

# Staying Pure in a Dirty World

## Upside Down series

by Pastor Chris Famisaran

All right, let's pray. Lord, You are good and your mercy endures forever as we now take time to open the word, Lord be with us as we look at this very important beatitude be with us now in Jesus name, amen.

Anybody know who Annie Peniko was? Just at random... Probably don't. Annie Peniko was, or is? Well, at the time of this writing. It was a 62 year old woman who had been blind from birth. Okay, can you imagine going your whole life without the ability to see at the same time to she didn't know any better. So maybe it was a little easier for her. But at the age of 47, she met a man in her Braille class. And they got married. And so the first 15 years of her life, her sorry, 15 years of her marriage. He did the seeing for both of them until he too was well went blind. So imagine, never been able to see a tree or a beautiful sunset, the moon ocean birds. Fortunately enough, she'd grown in a very loving and very supportive family. So she didn't harbor any resentment about her visual challenges. But then in 1981, a certain Doctor performed surgery on her eye to remove a cataract in her left lens. And for the first time, Annie could see. Could you imagine going 62 years of your life and then now you get to see. And what was interesting is she found everything was much bigger and much brighter than she could have ever imagined. And since that day, she would when she would wake up, she would wake up with Vitality with what was going to be new today. She looked forward to life to seen the morning sunrise, the sunset, the birds, the sky, her family? How often do you think we take the gift of sight for granted? I know I do every day. It's something that's mere it's a miracle really. And yet, if you think about it, it's actually even more exciting because think about seeing God. I think about the day when we'll be able to actually be able to see Jesus face, everything that we will have overcome by them. Amen. But we probably can't even compare what Annie must have felt like when she could see for the very first time the gift of sight of clarity.

Today, we're gonna go through our six Beatitudes, I believe. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. So I like to go to the book of Hebrews, the book of Hebrews. In Hebrews. What is Hebrews known for those of you who are a little bit more aware? It's about faith. Specifically, it's a laundry list of people who exemplified faith, these individuals that the writer talks about, are they perfect human beings? No, we could probably write a few things down for many of them. But in Hebrews 11, the writer shares several things about these individuals. And of course, this doesn't encompass everyone. But it's kind of a Hall of Fame, if you would say of believers. Now faith is the confidence of in what we hope for and assurance of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for by faith, we understand that the universe was formed in God's command, so that we might see that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. And who was the first person that Hebrews mentions. Abel okay. By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous when God spoke well of his offerings. Now what we know Abel was what he was the son of Adam and Eve. So second generation. And he was a noble man he did what God asked, gave a sacrifice that God was pleased with. And yet what happened to him? His brother, his own brother, murdered him. Can you imagine what sin had done already at the very beginning, just the second generation, not only Adam and Eve, but brought harmony, death, murder, second generation. Abel was a man of integrity, who lived by what God asked of him. You know, we could talk about Enoch as well.

But one other specific character in verse 22, is by faith. Joseph now talks about how, when his end was near, he talked about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instruction concerning the burial of his bones. But that's really not also why he's in there as because did Joseph live an exemplary life? Oh. Did Joseph always get it right? No, no, he didn't. But there are examples of where he did get it right. Because for instance, after he'd been thrown in, sold into slavery, you know, to Potiphar, who technically owned him, made some overseer of his whole household. And he could do whatever he wanted. The only person who was above him in authority was Potiphar. And as he was doing his job, somebody had his eye on him, Mrs. Potiphar. And Mrs. Potiphar, what did she want from him? She wanted him literally. And so he would have to keep his distance. And at one point, she tried to seduce him. And what did he do? He literally left running

without some of his garments. Awkward. And so what does she do? She goes and tries to snitch on him to her husband. Potiphar was a man of respect of reputation, good reputation, could have done what to him, could have murdered him could have executed that was his job. He was the overseer of the royal court, and he took care of the executions. But he didn't, he threw him in jail. And he kept them in jail, probably because he didn't believe his wife. But he had to protect his image and his wife to some degree. And Joseph then goes, and he lives in prison for years. But guess what? God blessed him because he was faithful. And he helped bring up the living situation in the jail. And God blessed him in his job. And eventually he would become what? He would become prime minister of Egypt, the only person above him, Pharaoh. And when Joseph's brothers come to see him, don't recognize that it's him. If Joseph was petty, what could he have done? Just could have locked them all up and left him in there because they sold him out. But he didn't. Now, again, Joseph is dealing with some family issues in that whole scene as well. But yet, he wanted to try to do the right thing. And instead of just throwing them in jail, he sought peace, forgiveness and redemption. When you continue through Hebrews 11, of course, there's also David. David, was he a perfect guy? No. In fact, if you read Psalm 51, and I think it's Psalm 32, though, even though David was not a perfect man, he did take ownership of his imperfections. And so, yeah, could he have done better? Yes. But in many ways, he knew when he was wrong, and he took ownership of it. I also think that they're not in the list here though. And something that we'll be talking about this week in our in our small group is Daniel Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Bill talked a little bit about that before because they did not want to compromise their integrity and eat food. that would ultimately make them not feel as good not be able to think as well. And then later on Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, when they're faced with the possibility of losing their life, they stood faithfully on God, on on their belief in God. So interesting.

I want to ask a question, and I'm definitely going to stir some, maybe an awkward conversation on the way home or maybe lunch conversation. All right, you ready? Raise your hands. The way I act in the church is the way I the same way I act at home work school or wherever I go. All right, why is it that only one person raised their hand? Because we know that's generally not the true, right. Why? Because are we perfect? No. All right. Now, listen, I'm gonna be honest, I tried to be as

100% who I am, here in the church wherever I go. And believe me, I'm way more transparent on the platform now than ever happened. But what if you're at home? And maybe your child does something that you wish they hadn't? Do you always patiently deal with the situation? Or do you sometimes I'm not saying all the time, but sometimes, do you get upset when you're at work, and your boss puts excessively demanding obligations on your life? Do you always want to respond to them in kind? You may not say it out loud, but what's going through your head? All right. Oh, the truth is, sometimes we come to church. Sometimes we put little face, little masks on, sometimes we act like we don't. Now, one of the things I know and I appreciate about this church, though, is one of our values, okay, may not be written up. But we value authenticity. We value realness. Okay? And that's one of the things I love about this place, because we love you regardless. All right. But do we always get it right? No, we don't believe me, thank God, my wife's not here today. Because she could share all the things I get it wrong at home. All right, because sometimes I forget to take the trash out. Sometimes I may have almost forgotten to pick her up somewhere. I said almost, I was late. She doesn't know that though. Because I've never admitted that. Well, honey, I'm sorry. She doesn't listen to me. Because I'm her husband. I'm not a perfect person. But I tried to be I tried to do the best that I can.

Don Flow CEO of Flow Automotive. He values integrity in his business because he realized, as he was overseeing his own businesses, some of the business practices were not fair to his clients to and especially to the poorest of his customers, he could not and did not want to separate the business practices and his personal commitment to faith. So he changed some of these things. He explains it this way, we have a customer centric selling process, we don't have the traditional run back and forth negotiating prices process, we have a pricing structure that said our prices are actually a little bit lower. Because we've been able to manage our costs better with our internal processes. You don't have to be a tough negotiator or more educated to get a fair price. If you got a PhD or janitor, you'll pay the same price for the vehicle. We did a study and found that the people who typically paid the least for the cars were the most able to pay those least able to pay paid the most. For me it was wrong to take advantage of the least able a clear violation of a biblical mandate in the book of Proverbs. And we went back and forth and restructure our business, our profit structure has to be much tighter around the

mean, and we have enough to communicate enough value that a person will pay us a fair return. So Don saw that, hey, we're pricing out some of our customers and that's not fair. They deserve a great product. Okay. Now they may not get a Lamborghini, but they'll get a fair car. Right. And in terms of also service, he wanted to make sure that nobody would get price gouged. Principles, ethics. Integrity. God calls us to be faithful followers of Jesus. And that means also living with integrity.

Now love, guys, when you found that special someone did love change you. Really? Silence. Oh, come on, when you saw that person from afar off, it spurred you into action? Why, hello, what is your name? Right, a caused you to get to know and see who that beautiful person was. It spurred you to ask, Hey, would you like to go out on a date? It did something within you. That chart caused you to move forward with actually compelled you to ask the person out for dinner. And as you grew together, by the way, those of you who've been married for a certain amount of time? Are you the same person who you were when you first met and got married? No, you are completely different. And thank God, because if you had stayed the same person, if I was still the same person, when Lisa and I met, oh, have mercy, you would not want me as your pastor. Okay.

I was very immature. Not that I am so mature. I am mature. But even when I got married, I still felt like I was young. And when you've been married, you realize you go to grow together, much like your relationship with God, when you first met God. Are you the same believer when you first met God? No, because you changed. Because you've developed a relationship with God. Love causes us to change and move forward. So loving gratitude, move us into action. The love that we have forgotten the gratitude for what God has done for us spurs us into action to make better choices for our life. If I'm an alcoholic, and it causes me to be mean, I need to let go the bottle because I love my family not only because I value my life, because I also value my relationships. If I love my face, if I love my wife, am I going to have an only fans account secretly on my phone? I'm not pastor, you went there. Yes. We have to live with integrity in our marriage, as parents, as an employee, as a member of the Body of Christ, we have to be faithful and true to what God has called us to do, and to be a person of integrity. So as you grow older, you're going to change God is as as you grow together in relationship with God,

you are going to change now. One of the things so we have to remember we're all a work in progress. We're all a work in progress.

Let's go to Philippians chapter one. Philippians chapter one. Okay, we all there? All right, Paul and Timothy, typical opening servants of Christ Jesus, to all of God's holy people. In some other versions that might mean saints in Christ Jesus Philippi. Together with overseas are the deacons Grace and peace to you from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, Paul and Timothy call the Philippians holy people were sometimes saints, when, when the idea of holy people or saints is conjuring up in your mind, what do you think of what comes to mind? Perfection. Okay, now were the saints, the holy people in Philippi. Were they perfect? No. Right. Let's keep reading. I thank my God every day, every time I remember you in all of my prayers for all of you, I pray with joy. Paul deeply cares about these people and he's praying for them. Because of your partnership, this partnership that we have in spreading the gospel from the first day until now being confident and all in this, okay? It's not passive, being confident that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. What is verse six saying? That we're perfect or though we're still a work in progress? By God's grace we have been saved, amen. But have we reached the end goal? No. Because guess what, we still have plenty of life to live. And that's an opportunity for many years, hopefully, for God's to be able to work on our hearts and our minds to shape us to mold us to lead and guide us as disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

And so just know that what God is calling us to do, it's not something that happens. And then you've arrived. But God wants to daily be in relationship with us. God knocks on the hearts of our door every day saying, Hey, let me reside with you. And let me help you throughout your day. Saints, we often think oh, it's Mother Teresa. Now Mother Teresa, faithful woman. God is not calling us to be Mother Teresa. God is calling us to be ourselves. Danny, Phillip, Alex, David, Victor, Bill, Von. Because we are all very unique. Imagine if we were all the same. That would not be cool. No diversity. It'd be a bland salad. I don't like buying salad. I like Vibrance. I like life. I like color. I like all of the different flavors from softness to chewy. And that's what churches I recently read something as well that had me thinking. One of the things this is a quote, one of the lies that we tell ourselves is that our sins disqualify us from ministering. We think that because we have made

so many horrible decisions in our past life, or in the past, that were not able. But yet, when you look through scripture, how many people were perfect in the Bible? And how many people really messed up? We already talked about David, right. Guy was a treacherous fool of many times. And yet, God still considered him a man after my own heart. And all the many beautiful psalms and prayers that he wrote, Samson, did he always get it right? No. Right? Is his pride got him. In the end, he was faithful. But God does not want us to live with a thought that I'm just going to quietly and meekly just go through life. No. God wants you to share your story because your story can be shared by somebody else that can identify and can relate to you. So go for it.

Now. What does it mean, to live forward to be a pure of heart that we may see God? One of the things that I always go back to, in all of my questions that I have to ask myself, about actions I'm going to take place. And we find it if you go later to Philippians chapter four, a couple of chapters over chapter four verses eight through nine. It says brothers and sisters, finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right. Whatever is pure, whatever is lovely. Whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent and praiseworthy, think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me put into practice, that God and the God of peace will be with you. If we choose to focus on the good things of life, to focus on the things that are pure that are right, that are true. You're going to save yourselves a lot of grief. Amen. Take this passage, and apply it to what you watch on TV or on your phone. Are you going to have to make some changes? Please, I'm not trying to be judgmental because listen, I have to do the same thing I have to ask myself is what I am watching. Glorifying God is what I'm saying or acting, being a representative of Jesus Christ. Do I always get it right? No, I don't. But yet God has called us to be faithful. Much like all the people in Hebrews, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. They were faithful people. So reflection time Is there something in my life that is negatively affecting my relationship with God? And if so, what is it? Is there anything in my life that I truly need to maybe think about, and need to give up and let go, that is hindering my relationship with God. And let's even take it a step further, with even my family, my relationships, because our relationships are extremely important.

This week I want you to seek God's grace and faithfully live to honor God in all aspects of your life. In your work, in your home, as you're driving down the

freeway, when somebody cuts you off. Please don't be saying anything or maybe giving sign language. But just say that person is a child of God, and I'm called to love that person as well. Now, does this just mean that I'm gonna let people roll me over? No. Because was Jesus Jesus passive? Was he timid? No, quite honestly, he was very firm. That might mean also setting boundaries and saying, Hey, look, I know you're trying to do this. But look, I'm not going to tolerate that. May we love as Jesus loved us, okay, man. That's the easiest thing to say and the hardest thing to do sometimes. But that's what God has called us to do. And may we love God with everything this week. Amen. Grace and peace.

God, we thank You for Your love and Your great mercy for us today, Lord. It is our greatest desire happier, those who are pure in heart it is truly, Lord, our desire to have a clean, clear thoughts, clean hearts, and above all, Lord, for those who are beaten down in a burden, Lord, for those who are coming here grieving or feeling that they're not worthy God, you love them, and you know how much you love them. Lord, clear their thoughts of the junk. Lord, do surgery on their hearts, that they may find joy and peace and know that you love them. May they leave with conviction and with grace, knowing that they are redeemed and loved and forgiven. God, for those who've been in a while, Lord, protect us from our pride, humbleness. And know that we're not perfect. May we together Lord as a body of the followers of Jesus, may we make an impact here not only in Downey but wherever we go. That also others may know who you are, be saved by you. And also go out and share the Good News and above all, Lord, we ask Please come soon. In Jesus name, Amen.