



[Matthew 5:8](#)

(8) Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

A Faithful Version

This beatitude, like all the others, has both a present and future fulfillment. Paul says in [1 Corinthians 13:12](#), "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known." To "see" [God](#) is to be brought close to Him. In this instance the sense is that what we are far from cannot be clearly distinguished. That, as sinners, we are far from God is proclaimed in [Isaiah 59:2](#): "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear." Thus [James 4:8](#) admonishes us, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

The pure in heart are those who with all their being seek to remain free of every form of the defilement of [sin](#). The fruit of this is the blessing of spiritual discernment. With spiritual understanding, they have clear views of God's character, will, and attributes. A [pure heart](#) is synonymous with what [Jesus](#) calls a "single" (KJV) or "clear" (NKJV margin) eye in [Matthew 6:22](#). When a person has this mind, the whole body is full of light. Where there is light, one can see clearly.

The sense of this beatitude's promise to [see God](#) carries over into the [Kingdom of God](#). In one sense, all will see God, as [Revelation 1:7](#) prophesies: "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of earth will mourn because of Him." They will see Him as Judge.

Jesus' promise, though, is stated as a blessing, a favor. [Revelation 22:4](#) says of those who will inherit God's Kingdom, "They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads." [1 John 3:2](#) reads, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." To see someone's face is to be so near as to be in his presence. In this case, the term indicated the highest of honors: to stand in the presence of the [King of kings](#). Certainly David understood the greatness of this: "As for me, I will see Your face in

righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness" ([Psalm 17:15](#)).

God places great value on being clean, especially in terms of purity of heart. Also, we can easily become defiled, whereas remaining clean requires constant vigilance, a determined discipline, and a clear vision of what lies before us to serve as a prod to keep us on track. Since it is sin that defiles, this beatitude demands from us the most exacting self-examination. Are our work and service done from selfless motives or from a desire for self-display? Is our church-going a sincere attempt to meet God or merely fulfilling a respectable habit? Are our prayers and Bible study a heartfelt desire to commune with God, or do we pursue them because they make us feel pleasantly superior? Is our life lived with a conscious need of God, or are we merely seeking comfort in our piety?

To examine our motives honestly can be a daunting and shaming but very necessary discipline, but considering Christ's promise in this beatitude, it is well worth whatever effort and humbling of self it takes. It is good for us to keep Paul's admonishment found in [II Corinthians 7:1](#) fresh in mind: "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting [holiness](#) in the fear of God."

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Beatitudes, Part 6: The Pure in Heart](#)

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