness? God's grace says, "I accept you as you are and love you." But, His holiness says, "I desire that you become what I want you to be." Can you put the two together?

6- When was the last time that you wanted to be so right with

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God that you spent a whole day alone with Him?

7- When, if ever, did you fast and pray for deliverance from unholy thoughts?

8- Does your standard of holiness include impure language in the mind that gets as far as the throat and then gets cut off by the will?

9- Do your eyes secretly long for pictures or objects that are impure?

10- Do you pretend to be disgusted with immorality while secretly desiring it?

11- Is your mind a seedbed for future immorality?

The answers that you give to those questions will help tell you if you are a viable candidate for surgery or not. But even if you aren't today, you may be someday. So let's stop together and pay a visit to the Great Physician. Let's see God's ultimate cure for heart disease: surgery.

Let's imagine that you have been struggling for some time with the issues we have been dealing with. You simply do not find a degree of victory. Let me remind you that I am not talking about an emotional experience. I am most certainly not talking about any form of sinless perfection. The Scripture says that if we say we have no sin that we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But rather, I am talking about walking in relatively consistent victory rather than consistent defeat. I mean that purity of heart that brings with it the freedom that manifests the joy of the spirit-controlled life.

Most of us have experienced this kind of relationship with God from time to time. Some have found relative consistency, but nearly all of us find ourselves locked, on occasions, in Satan's hammerlock. We know how to meditate. We know how to memorize. We know how to have a quiet time. We know how to do this spiritual discipline and that one. But even with all of the "right answers", there seems to have developed a level of impurity in the heart that taking spiritual aspirin just does not cure. Some of us are so stubborn that we make God hit us with a circumstantial truck to wake us up to get our attention. We are then so battered and bruised that we often take the wrong medicine.

There is a better way. It involves stopping dead in your tracks

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right now and realizing what has happened. We then need to set aside hours, even days, if necessary, to get God's cure for heart disease. It may involve surgery. But, surgery is okay if God is the doctor.

Let's imagine that you and I have come to realize a need. We come to the office of Dr. Jesus Christ, Spiritual Cardiologist. Like all physicians, He has certain requirements. As you enter, His assistant, the Holy Spirit, hands you a release form to sign. Doctors have to do this. This release document puts you by faith into His care and keeping. Here is the questionnaire that accompanies that release form. I want you fill it out in your mind in order to give God permission to do surgery if need be. The Holy Spirit says, "Please fill this out and hand it to the doctor upon your arrival."

Question 1- Are you willing to commit yourself to the time needed for treatment? Time. God owns it. He is very relaxed about it, have you noticed? He gives it to us as a gift, and we are frustrated by its limitations, yet we are poor stewards of its resources. We rush through times of spiritual enrichment to have time to engage in temporal pursuits that are eternally worthless. We are agitated over 5 extra minutes in church, but we will wait 2 hours to get into a restaurant so that we can eat something that will be gone tomorrow. Time. One day soon, there won't be anymore time. The Master of the sands of time will empty its contents into the sea of eternity. Today will be always and forever and tomorrow will never be, because it is yet today. Time. It is the most precious commodity that man has and yet perhaps it is the most ill-invested.

Now it takes time to get medical treatment. Doctors, please don't be offended. You call the doctor's office to make an appointment. The doctor can see you in about 2 weeks. So you wait and you wait. When you do get to his office, the receptionist says, "The doctor will be with you in a moment." The phrase, "in a moment," does not necessarily mean the framework of time to which we are accustomed. In fact, by the time you get into the doctor's office, you have what is called magazine eyes. When you finally get into the examination room, which is about a third the size of a phone booth, a nurse says, "O.K., undress." You can't even move and you are freezing to death. Forty-five minutes later, the doctor comes in.

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Another scenario is that the doctor assigns you to the hospital for surgery. You have to wait to get admitted. You have to wait to get a room. You have to wait to get into the operating room. You have to wait to get out. While you are there, you are at least a captive of time. Life goes on without you, strangely enough.

Spiritual surgery takes time, too. But, life will go on without you. For example, you get a babysitter for a social night out or a vacation. You take a day off of work for a golf tournament or a trip to the coast. Why don't you take a day alone with God? This day will be the most contested time slot in your life, I guarantee that. Everything will come up to get in the way of it.

Let's look at the life of Moses. Can you imagine Moses coming to Aaron and the council and saying, "Guys, I have an appointment with God, and I need 40 days off." You can just see Aaron holding up his hand and saying, "Moses, I'm sorry, but your schedule is too busy. There are too many things for you to do. You have to do counseling. You have to do this. You have to do that. Forty days is too much. Tell God you will give Him five. He can condense it. Ask Him to paraphrase it."

Let's look at the life of Jesus. Three years is all He had to give the entirety of His message to the whole of humanity. Three years. I figured it out and it is less than 1,100 days. He took the first 40 to fast and pray. Time after time we read in the remainder of those days in Matthew 14, Matthew 15, Mark 3, Mark 6, Luke 6, Luke 9, John 6 and many others that Jesus went up into the mountains. A great while before day, Jesus went off. Jesus went off to pray. Jesus went apart to be with the Father. Over and over again, we see Jesus taking time to be alone with His Father.

Let's look at the life of Paul. He had lots of time. He didn't take it, God gave it to him. God put him in prison. That is what it takes for some of us.

If you and I are not willing to give God an uncontested period of time, the Great Physician can't help. So the first step is to make an appointment with God. You can do that right now. You can write a time on a piece of paper and say, "Lord, I'm going to meet You all alone 2 weeks from Saturday.

Question 2- Are you willing to admit that you need help? is the next question on the doctor's questionnaire. Luke 18:10-14 is the story of the publican and the Pharisees. It is already etched in our thinking, so we don't need to read it again. Basically, the

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Pharisees problem was that he didn't even know that he was sick. He made an appointment with the Great Physician to tell Him how great it was to be well and that he was really too good to be sick. All the while, he was dying spiritually. The publican knew he had a problem. He cried out for help, "Oh God, have mercy. I am spiritually sick, and I really don't deserve to get well." The Pharisee focused on what he did for God and what he didn't do to man. He said, "Lord, I don't rob. I don't cheat. I don't commit adultery. I fast. I tithe. Look at my merit badges." The publican focused on his dirty heart and said, "Oh God, have mercy, I am so dirty." Jesus said, "Cured."

Luke 5:31 paraphrased reads,

And Jesus answered, "It is the sick who have need of a doctor, those who admit they have a need, not the healthy, those who are too self-righteous to cry out for help."

(Luke 5:31 paraphrased)

Peter's problem in Matthew 26 was similar. He said, "Lord, these guys have a problem. When the heat is on, they are going to take off. But Lord, you have one winner in me." The only standard of holiness acceptable to God is God's standard. This is the passage we quoted earlier, I Peter 1:15,16. Are you willing to admit that you need help?

Question 3- How badly do you want to get well? There are four parts to this question:

1) Do you want to get well badly enough to cry out for help?

I guess the most unforgettable night in my whole life took place 22 years ago when my wife and I were at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, to see a doctor. In and of itself it is a very unusual place. You think you are somebody, until you get there. Then you realize that there are an awfully lot of sick people in the world. We had made appointments to be checked. We were in a hotel that was joined together with the hospitals by tunnels. I was in bad shape that night. I was in so much pain that I was crying out and screaming.

I called the nurse and she said, "Go to the nearest emergency room and they will do something for you." I took out running down one of these tunnels and took a few wrong turns. I was so desperate that I kept going the wrong way. Finally, I got to the emergency room as I ran with all I had. A nurse saw me and asked, "Can I help you?" I said, "Yes, I am in so much pain." She

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said, "Please sit here. The doctor is viewing a film right now." I had been a Christian for a very short period of time, and my attitude was not very good. I didn't appreciate the delay very much.

The first time the doctor walked in he said, "I don't think we have your records." I was holding on to the edge of the table crying, because I hurt so badly. He came back in again and said, "I will tell you what I can do. I will give you a prescription if you will go down to the closest drug store. It is 8 blocks away. The prescription is for a painkiller." I was so desperate that I would do anything. As I was leaving he said, "By the way, they close in 5 minutes." I left, running as hard as I could. I got there a minute late. I begged the pharmacist saying, "Please, I am desperate. Will you help me?" He kindly said, "Yes." He did. That is the kind of desperation I am talking about. Why? I was willing to pay any price to get help that night.

That is the kind of spirit God wants us to have where spiritual things are concerned. When was the last time that you were that desperate for God to change your life? Psalm 28 says,

To You I will cry, O Lord my Rock: do not be silent to me,
lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down
to the pit.

Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You, when
I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary.

(Psalm 28:1,2 NKJV)

Psalm 34:6 paraphrased says,

This poor man cried his heart out and the Lord heard him.

(Psalm 34:6)

In the Psalms we continue to read,

The righteous cries and the Lord hears and delivers them
out of all their troubles.

(Psalm 34:17 NKJV)

because the Lord is near to them that have a broken heart
and contrite spirit.

(Psalm 34:18 NKJV)

I will cry unto God Most High,

(Psalm 57:2 NKJV)

Be merciful to me Lord, for I cry to You all day long.

(Psalm 86:3 NKJV)

These are the cries of those who are desperate. How badly do you want help?

2) Do you want help badly enough to accept help from others?

Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane was a perfect picture of how man should respond to sin. He was about to be separated from

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His Father for the first time. He was about to experience the darkness of night that only sin had caused. Matthew 26:37 says,

Taking with Him Peter, James and John, He asked them to wait with Him and intercede with Him while He wept before the Father. His soul was sorrowful and heavy.

(Matthew 26:37 paraphrased)

The Amplified Bible says,

He began to show grief and distress of mind and was deeply depressed.

(Matthew 26:37 Amplified Bible)

We read that Jesus threw Himself on the ground and said, “If it be possible, Father.” This is the way He prayed. Three times He went back to His buddies whom He had asked to help Him pray. They were in dreamland and were not much help.

The picture was and is that we need to be available to one another in times like that. We can look at Moses and Joshua when Joshua was on the mountaintop fighting and Moses had to hold his arms up to intercede for Joshua. He could not hold up his hands as long as needed. Moses had two friends come along side him so that one could prop up his right hand and one could prop up his left so that he could continue to intercede for the men in the battle. Are you willing to call a friend so that you can humble yourself and say, “I’ve got a problem. Would you come pray with me?” Or better still you could say, “I’m going apart to pray. While I go and pray will you watch and wait?”

3) How badly do you want to be cured? Do you want to be cured enough to be humbled or humiliated? To be humbled means to be brought low. To be humiliated means to be brought low before other people. Jesus humbled Himself, we read in Philippians 2 that Jesus was humiliated. They spit on Him. They put a crown of thorns on His head, and they counted Him as nothing.

Again, friends and doctors, please don’t be offended, but there is nothing more humiliating than a trip to some doctor’s offices. All of your indignities are done away with. You say to yourself, “The doctor or nurse is going to do what? You want me to do what? With all of these people looking on? You want me to wear that? Where is the rest of it?” You have all been there. Are you willing to humble yourself to that point and ask for help before God? Mr. Spiritual, Mr. Deacon, Mrs. Do-good, are you willing to pour yourself before God and be nobody?

Lastly, do you want help badly enough to persist. How many

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times have you called the doctor's office and the receptionist has said, "Sorry, the doctor is not in, please call back." But you wanted help badly enough that you continued calling back every 30 minutes. You finally get through when the doctor is there, but the receptionist tells you that although he is in, they are booked up and can see you next week. You say, "I'll be there." There may not be any room for you until then, but you keep calling back and calling back and calling back, because you want to be helped. Luke 11 is a passage that is difficult to understand. Beginning with verse 5 it says,

And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you?'

I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

(Luke 11:5-9 NKJV)

That is what Jesus is saying. Look at the relationship. This was a friend. Look at the timing. It was the most inconvenient time. Look at the size of the request. He wanted three loaves, all that the friend had, perhaps. Look at his motivation, "A friend of mine is in need." Look at the test. It says reason number one is that he deserved it because he is my friend. But it was not for that reason alone but for his brazen insistence, he kept on asking. That is what we are supposed to do with God.

So you say, "What are you trying to do, wear God down?" No, God is trying to wear you down. There is a big difference. You are not testing God's patience, He is God. God is testing your faith. Turn to Luke 18 where we see another passage with the same perspective. Jesus spoke a parable to them and said, "You are always to pray and don't stop. Keep on praying." He was telling the story of a city with a judge who didn't fear God or man. There was a widow in that city. She said, "Avenge me of my adversary." But the judge would not for a while. Afterwards he said to himself,

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Though I do not fear God nor regard man,
yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by
her continual coming she weary me.’ ”

Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said.

And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and
night to Him, though He bears long with them?

I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.”

(Luke 18:4-8NKJV)

The whole principle of those two passages is that God wants us to be desperate enough to cry and cry and cry, if necessary, until He hears us. How badly do you want help? Badly enough to toss God a prayer like a breadcrumb or badly enough to stand at the door and knock and knock and knock and knock?

4) Are you willing to fast before surgery? When you go in to be operated on, you are told not to eat anything the day before. You say, “You’ve got be kidding! Maybe an hour before, but not the day before.” You show up at the hospital with Hershey bars stuck in every pocket. You think you are in jail, and you have all of your relatives and friends smuggling food to you in the hospital.

What is fasting? It is abstinence in the physical realm to heighten the spiritual senses. It is a private demonstration of a man’s conviction demonstrated only to God. We are talking primarily in this passage at least, about food and doing without it. Let me give you three basic principles regarding fasting:

1- Start with what you can handle. Maybe you can only fast for one meal. If your motive is right, fast for one meal. If you physically can’t do that, just eat what is necessary to sustain you, not what is necessary to satisfy you.

2- Keep it to yourself. Keep a smile on your face.

3- Tell God what your reason is. Esther fasted to change the king’s mind. Paul and Barnabas fasted to find the direction of God for their lives. Nehemiah fasted and was given permission to protect the people of God. Ezra was granted safety for a dangerous journey after he fasted and prayed. Jonah saw a city saved after they fasted and repented. Jesus fasted and prayed for forty days and forty nights before He met Satan head to head. Moses fasted forty days before he received the Word of God.

Have you ever fasted? Jesus didn’t say in Matthew 6, “if” you fast, but “when” you fast. Don’t wear a long face. Put a smile

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on your face. Don't broadcast your spirituality. God who sees in secret will reward you openly.

I had wanted to meditate with you in this lesson through Isaiah 58:6-12. We don't have time to do that. I am going to ask you to write that passage down. If you decide to go apart and spend a day with God, and if you decide to fast while doing this, take this passage and meditate on it. It is a word directly from God,

Is not this the fast that I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burden, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke? (Isaiah 58:6 NKJV)

Meditate and memorize that passage.

Question 5- Do you agree to the anesthetic? Is next on the doctor's application. What is the purpose of anesthetic?

a- To stop the struggle and to put the patient to rest.

b- To perform surgery with neither help nor hindrance from the patient.

I can remember one time having a doctor try to stick a needle in my face. He didn't want to give me an anesthetic. I gave him so much help that he quit. Matthew 11:26 says "Come to my operating room", says the Lord, "I will give you an anesthetic". This is a loose translation.

II Chronicles 20 says that the operation is not yours, it is God's. All these attitudes and all these commitments are just to get you to the operating room. There, you surrender to the surgeon. It is all up to Him. You don't know what He may have to do from here on in. That is His business, not yours. He is the doctor, you are the patient. He can't operate until you quit the struggle. This is why some of us never win the battle. We forget that in heaven the battle is already won.

Question 6- Are you willing to accept the post-operative pain as part of the healing process? I don't know why it is, but I never think that it is going to hurt when the anesthetic wears off. Whether it is a trip to the dentist or an operation, when I come out of the anesthetic, it hurts most of the time. This is part of the healing process. God's spiritual surgery hurts while the scars heal. What do you want, an emotional high? Do you want to build three tabernacles and stay under the anesthetic? Do you want to be healed? It may take healing a painful relationship. It may

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take severing a diseased relationship. The orders you receive on the mountain may cause pain in the valley, but the pain is a sign that you are being healed. Are you willing to come home and do whatever God says?

Question 7- Will you more closely monitor your heartbeat after the surgery is over, or do you want to come back do this whole thing again in a very short period of time? Most of us come out of some kind of surgery and we say, “Boy, I don’t want to go through that again. What do I do doctor?” The doctor answers, “You need to start exercising. You need to start a right diet. You need to pay attention to your body. When this pain begins you need to call me right away.” We pay a lot more attention when we know the pain that is associated with the healing process. We don’t want to go through that again. We want to be healed, and we want to stay healed.

Question 8- Would you like to use your credit card to pay your bill? When you fill out the bottom line, it says this is the only 100% pre-paid insurance policy in the world. God assumes total responsibility for the surgery and total responsibility for the cost because underneath are the everlasting arms. In other words, you are in good hands with Jehovah.

Let me be as clear as possible so that, if possible, the message won’t get lost in the illustration. What I am talking about in this lesson is becoming aware of a need for greater moral purity in our thought lives. We need to commit ourselves to a day or days alone with God worshipping, meditating and perhaps fasting to recapture God’s concept of holiness.

One method is to spend a whole day meditating on nothing but the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Just work your way through these four books from early in the morning to late in the evening. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Don’t do anything but focus on Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Focus on what He said, what He did, who He was, what He wanted, what He gave and what He took. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. At the end of that day, you will have a concept of holiness that you never dreamed you could have before. Why? Because you looked at perfect holiness for a day.

But you see, in the world in which we live, we look at Jesus for a minute then we look at the world about us. We then compare ourselves with the world about us and not with what Jesus wants us to be. We then say, “Hey, I’m O.K.” But when we get apart and

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do nothing but focus on Him and bathe ourselves in His presence, we get a different message. Sing hymns to Him. Take a piece of paper and write out a list of the impurities in your life that you know do not need to be there. Then find verses of Scripture that prove that the will of God is deliverance. Write those verses down and begin to meditate on them. Then you will begin to break out in song and praise His name. If you can't sing, take along some music that you like and listen to it and shout, "Hallelujah!" Ask God one step at a time to break the bands of wickedness, to set the prisoner free, to break every yoke. This is the will of God. He didn't desire that we live in partial bondage day in and day out. He designed that we be free. If you need additional help in how to spend a day alone with God, it is available.

It seems that it is increasingly evident that we are in the last days of this age. The conflict between God and Satan seems to be heightening to an ever-frenzied pitch. National and international events, to the Christian, herald the coming of Christ. But never before in history has God needed more desperately for the church of Jesus Christ to be pure. To purify the church you have to start by purifying the saints. To purify the saints you have to start with me and with you. Few of us or none of us really possess the consistent holiness of life that marks triumphant living. But just visualize, if you will, what would happen in San Antonio, Texas, and what would happen in the world if just those of us who are hearing this message were to really get right with God, really linger before Him in His presence and assume His righteousness until all we wanted was all He wanted, until the very essence of impurity was distasteful to us. Do you realize what that kind of holiness would be like? It would be a holiness that is purged, purified and powerful marching into battle. Do you realize the effect it would have if God could use our lives in the reaching of other lives for Him?

At least some of us here now need that kind of healing. But to be healed, we need to take the time to get away and pay a personal visit to the Great Physician. The hospital room He uses is usually out in the country. The reason is that when you are out in the country, you don't have all of the interruptions or the thought patterns. You are not focusing on man's accomplishments but on God's accomplishments. Go away and pay a visit to the Great Physician.

In closing, perhaps some of you need to pray with me this prayer,

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Great Physician, I need surgery,
My heart isn't beating for You.
The valves seem clogged and dirty
And the heartbeat isn't true.

The mind doesn't dwell on heaven
And the heart doesn't linger in prayer.
And even, Lord, as I meditate
The power to worship is not there.

Lord, I'll wait 'til You're ready
And submit to whatever You desire,
Until at Your hand I'm delivered
Out of the filth and the mire.

Into the realm of a holy life
A life so transparent and true,
That it is repulsed at all that defiles
And all this is distasteful to You.

Lord, I need to have surgery
And the reason is so clear to me now.
I need to be holy, Lord Jesus,
For holy, Lord Jesus, art Thou.

And Jesus said unto them, "Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8 NKJV)

Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly "hear" his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It's been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that's a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you "hear" as you read.

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