To know, experience, or see God has been the deep desire and longing of all who truly love God. Paul wrote, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:8). In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught that those who are pure in heart will see God. To be holy is to be morally blameless, to be separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God. “God has provided all we need for our pursuit of holiness,” writes Jerry Bridges. “He has delivered us from the reign of sin and given us His indwelling Holy Spirit. He has revealed His will for holy living in His Word, and He works in us to will and to act according to His good purpose.” The challenge today is being pure in such a crooked and perverse generation! What help and encouragement can we receive from the Scriptures in our goal of perfecting excellence through purity?

God’s Desire for Purity

1. What attribute of God is emphasized in the following verses?

Psalm 99:3, 5, 9

Isaiah 6:3

Isaiah 57:15

Hebrews 7:26

2. Ephesians 5:1 states, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.” God desires that we bear an increasing resemblance to Himself. From each of the following passages, select one truth that seems most significant to you related to becoming “imitators” of God’s holiness and purity.

Ephesians 5:3-4

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

Hebrews 12:14
By faith and obedience, by constant meditation on the holiness of God, by loving righteousness and hating iniquity, by a growing acquaintance with the Spirit of holiness, we can acclimate ourselves to the fellowship of the saints on earth and prepare ourselves for the eternal companionship of God and the saints above.

A. W. Tozer

God’s Design for Purity

3. What are the major battlefields or stumbling blocks we face in our goal of purity?
   Mark 7:15, 20-23

   Ephesians 6:12

   James 1:13-16

   1 John 2:15-16

   On which battlefield do you most often find yourself?

4. What do the following verses teach us about rejecting sin?
   Romans 6:11-14

   Colossians 3:1-5

   1 John 3:7-9

Elisabeth Elliot writes concerning the characteristics of the old nature listed in Colossians 3:5, “These are the products of human desire, if human desire is given free reign. The Christian has handed the reins over to his Master. His human desires are brought into line. The desires still exist, are still strong, natural and human, but they are subjugated to the higher power of the Spirit. They are purified and corrected as we live day by day in faith and obedience.”

5. In dealing with temptation, we are often told to make a specific response to God and also respond in a specific way to Satan or our old nature. Look up the following verses and write the proper response in the appropriate column.
To experience joy, we must make some choices. We must choose to forsake sin, not only because it is defeating to us, but because it grieves the heart of God. We must choose to count on the fact that we are dead to sin, freed from its reign and dominion, and we can now actually say no to sin. We must choose to accept our responsibility to discipline our lives for obedience.

Jerry Bridges

**AUTHOR’S REFLECTION** - Several years ago there was a television mini-series entitled *East of Eden*. As I read the promotional advertisements, I felt a desire to view this program. The line of my thinking was this: “It’s based on the Bible, it would be interesting to see how the writers portray the conflict of Cain and Abel, so you should watch the series and critique it.” As I read, though, I realized that there were seduction scenes and parts of the movie that were probably not honoring to God. I did not see *East of Eden* and I may have been too quick to judge, but as I prayed, I knew in my heart that it was not right for me.

I want to share a definition of sin from Susanna Wesley that has guided me and helped me immensely, especially in the “gray” areas:

“**Sin** – Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things, that thing is sin for you, however innocent it may be in itself.”

It’s not that all novels, television, and music are evil. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:12: “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” The question for the committed Christian is, How will this book or program influence my walk with God and my thought life?

Another aspect of purity that I have to constantly evaluate is the subtlety of compromise and comparison. Often I think, “Well, at least I don’t do that,” or “I’m not as bad as many others,” or “My little sins are nothing compared to what she does!” The thought that helps me is that I should look at my own purity not by comparing it to others’, but to Christ’s, Jesus said, “For I do always those things that please him.” (John 8:29). Andrew Bonar wrote: “It is not the importance of the thing, but the majesty of the Lawgiver, that is to be the standard of obedience. . . . Is He a holy Lawgiver?”

The challenge and question is found in Scripture: “Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.” (Proverbs 31:10)

6. The importance of the mind in relation to purity is emphasized in the following verses. What specific instruction is given?

Psalm 119:9-11

Philippians 4:8

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<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Response to God</th>
<th>Response to old self or Satan</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ephesians 6:10-11</td>
<td>Put on the full armor of God</td>
<td>Stand firm against the Devil’s schemes</td>
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<td>Colossians 3:9-10</td>
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<td>James 4:7</td>
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<td>1 Peter 5:8-9</td>
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7. It is important to be fully aware of the sin around us. In your own words, write down what these verses encourage us to do that will help us in this area.

Proverbs 4:23

Ephesians 6:13

1 Peter 5:8-9

One of the ways that I have learned to guard my heart, to be fully armored, and to be on the alert is to consistently abide in Christ and His Word.

If there is an Enemy of Souls (and I have not the slightest doubt that there is), one thing he cannot abide is the desire for purity. Hence a man’s or a woman’s passions become his battleground. The Lover of Souls does not prevent this. I was perplexed because it seemed to me He should prevent it, but He doesn’t. He wants us to learn to use our weapons.  

Elisabeth Elliot

8. Many years ago I realized that I must have convictions concerning different areas of purity in my life. Pray about, think over, and write down your convictions in regard to:

- Your relationships with men:
- Your dress:
- Your speech:
- Your activities:

9. Proverbs 16:2 – “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.”

a. What does this verse tell us about 1) what should and 2) what should not be the source of our standard of purity?

b. In what personal areas do you find yourself most susceptible to setting your own standards of thought or conduct without seeking God’s guidance?

Asking yourself the following questions may be helpful in discerning your motives and choosing that which is pure.
➢ Is it helpful - physically, spiritually, and mentally? (1 Corinthians 6:12)
➢
➢ Does it bring me under its power? (1 Corinthians 6:12)

➢ Does it hurt others? (1 Corinthians 8:13)

➢ Does it glorify God? (1 Corinthians 10:31)

➢ Can I do it in His name? (Colossians 3:17)

God’s Delight in Purity

10. According to the following verses, what are the results of living a pure life?

Psalm 24:3-5

Matthew 5:8

It is quite true to say - “I cannot live a holy life,” but you can decide to let Jesus
Christ make you holy.”

Oswald Chambers

Thoughts for Spiritual Encouragement

Some precious words of an old hymn tell us that God’s grace is greater than all our sin. Perhaps there has been
some impurity in your past. The Scriptures state, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our
sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9). Our confession brings cleansing.

To encourage our own purity it is wise to have friends who practice purity. To help in areas of
vulnerability it is good to have someone you can call or go to for special prayer.

11. Perhaps you would like to write out a prayer to God expressing your desire to live a holy life. You might
want to include some thoughts from the old hymn that follows.

More purity give me, More strength, to o’er-come;
More freedom from earth stains,
More longings for home;
More fit for the kingdom, More used would I be;
More blessed and holy; More, Savior, like Thee

P. P. Bliss

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE MEMORY: Proverbs 4:23