

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

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IT IS EASIER

Nicolas Edwards

The path of least resistance is the one that most people take. Unfortunately, this path is not always the right one. The narrow way to heaven is a path of resistance, suffering, and trials. For this reason, many abandon it for a path that is easier! Some abandon it, but still insist that they are on the narrow way. You can't have it both ways! The right thing is not always easy, but certainly is the best thing we can do for our soul and the souls of others! It is easier...

TO ENJOY THE PLEASURES OF SIN THAN TO SUFFER. Moses had to make a choice, and we have to make the same choice today. *“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”* (Heb. 11:24-25). It's not easy to suffer, but it leads to a much greater reward (v. 26). *“...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”* (2 Tim. 3:12).

TO GIVE KISSES THAN TO GIVE WOUNDS. *“Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an*

enemy are deceitful” (Prov. 27:5-6). It is not easy to give open rebuke, but a friend that is faithful will do it out of genuine concern. A person who tells you what you want to hear is not a friend. He is your enemy! It is easier to receive kisses than wounds. We must develop a love and desire for rebuke because it makes us wise (Prov. 9:8-9).

TO TOLERATE SIN THAN TO DEAL WITH IT. It is much easier to tolerate sin, never say a word about it and never deal with it, than to stand up, refute it, oppose it and deal with it. What makes this so hard is there are so many people who are living in sin who do not want to be opposed! They want to remain in their sinful lifestyles and be tolerated. When you shed light on their dark practices, they scatter. They don't want to hear it and will often get angry. It is too bad people act this way. If I am in sin, I sure want you to let me know it because my sin will condemn my soul to hell! I do not want to go there (Rev. 20:12-15)! No matter how people respond, we must oppose sin and never tolerate it! When we tolerate sin, we are helping that individual and ourselves to hell rather than to heaven (Is. 58:1; Ezek. 33:1-20; Mt. 10:34-39; Jn. 16:8; Acts 20:20, 26-27; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 5:11; 2 Th. 3; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 13:17).

TO HATE YOUR ENEMIES THAN TO LOVE THEM. In Luke 6:27-36, the Lord teaches us to love our enemies. It is easier to hate them, render evil for evil, desire their hurt and downfall. It is easier to want vengeance than to forgive. Remember vengeance is the Lord's (Rom. 12:19). We must be merciful, forgiving, desire the wellbeing of those who wrong us, and do good to them (Lk. 6:36; Mt. 18:21-35).

TO FOLLOW THE MAJORITY THAN TO STAND WITH THE FEW. Caleb and Joshua are great examples of standing with the few. They stood against *“all the company of the children of Israel”* (Num. 14:7). This wasn't easy as *“all the congregation bade stone them with stones”* (Num. 14:10). It would have been easier to follow the majority, but they stood as a great minority. When you stand up for what is right, you will be among the few. Many call themselves Christians, but follow the majority, taking the path of least resistance. Who today would be willing to be stoned for the faith, for truth and right, for the Lord? We must be willing. Caleb and Joshua were among the few to enter the promised land; the majority died in the wilderness (Num. 14:36-38). *“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil...”* (Ex. 23:2).

YOUR MINDSET DETERMINES EVERYTHING

Rufus R. Clifford III

The apostle Paul in Romans 8:6 says, *“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”* A Christian is to be spiritually minded which means their mindset is what it ought to be! Paul again states this concerning our mindset, *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 2:5). Christ had the proper mindset! Over in Colossians 3:2 we are told, *“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”* In order to set my affection, I must have the proper mindset and this simply means that I’m keeping God, people, and things of this world in their proper place in my mind!

WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT? In the Bible, the words *“heart”* and *“mind”* are often used interchangeably and involve a person’s intellect, volition, and emotions — it’s much more than just our physical muscle known as the heart. Jesus stressed the importance of having our hearts (minds, intellects, emotions) in the proper place when He said, *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Mt. 6:21). So, according to Jesus, where my mindset is will determine where my treasure is; which will in turn affect the way I live in this world. Paul stated the same thing when he told us to set our affections on things above! Paul was in essence reminding the Colossians, and all who read his letter today, that one’s mindset must be in the right place.

THIS ANSWERS MANY QUESTIONS.

1. Why is it folks will dress up when going to parties, or funerals, or weddings and yet give little regard to their appearance when coming to church? **THEIR MINDSET!** They have unknowingly placed parties, funerals, and weddings on a higher level in their minds than they have given to Almighty God!

2. Why is it that children are taught to say, “Yes sir” and “No sir” and “Yes ma’am” and “No ma’am” to their elders and yet speak of God in terms of “you,” “the man upstairs,” or “him”? **THEIR MINDSET!** They have placed giving respect and honor to men of this world on a higher level in their minds than they have given to Almighty God!

3. Why is it folks can’t make it to service but one time a week and yet they can attend a ball game and sit and watch a double header, or not miss one single meeting at school or work or even in some cases attend these functions sick? **THEIR MINDSET!** They have given things of this world a higher position of importance than they have given to Almighty God!

4. Why is it that folks respect the laws of this land and readily accept their responsibility to obey them and yet try to disprove the law of God and show little regard for God’s authority today? **THEIR MINDSET!** They have brought God down to man’s level and in their minds they no longer respect and honor and give God the important position that He deserves!

One’s mindset will determine how he dresses, how he speaks, how he lives day to day, and, more importantly, where God stands in

relationship to himself. For you see until I have placed God first and foremost in my mind as being the awesome, supreme being that He truly is, my respect and regard for what His will is will not be what it ought to be! In other words, it could be said that my mindset is not right.

Where is your mindset today?

Get it right,
Put it right,
And keep it right!

Your mindset determines everything!

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PURER IN HEART

John Edwards

The apostle John wrote, *“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure”* (1 Jn. 3:3). The Scriptures put a lot of emphasis on the heart. God sees (Gen. 6:5), looks upon (1 Sam. 16:7), knows (1 Ki. 8:39), and searches (1 Chr. 28:9) our hearts. It should be our aim to be purer in heart (Ps. 24:3-4; Mt. 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:5; 4:12; 5:22; Jas. 1:27; 1 Pet. 1:22). *“Purer in heart, O God”* is a good song for the Lord’s people to sing often. How can I be purer in heart?

ASK GOD FOR HELP. The song, *Purer in Heart*, begins and ends with this thought: *“Purer in heart, O God, help me to be.”* Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord (2 Chr. 20:4). We need to do that! The Lord taught, *“Ask and ye shall receive”* (Mt. 7:7; 21:22; Jas. 1:5-6; 1 Jn. 3:22;

5:14-15). The song, Yield Not To Temptation says, "Ask the Savior to help you, Comfort, strengthen, and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you thru." Some things to ask as suggested by the song, Purer in Heart:

"Watch Thou my wayward feet, Guide me with counsel sweet." How's your feet, from a spiritual standpoint? The Psalmist said: *"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies"* (Ps. 119:59). *"I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word"* (Ps. 119:101). *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Ps. 119:105).

"Keep me from secret sin, Reign Thou my soul within." It is written, *"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord"* (Jer. 23:24). The Preacher declared, *"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil"* (Eccl. 12:14).

DEVOTE MY LIFE WHOLLY TO GOD. Psalm 119:2, *"Blessed are they that*

keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart."

We must observe God's law with the *"whole heart"* (Ps. 119:34, 69). The downfall of Solomon was brought about because his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord His God (1 Ki. 11:4). It is said of Jehoshaphat's good reign that his heart was devoted to the ways of the Lord (2 Chr. 17:6). Those whose lives are devoted wholly to God continue steadfastly (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 15:58). How about us?

HIDE THE LORD'S WORD IN MY HEART. God's word in the heart promotes a pure heart! *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"* (Ps. 119:11). The word of the Lord is pure (Ps. 12:6; 19:8; 119:140; Prov. 30:5). So, incline your heart unto God's testimonies (Ps. 119:36, 112)!

PURPOSE NOT TO DEFILE YOURSELF. Remember Daniel (Dan. 1:8)? There are things that will defile us today (Mt. 15:18-19; 1 Tim. 1:10). Determine not to do anything that will cause you to be unclean before God. Nothing will enter heaven that defileth

(Rev. 21:27). Will we enter?

FLEE AND FOLLOW. 2 Timothy 2:22 teaches us to *"flee"* and *"follow"*. This we must do, if we wish to be purer in heart. *"Flee youthful lusts"*, like Joseph (Gen. 39:12). *"Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace"* (1 Tim. 6:11).

HAVE THE RIGHT COMPANIONS. 2 Timothy 2:22 says, *"...with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."* *"With them"* puts us in the right company. *"I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts"* (Ps. 119:63). Does that describe you? If we want to be pure, we must associate with those who are pure (1 Cor. 15:33)!

THINK ON PURE THINGS. Our thinking affects our purity! *"As he thinketh in his heart, so is he"* (Prov. 23:7). The Philippians were instructed, *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure...think on these things"* (Phil. 4:8).

"That I thy holy face one day may see" (Ps. 24:3-4).

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