

# (1 Peter - Part 17): Seeing Ye Have Purified Your Souls

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of purifying our souls through obeying the truth, and the relationship between faith and works in living a life of unfeigned love of the brethren.*

**Duration:** 31:36

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 1 Peter 1:22

**Topics:** "Purification"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being able to order and structure one's preaching or teaching. He uses 1 Peter 1:22 as a perfect verse for a sermon outline, which consists of seven points. The speaker highlights that the New Testament always provides biblical reasons for its commands, and in this case, the command to love one another is preceded by the reason that believers have purified their souls. The sermon encourages listeners to study and mark their Bibles, and to understand the logical flow of apostolic teaching.

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## Transcript

In the first chapter of 1 Peter, 1 Peter 1, 22, 22nd verse, Peter continuing his exhortation to the Christians, scattered abroad, says, Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart, fervently. That's as far as we'll go, because the other, with the privilege an apostle claims for himself, switches on the word being to something else altogether. So we'll stay by verse 22.

Those of you who preach or teach or address groups of any sort will note that there is one thing that you must be able to do if you're going to address an audience at all, and that is to be able to order what you say. The average Christian knows enough to preach all night, but he couldn't do it because he is not skilled in ordering what he has to say. So that sermon preparation, as far as the homiletical angle of it is concerned, simply consists of ordering what you're going to say so that you won't talk in circles and meet yourself constantly running around the circle.

Now, this 22nd verse, to my mind, is one of the most perfect verses for a sermon. Not that there will be the most perfect sermon, I promise you that. But I mean a sermon outline here, something that you could get in your head or heart and be able to give it.

He says, you have purified your souls, point one, by obeying the truth, point two, through the Spirit, three, unto unfeigned love of brethren, four. See therefore that you love one another, five, out of a pure heart, six, fervently, seven. And it even has the good fundamentalist, seven.

One of my dear brothers won't preach at all unless he can get seven points in his sermon. I never allow myself to be hemmed in by mathematics. If there aren't seven there, I'm not going to put another one in.

If there are less than seven, I'm not going to add one merely to make it look good. But there are seven here. And starting out with this, we notice a peculiar phrase, or two of them, seeing that, see that.

Bible students might put a line under this. Incidentally, in studying the Bible, never try to spare your Bible. The Bible that was given to you twenty-five years ago was a wedding present and is still in perfect shape.

It might just as well have given you barkers all in the neck. Because it's not doing you any good, wear your Bible out. Mark it up.

Thumb it. And then when it's gone, get another one. Retire it honorably and get yourself another one.

Work on your Bible. And so I don't hesitate to say, if you want to do it, mark it. So that seeing that, see that.

Now there is the sweet logic of the apostolic teaching. The older I get, and the more familiar I get with the scriptures, the more I'm pleased with the logic of the Bible. It moves along with beautiful precision, marches like an army.

He was moved by the Holy Ghost. He'll take the liberty of a digression. Paul's full of them.

They call them ellipses. The scholars call Paul's style elliptical. He'll start to say one thing, and then he'll look over and see something else, and lose the thread that he's taught, and dash over and say something better.

They call that elliptical. But Peter did the same thing here, and you'll find that in the Bible. But you'll also find that wherever there's a complete statement, it always follows beautiful logic.

So he says, seeing that, therefore see that. Now seeing that ye have done this one thing, or seeing that this one thing is true of you, therefore see that this something else is true of you, based upon this other thing that is true of you. Now that is clear as I'm afraid it isn't.

So we have it here. The Bible never breaks in, comes ripping through to your heart with a command, but always precedes it with a reason for it. That is, the New Testament always gives biblical reasons for what it demands.

There's never anything whimsical about the Holy Ghost. There is imperious command, but that command always grows out of some sound, plentiful reason why it's perfectly natural and right that it should be so. So he says, seeing that you have purified your heart, therefore love.

Now let's look at the seven divisions here. And don't brace yourself for a long talk, for I promise you it won't be. He says, you have purified your souls, and the man of God begins with the word souls inside us.

Most of the great religions of the world begin with externals. In fact, I am at the moment unable to think of any that do not or does not begin with the external. They begin with diet, or dress, or ascetic practices, or the celebration of days.

And then they hope, and do hope indeed, that somehow by the performance of external acts, they will be able to work in on themselves to their heart. That by beginning in the fingers, you can work through to their heart. Beginning at the toes, you can work up to their heart.

That's the religions of the world. Buddhism begins externally, and the great religions that make so much of dress, and of ascetic practices. It would be amusing if it were not too significant of a trend to see how such groups as the Hollywood actors, and the nightclub boys, and all the rest, are going in big for yogi these days.

Everybody wants to be a yogi. Well, the yogi, of course, is one who begins outside. And by certain body practices, by even body postures, he manages to control his breathing, and then after he's got his breathing under control, he controls his thoughts, and slowly he works it in through his inner man.

And the hope is that he'll change himself and purify his soul by something he does on the outside. Now, that is exactly contrary to the scriptures. To begin on the outside and work into the center is unknown to the New Testament.

And that was the area of warfare between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Pharisees. The Pharisees were externalists. Jesus Christ was and is an internist.

They believed that by practicing external things, they could work into the center and change the internal through the external. Jesus knew better, and fought them as long as he lived on earth, and died and went to glory to prove them wrong, and to prove that he alone knew that it was their heart that mattered, it was the internal that mattered, and when the internal is right, the outside falls into line perfectly. That is also the difference between modernistic doctrines and liberalistic religions that begin by training and make a much of religious education.

Now, religious education at best is the training of the man to think right and act right, and certainly it's not to be decried, it's to be desired. But without the secret and mysterious internal change, all of this outside change will be found to be wasted at last. He says, you have purified your souls.

Now, I conclude from my study of the Bible that the faith of Christ begins in the center and works out to the external conduct, and that we are safe in concluding that if the heart has not been reached, any religious profession is vain, completely vain. If the heart has been reached, the religious profession then takes on meaning, but if it has not been reached, all religious profession is vain. Does it sound like an old bromide or religious cliché for me to repeat what you hear so much from the average evangelist, and he's right in it, that you can join all the churches in the city, be baptized by every mode known, and celebrate every holy day in the Christian calendar, and still be lost if you are not changed on the inside.

You have purified your hearts, your souls, he says. And so the soul is the inside of a person, the essence of the person, that which matters, that which makes you, that which is you. For the word soul here certainly can be and is extended to mean the whole interior man.

Synonyms would be the heart of the man, or the reins of the man, but it's the whole interior man. And this man has been purified. There is a purification of the deep inner life that is required before we have any

right to believe that our religious profession is valid.

Now that's one. You have purified your souls, now the next question is how. Purification of the soul by bathing in the river Ganges is the method practiced by the Hindus.

But the catch is that all they ever get is external bathing, and they tell me, those who've seen the Mother Ganga, that it isn't much because Mother Ganga's too dirty to ever cleanse anybody. But we do not smile at them, nor do we look down our holy noses at them, for the simple reason that they're trying erroneously to do a right thing. They're seeking a right in a wrong way.

And they'll never reach it, just as a man might erroneously start to drive to Detroit but turn his car in the direction of Omaha. Now we might be ever so honest, and some of you may smile quietly inside remembering the time you did that very thing. You thought you were going the wrong direction.

A man told me once this. He said he was a truck driver and worked with two men, the systems they had, two men were on the truck, and they had a little bed up there, as they have, and one would sleep while the other one drove, and then they would spell themselves that way. So they always had a fresh driver.

I don't know if they always do that, but they do that, some truck companies. Well, this man told me that he was driving once on a truck, and his co-pilot was sleeping in the little bunk back of the driver, and he said he came down this way, say going east, saw a filling station, swung completely around, made a U-turn and parked. Got some gasoline and woke up his friend.

He said, it's your turn, it's time for you to drive a lot. So he climbed up in the bunk and went sound asleep. Twenty-five miles later, the new driver found that his friend had turned the truck around.

Now, he was perfectly honest, but completely erroneous. It was a mistake, he had fifty miles to make up because of an error. You might say, but he's such a good man, any difference, he's going the wrong way.

But he pays his debts and he just loves his wife, it doesn't make any difference. He was traveling the wrong way, and he'll never get to the terminal going the wrong direction. But he's so handsome, and a man with hair like that couldn't make a mistake, he did.

He made the mistake nevertheless, but he belongs to the Masons and he's a church member, but he's going the wrong way. And no matter who is going, no matter how nice he is, no matter how bushy his hair, if he's going the wrong way, his personality won't get him going the right way. Now, there are thousands of people, the devil has turned their vehicle around and they don't know it.

And they're pushing it right down to the floor, and they're going along beautifully, and they imagine they're going where they want to go because they're making a good bracket and getting up some speed. But they're not going the right direction. The yogi who gets his breathing under control and can properly manipulate his abdominal muscles, and who can hypnotize himself and draw in his thoughts and all that, he is making progress all right, but he's traveling the wrong direction.

For he's assuming the validity of an erroneous doctrine, that the heart is made pure beginning from without. Whereas the scripture says the heart is made pure first, and then everything else comes of itself. He hath purified your heart.

Now how he hath purified your heart? It says by obeying the truth. Now by obeying the truth. I don't want you to be shocked by that word obey, it's not popular in the day in which we live, but it's a good word, obeying the truth.

Now there are two sides, obeying and believing. In Acts 15.9 the Holy Ghost says, God terrifying their hearts by faith. And in our text the Holy Ghost says, purified your souls by obeying the truth.

So we have faith and works, one by Peter and the other by the spirit in the apostles in the book of Acts. Now is there any contradiction here? No, here is where our critics come along and say there's a contradiction here. No contradiction whatever.

Suppose that I was talking about a seagull, and I was making a great deal over the seagull's beautiful right wing. And I said that seagull has one of the most graceful right wings you ever saw. Now watch him.

And he extended that right wing and pushed it out there and shoved it, and it was so graceful an artist would run for his pencil. Just to outline the symmetry and beauty of that wing. So we teach the validity of flight by the right wing of the seagull.

But another man comes along and says, have you ever noticed the left wing of the seagull? It's simply beautiful. But the first man says, heretic and legalist, that you would dare mention that a seagull has a left wing while our whole church is built on the doctrine that it has a right wing. And the critic stands up and says, listen to that argument, they're contradicting each other.

Well anybody ought to know that a seagull can't fly with one wing. He'd only flap in a circle. He'd never get off the ground.

And also anyone should know that a seagull can't fly with a left wing. He would fly in a circle only he'd be spinning the other direction. If he tried to fly with his right wing, he'd go counterclockwise.

And if he tried to fly with his left wing, he'd go clockwise, but he'd be where he was after he'd done flapping. Now there is the trouble in our churches. Some go out and get busy.

Just as soon as you join the church, they give you five jobs and the chairmanship of a committee. And away you go. And people just wear themselves out flapping their left wing.

But talk to them about the new birth, talk to them about cleansing on the inside, talk to them about the renewal of the soul, and tell them what you mean. But our crowd, we specialize on right wings. And we don't believe much in activity, we just believe in believing.

And we're both wrong, and we're both half right. But if you will believe the Bible instead of believing half-truth, and see that when one man says, you are purified by faith, and another man says you are purified by obeying, they're not contradicting, they're simply giving you both wings of the bird. That's all.

Faith has to have works or it flaps in a circle. And works have to have faith or they're dead. So by works and faith we go along.

Have you ever noticed that eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews? I was just looking at it here this morning. Have you ever noticed, now that's called the faith chapter, isn't it? It says, by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith. But have you ever noticed it's also a works chapter? By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

He offered it by faith, but he did offer it. And he offered it in obedience to some revelation God had given him. By faith in it was translated, but also in it by works walked with God until he was no longer.

By faith Noah built an ark. And by faith and works he built an ark. So that it took works to build the ark.

If Noah had sat down on a wooden horse and piled his tools beside him and said I'm a just a believing, he'd never have gotten the ark built. But he called in his carpenters, laid down the blueprints and went to work. Somebody came along and said you hope to save yourself by building an ark.

You are not a New Testament Christian, you are a legalist, you are mixing works with faith. No. Noah might have replied I am obeying my faith by doing what I am told.

So he built himself an ark. By faith Abraham went out, but he did go out. And by faith Gideon did things by faith, but he also did them by works.

He actually girded on his sword and went out. And there was Barak and Samson. Samson could have sat sublimely by and gazed at the heavens and said I am believing.

And the Philistines would have swarmed around him. But he grabbed a jawbone of an ass and slew about a thousand Philistines. And then there was Jephthah and David and Samuel.

And you can go right on down the line. So the 11th chapter of Hebrews is not only a faith chapter, it is a works chapter too. God never makes a whole chapter of one wing.

He puts the other wing in even if it isn't so visible. So they are both there. Now again, through the Spirit.

But you say that is teaching the power of the human character to do good. No it isn't because he says through the Spirit. God never commands righteousness without giving the power to be righteous.

So it is through the Holy Ghost. The real Christian who has been renewed inside and purified in his soul, he has got no confidence in the flesh. He knows the flesh will never get him anywhere.

But in Romans 8 we have that the works of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Now, the 4th point is, unto unfeigned love of the brethren. What does this all lead to? Unfeigned love of the brethren.

You see that word unfeigned here? Unregenerate society feigns its love, mostly. Politicians feign their love. They'll kiss your baby, they'll even kiss your hand.

They used to send garden seed. I haven't got a package of garden seed in years. Anybody around here got a package of garden seed? The Senators used to send out garden seed, hoping that you would plant their garden seed and vote for them the next senatorial election.

But they smile, they visit, they travel around, they make whistle stops, they wave the flag, they quote Lincoln, and all doing it to get your vote. They love you so much. When they make their speeches, they refer to you in drooling affection.

But the reason they refer to you is that you have the sovereign power to put an X after their name. And I suppose I shouldn't say it here, but I often think how some of these lugubrious tears that Union leaders shed over the poor, exploited, downtrodden proletariat, I think they're crocodile tears made out of plastic.

Because those boys call them in, call them out, call them in, call them out, make fools out of them, treat them like prophets, and they're writing in Cadillacs.

Well, unions are good things in a way, if they're carefully run, I've always believed that. I also believe that they can become curses when they get into the hands of men who only claim to love the public, but love only their own pocketbook and their own power. And then there's that salesman.

He comes in, bless him, I used to sell books myself. That is, I went around trying it, I never sold much, because too honest, too timid. But a salesman comes in and he finds your name next door, and it's Mrs. Jones, he says, how nice to see you.

He found out next door who you are. Also, he's inquired about your family. Did Jim get back from the warrior? He wants to sell you something.

The unregenerate world feigns its love for the most part, except for its own tiny circles. But the spirit implants real love, unto unfeigned love of the brethren. And the love of a Christian is not a feigned love.

I've had it said of this church that it's very friendly, and I've also heard it said of this church that it's quite unfriendly. I think perhaps a happy medium would be the truth. You'll find friendliness here if you smile and look friendly.

You'll probably be passed up if you look as if you didn't want to be a friend. But I have been in churches where they just fawned over you, haven't you? I remember years ago visiting a church. I just sat back there, looked straight ahead, and pretty soon the pastor came around.

And he fawned over me, and you'd think I was Eisenhower's twin brother. They didn't know he had. And he didn't know who I was.

To me it would have been anybody else the same. But I didn't quite accept that. It was a little too much.

When you love me too much, brother, I'm worried about you. Love me enough and it's all right. Don't love me at all, I'll pray for you.

But when it gets to be fawning love, it's feigned love. Now, the Holy Ghost gives us love that is real. It's real love.

You know that real love isn't always fawning over its object. Real love sometimes rebukes. The sharpest book in the New Testament, do you know what it is? The sharpest book in the New Testament, 1 John.

The apostle of love also could wield the paddle more vigorously than any other apostle. So the loving John could lay it on when he needed to. He that loveth his son whippeth him betimes, scripture says.

And God loves us and whippeth us betimes. And if we love each other, it doesn't necessarily mean that we love them with a meek, harmless, fawning love. But we love them for their soul's sake, and we love them in God.

Unto one thing, love of the brethren. Then he says, see now that ye love one another. Obviously then, this love is not a wild plant that will grow of itself.

It is there in the heart by divine planting, but it must be cultivated. Dandelions will grow without cultivation. Love must be cultivated.

The human heart must be cultivated. We must work on it. We must pray, search the word, and obey, and believe, and humble ourselves, and open our minds to the incoming Holy Ghost, so that we may cultivate and see that we love one another.

Then he says, out of a pure heart, and I can only pass that by for time's sake, and say that no other kind of heart can really love truly, because the heart to love truly must love unselfishly. Unselfish love does not exploit its object, and it doesn't ask anything in return. That is so lofty that the modern world knows little or nothing about it.

But it's out of a pure heart. Then he says, fervently, and I close by reminding you that God hates everything that is half way. He hates half-minded people.

You are double-minded, he said. Now, a double mind is a mind that is half one way and half the other. And God hates the double mind.

He says, no man who prays with a double mind, he'd expect to get anything. Have some kind of mind. Settle for one, but let it be all one thing.

Don't let it be a divided mind, for that's what a double mind is. They used to call them Sunday Christians in the country. They said they had Sunday religion.

And they used to say, quaintly, that they hung their religion up with their new tune in the closet when they got home Sunday night, and never put it on again until the next Sunday morning. Now, that's being double-minded. And God hates all double-mindedness because it isn't real.

He says we are to love fervently out of a pure heart. Fervent love. Fiery love.

Fervid love. And God says that Ephraim was a cake not turned, and you know what that is. I might ask for a show of hands how many had cakes for breakfast this morning.

I was brought up on buckwheat cakes. And I know what a half-turned cake is. It's a half-baked one.

And the Lord hates half-baked things. He wants it to be baked all the way through. And then he talks about lukewarm.

Now, I want to ask you this question, and send you home with this metaphysical problem on your mind. Is a bottle half-full of something, half-full or half-empty? I don't know myself. And is lukewarm water half-warm or half-cold? Tell me, Tom, after church.

Incidentally, I got a long five-page letter from a brother in California, vigorously taking me to task for saying that Tom here was Irish. He declared he was nothing of the sort. But I'll talk about that later.

But what I wanted to say was that what God wants here is not a half-anything. What I start to say is, is a half-Christian, a half-sinner, a half-Christian. I don't know, but I do know this.

God will sweep the whole business out together. It will have nothing to do with half-stuff. He says that we are to be filled unto the half-fullness of God.

Never. For God to say a thing like that, he wouldn't be God. Filled unto the fullness of God, he says.

Not unto the half-fullness. God has nothing to do with half-full things. He gives us a whole day, not a half-day.

He gives us a whole personality, not a half-personality. A whole mind, not a half-mind. A whole salvation, not a half-salvation.

And he expects our love to be a whole love, fervent, and not half-cold. Well, that's a little outline. You're welcome to it.

Think it over. See now that you have purified your soul by being the truth through the spirit unto one thing, love of the brethren. Now see to it that that love goes to work, and you really do love each other out of a pure heart, fervent.

That's Peter's exhortation. I pray that it may be taken to our hearts and may do us good.

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