

May our Lord Jesus Christ be glorified. We've been blessed with another day to see, and I invite you to join me in learning God's Word, especially as the day draws to a close. As we delve into this topic, let's remember that our walk with God is not just about avoiding visible sins, but also about guarding our hearts and minds in Him.

Just as "Holiness and sanctification" go hand in hand, so too do "Sin and uncleanness."

What is the difference between sin and uncleanness?

Sin is any act or thought that goes against God's will, often manifesting in the violation of His commandments. It's the breaking of His moral law. The Bible defines sin as "lawlessness" (1 John 3:4, ESV). This includes acts such as adultery, murder, theft, and idolatry.

Sin as Separation from God

Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2). The effects of sin are far-reaching—spiritually, it causes a breach in our relationship with the Creator, leading to guilt and spiritual death (Romans 6:23). It is something that defiles the person both inwardly and outwardly.

On the other hand, uncleanness refers to a condition of impurity or defilement, typically associated with ceremonial laws in the Old Testament. While sin is a moral issue, uncleanness is often related to physical, ritualistic, or ceremonial purity. In the Old Testament, certain actions, foods, or physical states (like childbirth or touching a dead body) rendered a person ceremonially unclean, temporarily separating them from the community and the worship of God (Leviticus 11-15).

The Heart of the Matter: Sin and Uncleanness Together

For a person living in sin, uncleanness doesn't hold much power because the person is already in a state of separation from God. However, for a saved person, both sin and uncleanness can disrupt their relationship with God, even if the uncleanness is not morally wrong.

Think of it like this: Imagine a black stain on a white shirt. If the stain is on a black shirt, it's invisible, and the shirt can still be worn. But if it's on a white shirt, even if the shirt is perfectly clean otherwise, the stain is glaring and ruins the purity of the shirt. This is the effect of uncleanness—while it may not always be a moral sin, it still hinders one's relationship with God, especially for those who are striving to live in holiness.

The Old Testament View of Uncleanness

In the Old Testament, uncleanness was a significant concern in the life of Israel. For example:

Leviticus 11:23-24 (NIV), "But all flying insects that have four feet are detestable to you. You shall become unclean by them. Anyone who touches their carcass will be unclean until evening."

Also in:

Leviticus 12:1-5 (NIV), "When a woman gives birth to a son, she will be ceremonially unclean for seven days... And on the eighth day, the boy is to be circumcised."

Leviticus 15:16-20 (NIV), talks about bodily discharges making a person unclean:

“When a man has an emission of semen, he must bathe his whole body with water, and he will be unclean till evening.”

In these cases, uncleanness was not necessarily sinful but rather a condition that needed purification for a person to re-enter fellowship with God and the community. God’s holiness required His people to maintain ceremonial purity, as a reflection of spiritual purity. The Israelites were to be a holy nation (Exodus 19:6), and uncleanness hindered their ability to approach God’s presence in the tabernacle.

The New Covenant: Jesus and the Heart of Uncleanness

In the New Covenant, uncleanness is no longer about ceremonial laws but is more concerned with the condition of the heart. Jesus changed the focus from external purity to internal purity.

Jesus Himself addressed this in

Matthew 15:17-20 (NIV), "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person."

Here, Jesus is teaching that moral impurity and sin originate from within—the heart. While the Old Testament laws focused on outward cleanliness, Jesus emphasized that true defilement is rooted in what is inside.

Sin and the Heart

Jesus makes it clear that sin is not only in the actions but in the heart.

Matthew 5:28,(NIV) underscores this: "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

This highlights that even harboring sinful thoughts—like lust, hate, or unforgiveness—makes a person unclean. It's not just about what we do but what we allow to take root in our hearts.

*Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV) says, *‘‘The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?’’*This is why we must guard our hearts (Proverbs 4:23).*

Theological Insight: The Need for Inner Purification

Under the New Covenant, Jesus offers purification not through external rituals but through His blood.

Hebrews 9:14 (NIV) says, ‘‘How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!’’

Christ's sacrifice cleanses us from both sin and the defilement of the

heart. It's through His work on the cross that we are made holy and pure in God's sight (1 Corinthians 1:30).

However, the battle isn't over. Christians are still called to be vigilant in guarding their hearts. Paul exhorts believers in

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV): "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

The mind and heart must continually be renewed and purified by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Practical Application: Guard Your Heart

To stay in God's presence and avoid defilement, we must guard our hearts and minds. The Apostle Paul writes in

Philippians 4:8 (NIV), “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

In a world full of temptations and distractions, it’s vital to continually renew our minds with God’s Word. We are called to

“put off the old self with its practices and put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (Colossians 3:9-10, NIV).

Conclusion: A Holy Pursuit

Uncleanness, in the New Covenant, is about more than just outward actions—it’s about the heart. Sin and uncleanness both defile us, and they start from within. To remain in God’s presence, we must be vigilant in guarding our hearts and minds, continually allowing the Holy Spirit to purify us. As Jesus Himself says in

John 15:3 (NIV), "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you."

Our purification comes through Him and His Word, but it's an ongoing process as we grow in holiness.

May the Lord help us to remain pure in heart, that we might always be in His presence, serving Him faithfully.

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