

## Did you enjoy April Fool's Day?

This is the first year my kids have known about this day of trickery and they embraced it with gusto.

One of my daughter's tricks was to take a big, beautifully wrapped present to her teacher. Under the bows and ribbons was a series of smaller boxes with bows and ribbons. At the heart of this big present was nothing more than an apple and a new pencil and pad. I'm thankful she was kind and didn't want to make the surprise something ugly, mean or nasty.

Sometimes we are like April Fool's Day presents - wrapped up in our pretty packages of doing good and covered in ribbons of saying the right things - when underneath it all lays an unexpected heart of bitterness, anger, jealousy or adultery.

To truly be new, we have to change what is inside. Join me in taking a look at what our hearts reveal to God and the importance of a pure heart.

Yearning for a pure heart,  
Jennifer

## Revelations of the Heart

As I write today's lesson, I'm baking in the Nevada desert sun. My husband came to Las Vegas on business and after months of frozen toes in Nebraska, I jumped at the chance to tag along and be warm again.

I've been blessed by not only the sun, but the opportunities to pray and open God's Word in the midst of Satan's playground. As I see planes land, I pray for the married men entering Vegas for conventions not to stray from their marital vows. As I see scantily-clad spring break girls, I pray that their purity will be protected as they naively flaunt their sexuality along the strip. As I see locals perched at slot machines, I pray it's not their grocery money disappearing into the machine. As I see couples, I pray they are married (to each other) and that God will strengthen their marriages. As I see the broken, I pray they will find the healing restoration of Christ.

As I've prayed my way through this self-proclaimed "sin city" where "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas," I've realized the city and its promotion of loose morals aren't to blame for what happens in Vegas. Las Vegas itself isn't sinful; it's just an enabler, providing opportunities to show what lies in the dark places of our human hearts. Las Vegas doesn't create immorality, it exposes it.

Take a moment to put yourself in a Las Vegas mindset. Imagine that you could indulge any desire without anyone knowing; that anything you wanted to have or do was possible with no one else ever knowing.

What would you do?

Would it be something God wouldn't approve of? Are your morals held in check by what others might think and not because your heart has been made new by the Lord?

My friend, if you can see this today - that you haven't really given your heart to the Lord - give praise and thanks because He has blessed you by showing you the true state of your heart. Take this opportunity to invite Him to change your heart and make you new in Him.

It can look daunting and seem scary, but we have to expose the wrongs of our hearts and get them right. Please share the darkness of your heart with Jesus. Ask Him to come into your heart and shine His light on the dark places. He alone knows the intimate details and can change you.

Only through Christ can we have new hearts.

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## Meditate and Study

Grab your notebook and Bible and get ready to explore!

### Lesson 7-1

1. Pray, asking God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.
2. What did you learn or apply from the last lesson?  
If you didn't do the lesson, you can print it at  
<http://www.hopeinthelord.org/DownloadBibleStudy.html>
3. Read 1 Samuel 16:7.
  - a. What does man look at?
  - b. What does the Lord look at?
  - c. Do you care more about what the Lord sees (your heart) or what the world sees (your outward appearance)?
  - d. Which do you spend more time working on?
  - e. Describe a time you used your outward appearance to cover up your heart.
  - f. If you are unsatisfied with your outward appearance, how does this encourage you?
4. Read 1 Chronicles 28:9-10.
  - a. How should you serve God?
  - b. What additional details does this passage give about what the Lord sees in our hearts?
  - c. What two choices are given for your heart?
  - d. What are the results of each choice?
  - e. Which choice do you make?
5. Read Luke 6:43-45 and Mark 7:20-23 (both of these passages record Jesus' words)
  - a. According to the Luke passage, how are we recognized?
  - b. What is the source of this fruit (v. 45)?
  - c. List the evils included in the Mark passage.
  - d. Where does Jesus say these things come from?
6. What does the Lord find when He searches your heart?
7. Meditate on Psalm 19:14  
Write your own prayer using these words.
8. Meditate on Psalm 51:7-12.  
Write your own prayer using these words.
9. Meditate on Psalm 86:11-13.  
Write your own prayer using these words.
10. What will you do this week to change your heart?

## Lesson 7-2

1. Pray for the Lord to reveal His truth to you and open your heart.
2. What changes did you make as a result of last week's lesson?
3. Read 1 Chronicles 28:9-10.
  - a. Reread verse 10, substituting your name for "you."
  - b. What has the Lord chosen you to do?
  - c. What directions does He give you?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.
  - a. What does 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 tell you about your body?
  - b. Who dwells in your body temple?
  - c. Where does the Holy Spirit come from?
  - d. What do you think it means that you were "bought at a price?"
  - e. From 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, what additional name do you find for the Holy Spirit?
  - f. What additional things do you learn about your body as a temple from these verses?
  - g. How does this knowledge change your thinking?
5. Read Ephesians 1:13.
  - a. When do we receive the Holy Spirit?
  - b. What does the inclusion of the Holy Spirit within the temple of our body guarantee?
  - c. Is this promise for everyone, or is there a condition?
  - d. What is required to be marked with this seal?
6. Read Colossians 3:1-17.

Reread Colossians 3:1-4. This passage refers to being made new in Christ.

  - a. Where should you focus (set) your heart?
  - b. Where should you focus (set) your mind?
  - c. Where do you focus your heart and mind?
  - d. What do you think it means that you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God?
  - e. What does v. 4 tell you will happen?
7. Reread Colossians 3:6-9.
  - a. What things should you put to death and rid yourself of?
  - b. Have you put these things to death and gotten rid of them?
  - c. Which of these areas do you struggle with?
  - d. Write a prayer to the Lord, asking Him to help you be new in Him. Ask Him to fill you with His Spirit to resist temptation and live for Him.
8. Reread Colossians 3:9-11.
  - a. Why should you make these changes?
  - b. How does this passage describe your new self?
9. Reread Colossians 3:12-15.
  - a. How does God describe His people (first part of v. 12)?
  - b. What does it mean to you that you are God's chosen, holy and dearly loved?
  - c. List all the things these verses encourage you to do as God's chosen, holy and dearly loved.
  - d. How does this passage describe the role of love (v. 14)?
  - e. What additional information do you learn about love from Mark 12:28-31?
10. Reread Colossians 3:16-17.
  - a. What should dwell in your heart?
  - b. In whose name should you do all you do?
  - c. With what attitude should you do it?

My friend, this was a lot of information to process! I know these lessons take time, but time in God's Word is never wasted! How He loves to see your heart searching for Him. As you learned last week, when you search for Him, HE WILL BE FOUND! Praise God!

Please take a moment to reflect over your lessons.

What surprised you? What challenged you? What was completely new to you?

How will this change your prayer life?

How will this affect your Bible reading?

What new things have you learned about your salvation through Jesus Christ?

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I wish you could see the big, cheesy grin on my face right now. I'm just so happy to have the opportunity to study God's Word with you. I know the riches and blessings He pours into our lives when we live for Him, focus on Him, and rely on His Spirit within us – and I'm excited to know you are sharing in those blessings.

My friend, be strong in Christ. Know that as you grow, you will face challenges and obstacles, some like you've never seen or imagined. But you are new in Christ. You have His strength and power at work within you. No matter what comes, you are guaranteed your inheritance and will be redeemed as God's possession.

Praise God!!

Rejoicing in the beauty of our King,  
Jennifer