

“To the Pure All Things Are Pure”

TEXT: “To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:15, 16).

INTRODUCTION

One man looks out on the world and sees beauty, love, kindness, and joy, while another man looks into the same world and sees ugliness, hatred, mistrust, and sadness. There is no doubt that both views are there. If one has true vision, he will see both. A problem arises when one sees impurity in everything or purity in everything. We need to see the pure as pure; we need to see the impure as impure.

The purity discussed in Titus 1:15, 16 is not moral purity but ceremonial purity. It has to do with “Jewish fables” and the “commandments of men.” They had gone down a long list to decide what foods and activities were pure or impure.

I. WHAT WE THINK AND WHAT WE SEE

Paul says, “I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean” (Romans 14:14). The context is discussing foods, drinks, and the observance of days. People need to learn what really defiles a person (Mark 7:15). When we begin seeing evil in the things God has declared clean and pure we have accepted a doctrine of the devil (1 Timothy 4:1-4).

What is your view of the church? If all had your vision, what would the church be like? I am always concerned about folks who know everything they are against but very little they are for. What we see depends on our minds and consciences. When our thinking is twisted and warped in such a way that we see evil in everything, our thinking needs cleansing. The conscience is that inner voice telling us what is right

or wrong. It must be taught to react correctly. The conscience is taught by teaching the mind. The better it is taught, the better the conscience will react. “A man must keep the white shield of his innocence unstained.”

II. OUR PROFESSION AND OUR ACTION

“They profess that they know God,” says Paul in verse 16. We may have an intellectual knowledge of God that is passive or rebellious. Profession is good if the life backs it up. But the real judgment of any profession is made up of the life that is lived. Those who claim a knowledge of God but whose hearts are impure deny God by their actions. They are abominable. *Repulsive* is a word used of the heathen idols and images. There is something repulsive about a person with a prying, obscene mind, a person who makes sniggering jokes, one who is a master of the unclean suggestions. There is always a simple beauty in sheer cleanliness. There is always a disgust in the presence of that which is soiled, filthy, and unclean. They are disobedient.

When the mind and conscience are defiled, the action cannot be surrendered to Jesus. They become *useless* to God and man. The word for “useless” describes a counterfeit coin, a coin which is below standard weight. A cowardly soldier who fails in the hour of battle is “useless.” A rejected candidate for office, one regarded by citizens as having no valor, is “useless.” A stone rejected by the builders because it is cracked and weak is “useless.” Salt that has lost its savor is “useless” (Matthew 5:13). The ultimate test of life is usefulness. A person whose mind and conscience are impure is “useless.”

CONCLUSION

We need to clean up our minds and consciences by allowing God to control our thinking, our hearts, and our feelings. What is your view of the world? Of life? Of the church?

—Leon Barnes