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A Pure Heart

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matt. 5:8, NIV)

Scottie Scheffler's Sunday singles match in the recent Presidents Cup provides a marvelous example of "heart purity."

With the U.S. trailing 11½ to 9½, Scheffler, three up at the time, and Nico Echavarria reached the 14th hole. In the middle of Echavarria's swing, an unruly fan yelled out, "Go, Scottie!" Clearly bothered by the interruption, Echavarria hit his tee shot wide right of the fairway.

Eventually, he hit his third shot onto the green and faced a 30-foot putt for par. Scottie had an 18-foot birdie putt. Before Echavarria could putt, Scottie conceded the putt for par. He missed his birdie putt, and the hole was halved.

Only God can see directly into the heart of a person to determine the purity of their motives (1 Samuel 16:7). However, we can recognize evidence of a transformed heart through a person's conduct and spiritual fruit (Matt. 7:16–20).

Based on everything we know about Scottie, it is fair to assume that there was an element of "heart purity" at work in his actions. He recognized how unfair it was to his opponent to have to play a shot that was the result of a spectator's stupid outburst.

Equally compelling was his humility. He was reluctant to talk about his actions and appeared not to want to receive any recognition for his sportsmanship.

In Scripture, the heart is the center of the whole person and contains our desires, motives, thoughts, loyalties, and will. Proverbs 4:23 instructs us: "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

The Greek word for pure, katharos, means clean, undefiled, or free from contamination. One of the chief components of a pure heart is an undivided, single-minded devotion to God that is free from hypocrisy, pretense, or mixed motives.

Only one person possessed a perfectly pure heart—Jesus. In the Bible, David might be the closest example of a person with a "pure heart," even though he committed serious sins, particularly regarding Bathsheba and Uriah. God described David as "a man after my own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14).

As David reflected on his sins, he demonstrated an attitude of honest repentance and a desire to return to God as he prayed: “Create in me a pure heart, O God” (Psalm 51:10).

The wonderful blessing that Jesus promises to those who have a pure heart contains both a present and a future dimension. In the present, a purity of heart allows us to recognize God’s activity more clearly.

A heart that is increasingly aligned with God recognizes His character and purposes, His work in our lives, and His presence in circumstances and other people.

The future promise is greater. Jesus is talking about the destiny of believers—living in the immediate presence of God. In Revelation 22:4, we learn that we shall see His face, and we will experience God’s presence directly and completely in eternity.

As we strive to make our hearts purer, let us remember to come to God honestly and ask Him to search our hearts. We must repent, ask Him for a new heart, and receive His forgiveness.

Finally, we need to read and study His Word daily to uncover false beliefs, correct our desires, direct our choices, and teach us what love, humility, justice, mercy, and faithfulness look like in our daily lives.

Having a pure heart requires us to have unfeigned intentions, with our inner character aligning completely with our outer actions, free from deceit and hidden agendas.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, search my heart and, where it is found wanting, create in me a pure heart so that I might live in harmony with your plan for me.

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