

Abiding in Christ
Chapter 2: Pure in the Eyes of God
(Bob & Graham Interview, edited by Bob Clarkson)

The Pure in Heart See God in Everything

Matt. 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God ...”

"You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you." If you want to walk with God, purity is absolutely essential. You know a pure mind and a pure heart is always going to see God in everything. Sometimes you know, we lose our vision of God because the way in which we perceive, is unclean.

When God looks at you He doesn't see anything wrong with you. He's not an evangelical. He's not obsessed by sin. He's dealt with sin once and for all, in Christ. So God is not bothered by sin. He's dealt with it. He's consumed by life. But when we perceive others' motives or behaviors as unclean, we are not pure in heart. Purity of heart is always seeing the best and most positive motives in others. We can see God in everyone whom we see as 'clean.' And we can learn things about God when we see Him in everyone we meet.

God Doesn't See Anything Wrong with You

When God looks at you, He doesn't see anything wrong with you. Why? He put you into Jesus. Question. Was Jesus punished enough? This is not a trick question. Was Jesus punished enough? Okay, half of us think, "Hmm. I don't know what to think about that

one." Was Jesus judged enough? Yeah!!! So there is no more place for judgment then. Come on, think it through. So Calvary was a place of judgment. Was Jesus judged enough? Yeah! So one day, the books will be opened on judgment day and judgment will be meted out. Yeah? So between Calvary and judgment day, there is no place for judgment.

There Is No Place for Judgment in This Life

We are living in a season of grace. We are living in a New Testament covenant and relationship with God. There is no place for judgment on this earth because Jesus paid a price once and for all for all people; for all men everywhere. No one goes to hell because of their sin because they have been paid for. But all who do not accept Jesus' substitutionary payment for their sin will suffer eternal separation from God.

So there is no place for judgment in this life, especially not for the Christian. So what does judgment mean in a New Testament context. What does it mean when we have the Gospel of grace which is the essence of the goodness and kindness of God that leads us to repentance. It's the Gospel of kindness. It's the Gospel of mercy. It's the Gospel of the goodness of God because, funnily enough, it is the 'good' news.

What is the good news? There is no judgment in this life, only the availability of mercy and grace and goodness and kindness. So what does judgment mean in a New Testament context of the Gospel of Jesus. What if judgment is an assessment of the condition of the heart? What if I am judging a person, but not for what they have done? What if I'm looking at what was done

and judging how much mercy and goodness is it going to take to restore this person to a place of fellowship with God? What if that's what judgment is?

What if I am assessing (judging) what I need to be to them as a friend to bring restoration to the grace of God? What if I am trying to discern the level of warfare around his life that I need to contend with so that I can deliver him from his present condition? What if that's judgment? What if I am judging how much blessing and encouragement is needed to give the person a radical idea of who Jesus is for him. What if that's judgment? (Judgment of others is generally associated with condemning them.)

You Are Clean Because of What Christ Has Did

You're already clean. You're already clean because of what God has done for you in Christ. You're already clean because He cleansed you from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9. You are set free from guilt, shame and fear. You are the beloved of God. You are the passion of God. He adores you. He loves you. He's made a way for you to know that you are clean in His sight.

And God isn't frustrated with you because when He looks at you, He doesn't see what's wrong. He only sees what is missing from your current level of experience with Him. He put you into Christ. Here's a question. Is the Father a schizophrenic? Does He do one thing and say another? Does He do one act and then treat it as though He hasn't done it? He put you into Christ. Why? He put you there so that you would always be accepted in the beloved.

Who's the beloved? Jesus! Who else is the beloved? You! Do you think the Father approves of Jesus? Wait for it. ... This is not a trick question. Do you think that God approves of Jesus? So when He put you into Christ, what was He thinking, "I am so going to put you into a place where I can approve of you, where I can always look at you and always see who you are in Jesus and who you are becoming, more Christ-like. Where there will always be grace and mercy available to you."

You Never Have to Cower Before God

In Christ, you can come boldly into the throne room and park yourself right in front of the throne of grace and you can find grace and you can find mercy to help you in your moment of need. Why? That's the sum and substance of the good news (the Gospel). Judgment? Hah! Fat chance! You think God's going to judge you? He is so not an evangelical. He's not. He can't punish you. He punished Jesus so He'd never have to punish you. You are extremely welcome in his presence. He enormously desires for you to be in His presence at all times!

The truth is, the Father doesn't have anything but a good thought about you. It's who He is. He loves you. He has things to show you. He doesn't get disillusioned with you because He never had any illusions about you in the first place. He chose you knowing full well that you're weak and foolish with a history of screwing up. And the Holy Spirit is going to help you translate all of your inadequacies and insecurities into a joyful vulnerability.

You Need to Have a Radiant Idea of God

All of us need a radiant idea of God that makes us joyful. It's the only place to live. Be astonished! Be amazed! Marvel! Be so caught up with the beauty of His nature (pure love) that it becomes who you are. It washes over you day after day after day. You love every thought that you have about Him. You love every word He says. You hang on it because it's life.

The love of God is so powerful that nothing can stop it. It never stops flowing in your direction. The truth is that the Holy Spirit is come to enable you to become vulnerable to the goodness of God. That's what I like about my own life. I am so vulnerable to the goodness of God. I'm like a complete pushover. I mean, He only has to wiggle His left ear in my direction and I'm falling all over the floor and manifesting. There's something about Him that's irresistible.

There's something about His nature that's totally compelling and utterly irresistible and your role in the earth is to be loved wonderfully, marvelously, and beautifully. You were made to revel in that love and to be confident in that love so that everyone who comes into contact with you comes into contact with who you are in Jesus (pure love).

God Even Loves Our Weaknesses

The truth is, God loves our weaknesses. It's the place where he chooses to step into our life. I love that about the nature of God. I love being that with my friends. In every relationship you get the chance to be passionate in a strong way for your friend. But the other

side of that coin is that you get to see your friend in their area of weakness and you get to actually step into that place and be something for them. If all we ever do is connect in the area of our strengths, all we do is touch each other. That's not real love. There is nothing intimate about that.

True love is where we connect in the low places, and there's strength there. It's exciting to know, in relationships you have with others, where they are struggling. I know currently where all my friends are struggling and I'm so committed to them because this is my moment to be something for them. It's in the low places of life and humanity where you get to express real love. That's where real love works. That's the good stuff in relationships. It is the struggles, the little lunacies, and the idiosyncrasies that we all have. The areas where we think, "I'm no good at this." "Yeah, but, I'm your friend and God puts people together so we cover each other in the areas of our weakness."

We don't reject or abandon each other because we're weak. We step into that low place because that's what God is like. All of the things we don't like about ourselves, to a real friend, that's the good stuff. That's where I get to be something for you because I'm your friend. That's where God gets to step into our life. It is in the low places. Yeah, you're weak and foolish. I will defend you to the death and at the same time I will build you up. That's friendship. That's the 'Good News.' That's the Gospel. That's the message that we have.

God is not put off by your weaknesses. He's excited by them. He has a plan for them. He will step

into each low place. So when people around you lose it and get stupid, you have a great opportunity to prove your friendship. And when you get stupid and lose it, God gets to be there for you! In Christ we get a double dose of mercy, forgiveness, grace and encouragement! What's not to love about being a 'Christ-In?'

The Church Needs to Step In, Not Step Away

What do we do in the evangelical church? Someone sins and we step away. Ewwww! We step away. We don't want to get infected by their wickedness. God doesn't step away! He steps in closer! Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. And grace is a by-product of unconditional love. Grace is always bigger than sin.

Often we have lots of sin in church because we have so little grace. Where there's no grace, sin increases. That's who God really is. That's the Good News, eh? God looks at you and says, "You are so clean, because of what I'm doing. I need you to understand how clean you are." When God looks at you, He doesn't see what's wrong with you. He sees your full potential. He sees what's missing from your current experience of him and he's committed to bringing what is missing into your life. If God sees you as clean, it is offensive to God for me to see you as dirty. Since God has declared me to have the righteousness of Jesus, I am calling God a liar when I denigrate myself or others.

Right Assessment; Wrong Interpretation

I was in Kansas City doing some ministry with a whole team of prophets. I had just finished prophesying

over this one person and stepped back to get a drink. As I'm stepping back into the line, the prophet next to me is prophesying over this young man. I looked at this young man's face, and it was a hard, hard face. It was a tough looking face, giving nothing away by its expressions. And this guy is prophesying, "I see a walnut. It's a hard exterior but soft on the inside. The walnut is you and God is the nutcracker. Over this next season God is going to break you so that hardness can actually be diminished and God can release all of the good stuff that's on the inside of you."

And I looked at this young man's face and I'm thinking, "Right vision but wrong interpretation." All he's ever known is people being hard on him. He obviously did not know God. And if you don't know God in your life, for God's sake build a wall around your heart and defend yourself. That's sensible. That's all He's ever done. He's known hardness all his life and now here he is in the house of God and God's a nutcracker? Who wants fellowship with a nutcracker when you're the nut? "Not me!" says I. "Forget that. Are you mad?"

So this guy prophesies about this hardness and how God's going to break him and all this kind of stuff and then he looks at the guy. Just so you know, I'm going to cuss in a minute. So get ready. Okay. It's an important part of the message otherwise I wouldn't do it. So gather yourself. Okay. So he looks at the guy and he finishes prophesying, "God's going to crack you open and break you and smash you and all of this kind of stuff so that God can release all the good stuff inside you. Then he looks at the guy and he says, "Do you want me

to pray for you?” And he said, “Shit, No!!!” He turned around and left. I’m thinking, “Good for you son,” because I wanted to give this prophet guy some five-fold ministry myself. (You would have to see my clenched fist as five folded fingers.)

Right Assessment; Right Interpretation

What is that? That’s nuts. I prayed silently for the walnut guy. I got back to my room and all through the night I woke up several times. He was on my heart. I prayed for him again. So the next day I wasn’t due to speak until the afternoon, so I went to another church, St. arbucks, and got a cup of coffee. It’s probably my favorite church if I’m really honest. As I sat there this walnut guy walks in. He got a cup of coffee, sat down. I walked over and said, “Hey, how you doing, my name’s Graham.” He said, “I know who you are.” So I said, “Can I sit down?” and he went, “Yeah, if you must.”

So I thought, “I’m just going to have some fun here.” So I said, “You know I was just looking at you across the coffee shop and I got this picture of a nut.” And you could see his face expressing, “Oh shoot, or words to that effect.” I continued, “I just feel like the Lord wants to say something, would you be open?” And he replied, “Oh, if you must.” So I said, “I see a picture of a nut. I know that you’ve had a hard life, eh?” And the Lord showed me some things that he’d gone through as a kid. I continued, “When you were nine, this is what happened. When you were eleven, this is what happened. When you were going through your teenage years it was one thing after another and God knows all of that. God knows that you had to build a wall around your heart to

protect yourself, and you did. Great wall by the way. It's really high.

The Lord says that it's time for that wall to come down now because I'm in your life and you can trust me. You see, there is this hard exterior. That's not a word of knowledge. I can tell just by looking at you. This is what the Lord is saying about this hardness, there is suspended over your life right now, a huge jug of oil and God is going to pour the Holy Spirit upon you for the next three years, continuously, until all that hardness is made soft and you are going to dissolve into a place of intimacy and worship and you are destined to become a man after God's own heart."

Pure Motives Enable Visions of God

A pure mind and a pure heart will always see God in everything. Abiding allows us to see the invisible God as well as the visible God. So, 2 Kings 6 is the story of two men, Elisha and his servant both in exactly the same situation, but both with a totally different perception. The servant can only see the enemy and what they're about. So he's affected with fear by what he sees on a natural level. Elisha can see horses and chariots of fire in the heavens ready to protect them both. Which do you think was going to have the better day? That's a 'no brainer,' eh? You see, Elisha could see the invisible and that's what abiding does for you.

The pure in heart see God at every opportunity, so with all your heart, long for purity because then you'll see God in everything. I love the fact that the Holy Spirit enables us to see God in the ordinary, everyday things of life and everywhere you look you'll find God if you're

looking for him. We have clean garments. We have a new birth. We are a new creation. We are clean, and Christ is our righteousness and the Holy Spirit keeps us holy.

That's why He's the Holy Spirit. In your life He keeps you holy. Yeah? So we are destined to live as people who are continuously and constantly clean. I love the blood of Jesus because it's like acid to sin. You drop sin in the blood of Jesus and it dissolves. Abiding is about living a clean life in the shadow of the Father. You are clean. It doesn't say, "You will be clean after you die and go to heaven." Clean is a state of mind and heart that is bestowed in the person of Christ. Abiding helps you to remain clean. Now there may be areas in your life presently where the Holy Spirit is shining his light on impurity and lust. He's not showing you what's wrong so much as declaring to you, "Something is missing." He is not convicting you of sin, that's what he does for the unbelievers. He is revealing the truth of your own heart to you so you can let Him remind you of your innocence.

Prophecy Reveals Truth

I was doing some prophetic ministry and a guy came forward. I saw immediately that he had a spirit of lust and pornography on his life. He doesn't need me to tell him that because, funnily enough, he already knows. Like David said, "My sin is ever before me." If I gave you a piece of paper right now and said, "On one side write down all the things you like about yourself and on the other side write down all the things you don't like about yourself, which one would you fill out first? Which side of the paper would have more information

on it? Obviously, we don't need to be told things that are wrong in our life. We know. We live with it.

He didn't need me to tell him, "Oh, there's a spirit of lust and pornography on your life." He knew it. You see, I'm looking at him and I'm seeing those things and I'm realizing, when God shows you something negative about a person, He doesn't want you to tell them. He's not giving you information to give to them because, surely enough, they already know. He's giving information to you so that you will know what they're going through.

My question to the Lord was, "I see all of that, what's the impact on his heart?" So God showed me his heart. He hated himself. He loathed himself. He felt unworthy. He felt like he couldn't come into the presence of God. He felt like he was lower than scum. He thought that he was not acceptable. Maybe he just forgot that Jesus died for all of that. He forgot that he was in Christ. He doesn't need to be confronted with the sin. So I looked at him. The issue is that he's feeling awful about himself. He's feeling guilt and shame. So, what's missing is the feeling of holiness and purity.

Holiness Is Jesus' Holy Spirit In Us

What do I prophesy? I prophesy holiness, righteousness and purity. So I said to him, "I look at you and I see suspended over your life a huge container of holiness and righteousness and purity. And it is the Father's promise that you will be a man renowned for his purity and his innocence. When God looks at you He says, "I see an innocent man." That's what God made you in Jesus.

The man bursts into tears. Why? It's his dream. It's the secret in his heart. Isn't that what Scripture says? That people will come into our presence and will speak in a heavenly language and the secrets of their heart will be manifest. Not the sins of their heart; the secrets. What are the secrets that you lock away in your heart? The vision you have for yourself that you dare not share with anybody. The dream that you've cut down so many times that you've lost sight of the original dream. God doesn't point out your sins. He tells you your dreams. The Pharisees were the dream thieves of their day. They stole peoples' dreams. God is the dream giver. Secrets? He had a yearning to be holy. That's what I saw. That's how God see you!

So when I prophesied that, I said, "Would you mind if I laid hands on you and just prayed that in?" He said, "Oh, yes! Please!" So I laid hands on him and I prayed. I could sense something changing on the inside of him. It was like a resolve coming up from within him, "I want to be that man, and God's going to help me." I saw him a couple of years later. He came walking up to me. He was totally different. I looked at him and there was a visage of purity there. I said to him, "Man, you look so clean." And he said, "Yeah. All that guilt and shame broke off me. And **it's not that I don't do it anymore. But when I do, I don't even think about doing it.** It's like it's gone. It's dissolved in the blood of Jesus. I have this hunger for innocence. And this hunger instantly draws me back to God" I said, "Yeah, I can see it."

What is he now? He's the Good News. Why? Because he lives in the truth that Jesus has already paid

for every sin he could ever commit. You see, God wants to work in your life so that you become the **best news** available to all the people around you. You **are** the Good News. You're already **clean**. You don't become a new person by changing your behavior. You discover the person you already are in Christ and you behave accordingly. What was missing from his life? That's what the Lord wanted to talk about. Dude, "You're missing something and this is what it is. Here you go. "Be holy, even as I am." That's the goodness of God. That's the life that we have before us. Anything, less than that revelation, is substandard Christianity. It's a substandard relationship with God.

God's Ultimate Desire for Us Is Intimacy

God has real designs on you for intimacy. What He's doing when He prunes you is just taking away all the distractions of ministry and the distractions of service. He's taking away the distractions of false beliefs which sap our strength through guilt, shame and anxiety. God loves you serving Him, but He much prefers that you see Him as He really is. He wants you to get Him. He wants you to get who He is and more specifically who He is for you. He wants you to feel Him.

Actually, intimacy is to relationship what wisdom is to knowledge. When Solomon asked for wisdom over fame and fortune, He received all three. And when you become intimate with God, He gets the pleasure of your passion, your fruitfulness in ministry and access to your entire arsenal of talents and time. So He's pruning you right now because you need a bigger, improved revelation of who He is for you.

Often, those who are in ministry vocationally are even more susceptible to distractions **from** intimacy than ordinary people. The enemy of the best is **not** the worst. The worst is easy to spot and largely avoid. **The enemy of the best is the very good.** And what could be better than to be in ‘full-time’ service for God? Well, the answer was just stated. **The best is intimacy with God. Intimacy** with God is **not** the same as **intensity** for God. Judas Iscariot was very intense, like Peter, but intensely wrong, not like Peter, and hanged himself in the end. Peter was very intense about Jesus, but in the end denied Him three times in public! Often our service for God is so much about our reputation that in it we actually deny Jesus’ because we love ourselves. So whether you are clergy or laity, intimacy is the best. And to be sure **intimacy is a passionate feeling of affection.**

Intimacy Takes Time and Attention

Now if you’re in ministry and don’t have the luxury of taking a sabbatical for time alone with God, the grace of God will come to you and help you work on both the business at hand and intimacy. This applies to non-ministerial persons as well. God will enable you to devote a larger amount of time to becoming more intimate. That means that if you don’t get around to preparing your sermon or lecture until the morning of your presentation, God will give you a Spirit of Revelation over breakfast. Yeah. You’ll get away with it because the grace of God will allow you to.

In the time of pruning you must put most of your energy into being **with God** and to spending time **developing your love for God.** He will give you grace

and the words or insights so that you can accomplish everything else that is required of you. There have been times in my own life of pruning when I have not even prayed for events I am teaching. I'm not even prepared for them, because I'm so hooked into being in this place of awareness of God. Then when I go to those events, everything happens like it normally would just as if I had prayed and prepared. The longer you live in this state of awareness of God, the more you find Him doing what needs to be done, while you relax in trust. This applies to secular pursuits as well. What happens is this. The work is different, actually far less tiring, because you are more intimate with God. So what God wants to do right now, is to establish or re-establish your deep affection for Him. It's like the word in the Revelation to one of the seven churches, "return to your first love, the honeymoon love."

Knowing Exactly How God Feels About You

God is re-establishing in your heart the truth of how He sees you and how He feels about you so that you will come to a deeper level of affection, a deeper place of joy, a deeper place of worship, a deeper place of intimacy and prayer that is truly "without ceasing." The Holy Spirit has designs on you right now to help you discover that He is a relationship genius. He's totally about relationship. He always knows what He wants to say to you, what He wants you to say, what He wants to do and where He wants to lead you. My prayer now and always will be that you let the Spirit lead in every moment of decision in your life. Maybe my prayer will be yours in the days ahead.

“Father, here I am. This is a great moment Lord. I know that You are really excited right now. You have things to give me. You’re such a giver; a great giver. Oh my goodness. God’s such a great, great, great, giver. Lord I am so behind in my receiving. But You are going to change all of that. This is my request Lord. I ask that in this time of pruning, in this time of rebuilding intimacy, all the intimacy that should have been mine, that I haven’t picked up, will come to me. Make it such that it feels as though I never stepped away. I pray that everything I should have picked up will be restored to me in the intimacy You bring to me.

Continue to pour out Your love on my life. Pour out Your love upon me. And Lord, bring me to a place of abiding, staying, dwelling, remaining, resting, loving Your presence, loving being with You, loving what You bring. I know that You will lavish affection on me. I pray that You will indulge Yourself Lord. I am asking You to go over the top in terms of what You bring to me. Lord ‘renew my mind, every thought,’ such that I feel Your love and favor from this day forward until death do we meet face to face. And may my life be so fully surrendered to Your Holy Spirit in me, that people see Jesus and His love, not me and my love. I want to be so overwhelmed by the love of Jesus that I will never step out on You again! AMEN!!!”

My friend, Bob, who has prepared this manuscript, once told me of an amazing episode of God honoring his time and attention to developing intimacy with God. Here’s how it worked for a businessman.

Bob was working for a major bank in Philadelphia. His employer offered to pay for tuition for college to finish his degree as long as he maintained above average grades. So Bob began attending classes at Temple University. In Bob's second year at Temple, he was approached by a couple in his church. They told him that they had installed a swimming pool at their home in hopes of establishing a youth Bible Study. The plan was to have the students come to a pool party which would be followed by the study of scripture. They asked Bob to be the teacher since he had been a youth minister at the church before he became a banker. Bob said, "Yes."

As Bob embarked on this new teaching assignment, he soon realized that he did not have enough time to study for his college courses and prepare for the Bible study each week. Concerned about the possibility that he would not maintain high enough grades, he sought God's guidance. Well the answer came back from the witness of the Holy Spirit that God would enable Bob to do both. So, instead of withdrawing from Temple University, Bob spent almost all of his time preparing for the Bible study and very little on the college course materials, but he took copious notes in each class.

To Bob's extreme delight, with little effort devoted to college study and much time spent with God, the Bible study was a roaring success. The students stayed so long after swimming that many horns were honked by the parents waiting for their kids. They spent over three years just studying the Book of James. Meanwhile, Bob maintained a very high GPA which assured tuition payment by his employer.