

The Purifying Power of God's Word

Scripture Reading — John 17:13-19

How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. — Psalm 119:9

Years ago, when parents told their children to wash their dirty faces, they might have said, “Cleanliness is next to godliness.” That saying is not in the Bible, but it may have come from some ancient Jewish teachers. The Bible equates god-likeness not with scrubbed skin but with pure hearts.

The author of Psalm 119 asks, “How can a young person stay on the path of purity?” And his answer is the core teaching of this psalm: “By living according to [God’s] Word.” But, honestly, how can we do that?

As most people will admit, having a pure heart is a difficult challenge. In fact, the Bible says this is out of reach for us. Our hearts are deceitful, self-absorbed, and disobedient. We need help. In his mercy, God sent his Son, Jesus, so that he could forgive us our sins and create pure hearts in us. In John 17, Jesus prays that his followers will be “sanctified” (purified) through himself and through the truth of God’s Word. And the Holy Spirit of God will provide us understanding and power to endure in this purifying process.

So, as both Jesus and the psalmist affirm, purity of the heart is strengthened and encouraged by the truth found in God’s Word. The purifying process begins with knowing Jesus, and it continues daily as we grow in knowledge and grace.

Continue this process today as you reflect on God’s Word.

Prayer

Help us to long for your Word, Lord. Preserve our lives in your righteousness. For Jesus’ sake, Amen.

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