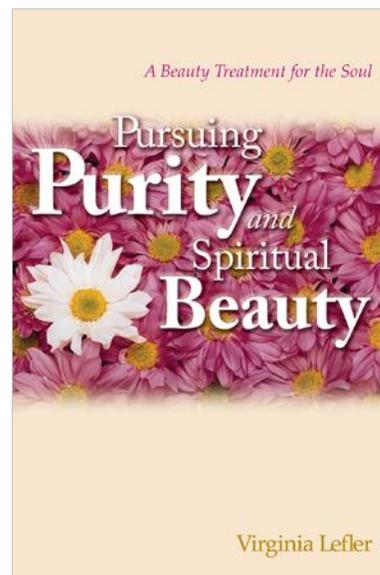


Pursuing Purity and Spiritual Beauty

Women's Ministry Group Study Guide

This study guide is designed for women of all ages. We often think of purity mostly as a need of young or single women, but the truth is all Christians face serious challenges to live pure and spiritual lives. This eye-opening study of purity and spiritual beauty exposes the consequences of impurity and equips women of all ages to make choices that will help them in their pursuit of the beauty that never fades.



The assignment for the group is to read a chapter of *Pursuing Purity and Spiritual Beauty* and consider the worksheet questions from that chapter before each meeting. Then come together for your “Pure Beauty” weekly meeting for further discussion and activities.

The group leader will need to read the study guide ahead of time in order to be prepared for the activities and discussions. I suggest that you offer prizes for some of the activities. I find that prizes help create a fun atmosphere and more participation. If you are using this guide in a large group, you will find suggestions on how to adjust some of the activities to accommodate your group.

I will update this study guide from time to time. Please feel free to e-mail me ideas that you found helpful with your group to: ideas@silverdaypress.com.

With love,

Virginia Lefler
www.SilverdayPress.com

P.S. There are two other versions of this study guide. It is also available in a Campus & Teen Ministry format and a Mother/Daughter format. You can find them under “Free Resources” at www.SilverdayPress.com. (Contact me at 847-744-8632 for quantity discounts).

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Chapter 1 – The Privilege of Purity

Focus: To understand the obstacles surrounding purity and to understand the incredible privilege we have to pursue purity.

Things you need: 2 small water bottles, a little dirt, and a beautiful glass.

Optional: Pictures of Anna Nicole Smith, Marilyn Monroe and Britney Spears from the internet.

[Large group: Use digital pictures and projector equipment if you want to show pictures for the discussion below.]

Discussion: Discuss the challenges and deceptions mentioned in Chapter 1:

Deception: Worldliness makes you strong and secure

This message permeates women's cultures around the world; however, there is a lot of evidence that this is not the truth. Worldliness hardens our hearts; it does not make us stronger. Who are famous women who have embraced more and more worldliness, yet their lives are not a picture of strength. (Britney Spears, Marilyn Monroe, Anna Nicole Smith, etc.) **The purpose of this exercise is not to make disparaging remarks about these women, but to understand that there are many pictures all around us of the result of worldliness.** We must also understand that these women are influential and promote worldliness through their music or acting careers.

(The following short bios are information taken from Wikipedia.org unless otherwise noted.)

Marilyn Monroe was an iconic beauty who worked as an actress, singer and model. She was voted the sexiest woman of the century in 1999. She appeared in dozens of films. She was married and divorced 3 times. She struggled with depression, drug and alcohol abuse and broken relationships. She died in 1962 at the age of 36 from an overdose of barbiturates.

Anna Nicole Smith was a model, sex symbol, actress and television personality. She first gained popularity as a Playboy model. Smith said she planned to be "the next Marilyn Monroe." After her first marriage ended in divorce, she married an oil executive billionaire who was 63 years older than she was. After his death, she fought a lengthy court battle over his billion dollar estate. She died in 2007 at age 39, apparently as a result of an overdose of prescription drugs. An autopsy showed that she had 11 drugs in her system. She had recently given birth to a baby daughter whose paternity was in question. After her death, four men claimed to be the father of her daughter. Anna Nicole struggled with alcohol and drug abuse and she suffered from the loss of her 20-year old son who also died from a drug overdose.

Britney Spears is a singer, songwriter, actress and entertainer. Her career began in her preteens on The Mickey Mouse Club. Her recording career began when she was 17-years old. She has sold over 83 million records worldwide. Her all American image began to deteriorate after her appearance on the cover of *Rolling Stone* at the age of 17. The American Family Association called for a boycott of her music because of the "disturbing mix of childhood innocence and adult sexuality."

On January 3, 2004, Britney married childhood friend Jason Allen Alexander in Las Vegas. The marriage lasted 55 hours, ending with an annulment. In July of that year, Britney announced

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her engagement to Kevin Federline. She said in an interview to *People* magazine regarding her engagement, "I kissed a bunch of frogs and finally found my prince. I feel like I've found my happily ever after." Britney filed for divorced in 2006 after the birth of their second child. Britney's drug addiction resulted in the courts giving her father control over her. During this time, it was reported that the major news networks had already written her obituary. She has since worked to revive her career.

We should not mistake beauty, talent and money for strength. You can have all of these and not be a strong woman. Did worldliness help these women become stronger?

What was the result of worldliness in their lives? (Addictions, broken families, death, heartache)

Challenge: Purity is too narrowly defined

If you think of "purity" only as sexual purity, you may miss many blessings and miss opportunities to become stronger spiritual women. God calls us to pursue purity in all areas of our lives.

Challenge: The changing moral standards

How have you seen moral standards change in your lifetime? How have fashions, television, movies, and business standards changed?

Deception: Purity means you will miss out on life

Activity: Prepare a demonstration for your group using water. Take two small water bottles (or two plain glasses) and fill both with pure water. Then take a little dirt and add to one. Shake the bottle and then pass it around.

Pure drinking water is a privilege. How would you feel if you had only the impure water to drink?

Would you ever feel your life was incomplete if you never had the opportunity to experience dirty water?

Compare the privilege of environmental purity to the privilege of spiritual purity. Which is the greatest privilege and which is the greater threat?

Next, pour the dirty water into a beautiful glass and discuss whether or not the packaging changed the impact of the dirty water. Discuss how the world packages spiritual impurity to make it look appealing. Even though it may look good, it is still very hazardous to our spirits.

Assignment: At your next group meeting, plan to do a beauty treatment. Choose something ahead of time and have it ready to use at your next meeting. This can be something as simple as a hand treatment. **Or** if your group is too large to do this at your meeting place, encourage everyone in the group to do a beauty treatment of some kind before you meet again (facial, manicure, workout, haircuts, etc.) If on a tight budget, they can choose something they can do at home.

Assignment: Read Chapter 2- The Beauty of Purity before our next meeting.

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Chapter 2 – The Beauty of Purity

Focus: The focus of this chapter is to get in touch with how sacrificial we are when it comes to our physical beauty and to see that spiritual beauty is much more important. The goal is not to put down someone's efforts to look more lovely, but to use our love of beauty as a motivation to pursue our inner beauty as much or more than we do our physical beauty.

Things you need: One copy of handout for each person (see following page). If you are doing your beauty treatment together, have everything ready to begin. [It can be something as simple as a hand treatment or something more involved such as a mini facial or manicure.] Two to three prizes (depending on how many people in each team).

Activity: [Warm up activity.] Have everyone form teams of two to 3 people. Give a blank sheet of paper to each team. Ask them to make a list of as many beauty treatments as possible in 2 minutes. The team who comes up with the longest list wins the prizes. Award a prize to each member of the winning team.

Activity: If you are doing the beauty treatments together at this meeting, begin the treatment. If the group did the beauty treatment during the week, ask them to describe their beauty treatment. What sacrifices do we typically make to look more lovely? (Make a list.)

What sacrifices will we need to make to be more spiritually beautiful? (Make a list.)

Compare the similarities.

Which beauty are you most devoted to and which will have the greatest impact in your life and your eternity?

Read the definitions of the Greek words translated “gentle” (page 19-20) and “quiet” (page 21). Compare the definitions of these Greek words to how we perceive the words “gentle” and “quiet.”

Read the definition of the Greek word translated “great worth” (page 24). How does it impact you to know God highly values these qualities?

Spiritual Beauty Treatment List: Give everyone a copy of the Spiritual Beauty Treatment List handout. Ask everyone to begin making a list of spiritual beauty treatments that will help us develop more inner beauty. Discuss and share ideas for a few minutes. [In this chapter, we read that gentle (*praus* = surrendered to God) and quiet (*hesuchios* = inner peace) will make us beautiful to God. Add these to your list. If you find this list is shorter than your physical beauty treatment list, discuss how it is easier to be in touch with our outer beauty than our inner beauty. (Ask everyone to keep this list and bring it each week so you can add to it as you go through the book.)]

Assignment: Read Chapter 3 – Spiritual Adornment before our next meeting.

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Chapter 3 – Spiritual Adornment

Focus: The focus of this chapter is to understand the importance of our Bible study as we make ourselves spiritually beautiful and the importance of getting help from spiritual people.

Things you need: A colored lipstick (the brighter the better) for each person (no lip glosses). You can ask everyone to bring a lipstick with them or have some samples available. Two prizes. [Large group: Have a few women demonstrate this activity to the group.]

Activity: This is a contest to see who can put on their lipstick the best without using a mirror. Award two prizes for the best applied lipstick. Discuss the challenge of trying to improve our beauty without a mirror. [Large group: Ask for a few fun loving volunteers to participate in this activity.]

How important is a mirror when we get ready each morning?

Read James 1:22-25. Your Bible is like a spiritual mirror that shows you glimpses of your soul's condition. How important is our spiritual mirror for our spiritual adornment?

A second mirror is also helpful as we get ready. We look into a second mirror to see the back side of our head or our body. It gives us a fuller picture of ourselves. Our relationship with each other is like a second mirror. What are benefits of having a close spiritual friend?

Read 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and Proverbs 11:22. Your godly actions are more adorning than stylish hair, beautiful jewelry or expensive clothing! What challenges do we face to make bible study and our spiritual beauty a priority? (Sacrificing time, reprioritizing our day, or giving up something we tend to do so that we have enough time to focus on our spiritual beauty.)

Read the following inspirational story about a young woman who lived in the 1500's. She gave up her life for the privilege of reading the Bible.

“I found one!” The Inquisitor held up the forbidden book as he called to his assistant. “Bring in the mayor and his family. Someone is studying the Bible in this house!”

In the 16th century, Philip II sent the Duke of Alba to Flanders to stamp out the Protestants who insisted on reading the Scriptures in their own language. Anyone found studying the Bible was hanged, drowned, torn in pieces or burned alive at the stake.

The Inquisitors had found the Bible while inspecting the house of the Mayor of Brugge. One by one, family members were questioned, but everyone claimed they knew nothing about how the Bible got to their house.

Finally the officials asked the young maid-servant, Wrunkel, who boldly declared, “I am reading it!”

The mayor, knowing the penalty for studying the Bible, tried to defend her, saying, “Oh, no, she only owns it. She doesn't ever read from it.”

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But Wrunken chose not to be defended by a lie. “This book is mind. I am reading it, and it is more precious to me than anything!”

She was sentenced to die by suffocation. A place would be hollowed in the city wall, she would be tied in it, and the opening would be bricked over.

On the day of her execution, as she stood by the wall, an official tried to get her to change her mind, saying, “So young and beautiful – and yet to die.”

Wrunken replied, “My Savior died for me. I will also die for Him.”

As the bricks were laid higher and higher, she was warned again. “You will suffocate and die in here!”

“I will be with Jesus,” she answered.

Finally, the wall was finished, except for the one brick that would cover her face. For the last time, the official tried to persuade her. “Repent – just say the word and you will go free.”

But Wrunken refused, saying instead, “O Lord, forgive my murderers.”

The brick was put in place. Many years later, her bones were removed from the wall and buried in the cemetery of Brugge.¹

What qualities of inner beauty do you see in Wrunken? (Courage, honesty, forgiveness, dedication, faithfulness, surrender to God, sacrificial)

Spiritual Beauty Treatment List: What are some more spiritual beauty treatments that you can add to the list? (Reading the Bible, developing courage, faithfulness, etc.)

Assignment: Read the next **two** chapters before the next meeting: Chapter 4 – Modesty and Decorum and Chapter 5 – Decency and Propriety.

¹ dc Talk and The Voice of the Martyrs, *Jesus Freaks* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Albury Publishing, 1999), pp. 41-42.

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Chapter 4 – Modesty and Decorum / Chapter 5 – Decency and Propriety

Combine Chapters 4 and 5. They are short chapters that are similar in content.

Focus: The focus of Chapter 4 is to understand that our choice of clothing reflects our consideration for others. The focus of Chapter 5 is to understand the importance of decency in our clothing and that you can dress beautifully without dressing inappropriately.

Things you will need: Pictures of the latest fashionable clothing for women (age appropriate for your group). You can get these from catalogs, popular magazines, sale flyers or the internet. Include both decent and indecent pictures. [Large group: Projector equipment and digital pictures of the fashions.]

Discussion: Read the definition of the Greek word translated “modestly” (page 42). When are occasions that we should be considerate of others by what we wear?

Read the definition of the Greek word translated “decency” (page 47).

What is the difference in the Greek words translated “modesty” and “decency”?

What is the purpose of shame?

Read the definition of the Greek word which is translated “propriety” (page 48). This is an amazing quality that will help us become more and more spiritually beautiful.

How will *sophrosyne* (so-fros-oo'-nay) help us as we choose our clothing? (With the help of this quality, we will first consider our clothing from a spiritual perspective before we wear something just because it is fashionable.)

What Not To Wear:

Psalm 73:6 *Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence.*

Pride is one accessory that is never in fashion in the spiritual world. How might pride impact our physical beauty and our choices of what we wear?

What other things will keep us from being spiritually beautiful?

Read Proverbs 2:11 and 11:22. Beauty without discretion is spiritual ugliness. How does discretion protect us and make us more spiritually beautiful?

Who are some of the most influential women today regarding fashion?

Would you say their fashions are typically decent or indecent?

How have fashions changed in the last two decades?

Activity: Display the pictures of the latest fashionable clothing. Which of these are both fashionable and decent? What could you do to make some of the indecent fashions more decent?

Spiritual Beauty Treatment List: What are some more spiritual beauty treatments that you can add to the list? (Consideration for others, modesty, propriety, humility, discretion.)

Assignment: Read Chapter 6 – Motives of the Heart

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Chapter 6 – Motives of the Heart

Focus: The focus of this chapter is to get in touch with the motives behind our choices of clothing. Young or old, we can struggle to have and maintain pure motives.

Things you will need: (Nothing extra for this week.)

Motives drive us to wear or not wear certain clothing. Have you ever put on garment after garment trying to get ready for your day without finding any that you liked?

Did you know what was motivating your frustration?

Do you know what moves you to wear or not wear something? Understanding our motives will help us overcome our insecurities and grow in our spiritual beauty.

Ego building: How do our egos influence our clothing choices?

Power and prestige: Read Esther 4:1-17 and Esther 5:1-3. Esther was a beautiful woman who also made herself spiritually beautiful. She relied on God during this time and she also asked for the help of others. The King offered Esther half of his vast kingdom. Read Esther 1:4 where it describes his kingdom. In what way did Esther's spiritual beauty make her stronger? Consider that Queen Vashti was also beautiful but her physical beauty was not powerful enough to help her through her challenges (Esther 1).

Read 2 Corinthians 6:3-7. Beauty can give us a sense of power. What responsibility do we have regarding our choice of clothing to not put a stumbling block in anyone's way?

Just as beauty can make us feel powerful, not feeling beautiful can make us feel powerless.

What are the short-term and the long-term results of using beauty to measure our worth or our strength as a woman?

Approval and praise: What power does a compliment have or what impact does an insult have regarding our clothing?

Why is the approval of others such a strong force?

Read Proverbs 31:30-31. What are the advantages of dressing to please God?

Spiritual Beauty Treatment List: What are some more spiritual beauty treatments that you can add to the list? (Esther prayed and fasted. What other things did she do that made her spiritually beautiful?)

Assignment: Read Chapter 7 – Pure Entertainment before our next meeting.

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Chapter 7 – Pure Entertainment

Focus: The focus of this chapter is to consider how our choices in entertainment impact us and our relationship with God.

Things you will need: Bring to the meeting a list of recent movies or old favorites. You can get information about the content of the latest movies from www.screenit.com. If you happen to land on their membership page that asks you to subscribe, just scroll all the way to the bottom of that page and click “no thanks.” It will then take you to their home page. Then click on either the “new movies” or “all movies” button at the top of the page. Scroll down and you will find the list. Choose a variety of movies to discuss with your group. Screenit will give you a summary of the plot and rate the movie in 15 categories. Print the information for your discussion time.

Discussion:

Read the motion picture code (page 62).

How have standards changed over the last few decades?

What impact has this had on our society?

Activity: Make a list of popular and favorite movies. Briefly discuss the information you brought about several of the latest movies.

Discuss whether or not the movies you have listed have an immoral or violent theme.

Would it have been possible to remove any immoral or violent scenes without damaging the story line of the movie?

Read Ephesians 5:8-12

What are our challenges if we decide to only choose godly entertainment?

What are the benefits of godly entertainment?

Do you think ungodly entertainment has impacted our society? If so, how? (Television, movies, video games, etc.)

Assignment: During the next week, plan a special entertainment time with your group. First, spend time together considering all your choices. Which are godly and which are ungodly. Discuss the influence of ungodly entertainment. Choose something that will be godly entertainment. Make it a memorable time. **Or** if you cannot meet during the week to do this, plan this special entertainment time during your next meeting. Resume your group discussion the following week.

Spiritual Beauty Treatment List: What are some more spiritual beauty treatments that you can add to the list? Read Psalm 101:3. Not looking at evil things is a beauty treatment for your soul.

Assignment: Read Chapter 8 – Sexual Purity before the next meeting.

Chapter 8 – Sexual Purity

Focus: The focus of this chapter is to be more aware of the eternal, emotional and physical consequences of sexual sins.

Things you will need: Pictures of famous couples whose relationships were held up as great examples but who eventually split up. You can obtain these from magazines or the internet. www.People.com has all their past covers on their website. Use their search option by typing in the names of popular couples and you can find the cover pages that announced their relationship and the ones that reported their break-up. You can click on a link next to it to enlarge the picture and then print it. (Suggestion: Brad Pitts/Jennifer Aniston; Britney Spears/Kevin Federline; Madonna/Guy Ritchie; or whoever is the latest Hollywood break-up). [Large group: You may want to use projector equipment for this activity. However, the cover pictures described above will be about as large as a magazine cover which you would be able to hold up and show your group without a projector.]

Eternal consequences: Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. There are many warnings in the Bible that tell us that true Christians cannot live an unrepentant immoral life and go to heaven. Discuss the popular belief that as long as you love each other, it's okay to have sex outside of marriage. What does the Bible say?

Discuss the influence that movies and television have had on our moral values.

Physical consequences: Read 1 Corinthians 6:18. Read the following excerpt from the book:

The consequences of STDs can be devastating and long-term. Although substantial progress has been made in the prevention, diagnoses, and treatment of certain STDs, an estimated 19 million new infections occur every year in the U.S.

Human papillomavirus, or HPV, is the name of a group of viruses that includes more than 100 different strains. More than 30 of these viruses are sexually transmitted. About 20 million people are currently infected with HPV, and every year in the U.S., about 6.2 million people get HPV. It is the major cause of cervical cancer.²

The most deadly STD is HIV/AIDS. Globally, over 25 million people have died of AIDS since 1981, and an estimated 33 to 46 million people are living with HIV/AIDS.³ The serious physical consequences of sexual impurity show us that God did not create our bodies for multiple sex partners.

Even the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises living in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship to prevent STDs. Thinking that safe sexual practices will prevent all STDs is false security. The CDC says an HPV infection can occur in both male and female genital areas even if they are covered or protected by a latex condom, as well as in areas that are not covered. It is estimated that at least 50 percent of sexually active men and women will acquire a genital HPV infection at some point in their lives.⁴

² “Sexually Transmitted Diseases, General Information,” Centers for Disease Control (http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/dstd/disease_info.htm), 2004.

³ Avert Global HIV/AIDS estimates, end of 2005 (<http://www.avert.org/worldstats.htm>), 2005.

⁴ “Genital HPV Infection - CDC Fact Sheet,” Centers for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/std/HPV/STDFact-HPV.htm>), 2004.

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God did not create our bodies to have multiple sex partners and His commands are for our protection. Read Proverbs 1:32-33 and 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and 7:1.

What promises are made to us in these verses?

Which promise impacts you the most?

Emotional consequences: The emotional consequences are seldom discussed when we talk about sexual immorality. We read about eternal consequences in the Bible and hear occasional sermons on the subject, and we hear about physical consequences in the news and the spread of STDs. But seldom do we hear much about the emotional consequences of sexual immorality.

Read Galatians 5:19-23.

What are the emotional consequences of sexual immorality or any of the other sins listed in verses 19-21?

Compare the emotional consequences of sin to the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Activity: Display the pictures of famous worldly couples whose relationships were held up as great examples but whom later split up. Discuss the choices these couples made and how they built their relationship on worldly values. Discuss the heartaches (emotional consequences) of not following God.

These couples were truly in love with each other. What happened? Their downfall was not building their relationship God's way. God instructs us to build our relationship on purity and friendship and wait until a life-long commitment in marriage has been made and then enjoy a great sexual relationship. He teaches us how to repent when we are off track in our relationships.

Much of the world says that there are no limits or boundaries, no right or wrong – do what feels good. But Jesus said not following God's wisdom is like building a house on sand – it will eventually fall. (Matthew 7:24-27)

Read Galatians 6:7-8. Compare God's blessings to the consequences the world faces by not following Him.

Spiritual Beauty Treatment List: What are some more spiritual beauty treatments that you can add to the list? (Emotional, mental and physical purity.)

Assignment: Read Chapter 9 – Pure Thoughts before the next meeting.

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Chapter 9 – Pure Thoughts

Focus: The focus of this chapter is to identify impure thinking, how it hurts us and how we can begin to purify our thoughts.

Things you will need: Provide a copy of the three activity sheets (see below) for everyone in your group.

Discussion:

Read Romans 12:2. One of our greatest privileges as Christians is that we can change how we think. We can learn how to change destructive and harmful thoughts to encouraging and peaceful thoughts. Changing our thinking is an important part of pursuing purity.

Ask someone to read 1Samuel 16:7 and Proverbs 15:26. Why are our thoughts so important to God?

Activity: Hand out the activity pages to everyone.

Read the list of common impure thoughts. What are other common impure thoughts with which we might struggle? Add to the list on your worksheet.

Read Philippians 4:4-8

Read the list under each category. As time allows, discuss other verses you can add to the list.

Most of our spiritual battle takes place in our minds. Find scriptures that give you the strength you need to purify your thoughts. It will take practice to purify your thoughts, but it will be well worth the time.

Spiritual Beauty Treatment List: What are some more spiritual beauty treatments that you can add to the list? (Purifying our thoughts of worry, anxiety, anger, etc.)

Assignment: Add to the list over the next few weeks as you discover more verses to help you purify your thoughts. Read Chapter 10 – Pure Words before the next meeting.

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Noble thoughts:

- . . . pray for those who mistreat you. – Luke 6:28
- But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you – Luke 6:27
- So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. – Matthew 7:12

Right thoughts:

- . . . for Man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. – James 1:20
- Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? – Matthew 6:27

Pure thoughts:

- But godliness with contentment is great gain. – 1 Timothy 6:6
- Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. – Philippians 4:6-7

Lovely thoughts:

- The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. – Psalm 145:8
- Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? – Matthew 6:25

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Admirable thoughts:

- Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. – John 15:13
- Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. – Philippians 2:3

Excellent thoughts:

- I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians – 4:13
- For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. – John 3:16

Praiseworthy thoughts:

- For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. – John 3:16a
- In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. – John 14:2-3

Scriptures have the power to help us change how we think and how we feel. Keep your favorite scriptures close!

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Chapter 10 – Pure Words

Focus: The focus of this chapter is to identify what is going on in your heart when impure words come out of your mouth.

Read Luke 6:45. Jesus said our speech reflects what is in our heart. If you want to change something about your speech, you must first change your heart. Otherwise, you will quickly slip back into old patterns.

Activity: Ask your group to make list of impure words. What are possible heart conditions that could drive these types of words?

Words:	Heart condition:
Complaints	Lack of gratitude; selfishness
Angry words	
Gossip	
Slander	
Lies	
Swearing/cursing	

Read the section on gossip from page 111. What challenges do we face concerning gossip?

Read Proverbs 1:5; Ecclesiastes 5:1-2; Ecclesiastes 6:11, Proverbs 10:19 and James 1:19.

What are your greatest challenges to be a good listener?

When do you find it challenging to be quiet and when is it challenging to speak up?

Assignment: Fast for a period of time this week. But instead of fasting from food, fast from speaking. The goal is to speak as few words as possible during your time of fasting. But do not be disrespectful to others by not speaking. Keep your answers brief and to the point. (Texting and e-mails count as words.) If you are with someone, ask questions and try to be a good listener. Your period of fasting can be a few hours or an entire day (but not while you are sleeping ☺). Do not let anyone know you are fasting (other than your Pure Beauty Group). Spend time thinking about making your words pleasing to God. Memorize Psalm 19:14.

This is a very revealing activity. It will help you become a better listener and help you gain more self-control over your words.

Spiritual Beauty Treatment List: What are some more spiritual beauty treatments that you can add to the list? (Being a good listener, purifying our words.)

Assignment: Read Chapter 11 – A Pure Heart before the next meeting.

Chapter 11 – A Pure Heart

Focus: The focus of this chapter is to consider what we can do to purify and protect our hearts and make them more beautiful.

Things you will need: (Nothing extra for this week.)

Read Proverbs 4:23. A spring fills up the well. What are examples of ways our hearts fill up our lives?

There are many things we will need to change in our hearts throughout our lives. We must remember that this is a life-time pursuit just as our pursuit of outward loveliness is a life-time pursuit. We will always need to work to make our hearts beautiful to God. In this group discussion, we will consider two women in the Bible and how they made their hearts more beautiful.

Sarah: Read Genesis 18:1-15. Sarah struggled with unbelief. Considering Proverbs 4:23 where it says our hearts are like a well spring, how did Sarah's unbelief fill up her life? (She created bigger troubles than she already had by giving Hagar to Abraham as his wife.)

What are areas of unbelief we might have in our hearts?

Sarah learned that nothing was too hard for the Lord. We are called to be her daughters: 1 Peter 3:6 ...*You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.*

What helps you the most when you face challenges with your faith?

How does "faithfulness" make us more spiritually beautiful?

Naomi: Read Ruth 1:1-21

Naomi struggled with bitterness in her heart. In what ways did her bitterness fill up her life? (Naomi's bitterness not only filled up her own life, it was a hardship on those around her. Ruth remained faithful in spite of Naomi's bitterness, but Orpah did not. Eventually Naomi realized that God had not stopped showing her kindness and she overcame the bitterness in her heart. It was replaced by joy.

What are things we might be bitter about in our lives?

What did Naomi do that helped her purify her heart?

Sarah and Naomi gave us examples of how to make our hearts more beautiful to God.

What are other heart conditions we need to guard our hearts against? How might they fill up our lives if we allow them to stay in our hearts?

Spiritual Beauty Treatment List: What are some spiritual beauty treatments for the heart? (Faith, trust, getting rid of bitterness.)

Assignment: Read Chapter 12 – Protecting our Daughters before the next meeting.

Chapter 12 – Protecting our Daughters

Focus: The focus of this chapter is to understand the special challenges younger women have today and how we can help them. This outline also includes additional material that focuses on our need to open our spiritual eyes.

Read Genesis 34:1-6; 34:30-31. Dinah chose to visit the women in the area. We are not given many details about this tragic event, but she must have felt safe while visiting these women.

It is not always easy to be aware of the dangers we might be facing. The Bible teaches us to make careful choices.

Read Proverbs 4:26 *Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm.* 1 Corinthians 15:33 *“Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’”*

In other words, be careful who you let into your life. 1 Corinthians 15:33 mentions good and bad character. Character in a person is described as the pattern of behavior or personality found in an individual or group; moral constitution; strength; self-discipline, fortitude, etc.

Activity: What Just Happened? This is an activity where you tell your group about a situation and you ask for possible conclusions you might draw from what just happened. One perspective is to look with spiritual eyes open and the other is to look with your spiritual eyes closed. See the possibilities.

God tells us we can open our spiritual eyes and ears: **Read** Matthew 13:15 *For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.*

We are given opportunities to see someone’s character as we spend time with them. When we open our spiritual eyes, we can begin to get a better picture of a person’s character. Consider the following situations. First, consider how you might think about them without a spiritual perspective. Next, consider them from a spiritual perspective.

Situation No. 1: You are a teen girl. You walked to the park after school with a young man. You enjoy spending time with him. He makes you feel special. His cell phone rings and he answers, “Hi. Sure. I’m at the library right now. I’ll be home in about an hour.” **What just happened?**

Spiritual eyes shut: He really likes you and will do anything to spend a little more time with you. It makes you feel very special.

Spiritual eyes open: He is a liar. He just lied to one of his closest relationships. **What would it be like to be married to someone who tells lies so easily?**

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Situation No. 2: You are on a double date with another couple watching a movie at your friend's home. The movie ends and another movie begins. This new movie playing begins with an explicit sexual scene, and it is making you very uncomfortable. You say, "I don't think we should watch this movie." Your date looks at you and says, "You are being a baby. This is really a great movie. We are all adults." Your friend's date overheard what you said. He gets up and turns off the T.V. saying, "Let's do something else." **What just happened?**

Spiritual eyes shut: My boyfriend will be mad at me. I feel bad for spoiling the fun for everyone else.

Spiritual eyes open: My date is not concerned about my feelings. If he does not care about my feelings in this situation, what does that say about his character? Which guy showed the better character? What would it be like to be dating someone or married to someone who does not care about your feelings?

Situation No. 3: You are spending time with a friend. Her phone rings and she spends a few minutes talking to a mutual friend. She is sweet and kind while on the phone. When she gets off, she begins to say mean things about this friend and tell you personal things about her. **What just happened?**

Spiritual eyes shut: Your friend likes you better than the friend she spoke with on the phone.

Spiritual eyes open: Your friend is two faced to some of her friends. What kind of friend do you expect her to be to you? (She is someone who could cause you a lot of pain by her lack of discretion.)

Even as older women, we need to ask ourselves this question: What just happened? Make an effort to look at things from a spiritual perspective. Having our spiritual eyes open is something we need to learn no matter how old we are. Opening our spiritual eyes will help us make good choices and help us be safer in a world that can be filled with challenges and danger.

We must open our spiritual eyes concerning our own character too. This is part of making ourselves spiritually beautiful. Sarah and Naomi show us that this is not just for young women.

Spiritual Beauty Treatment List: What are some more spiritual beauty treatments that you can add to the list? (Learning to open our spiritual eyes and see the spiritual side of a situation.)

[I hope you have enjoyed your study. Please let your group know that they can review *Pursuing Purity and Spiritual Beauty* on www.Amazon.com or send a review to me at reviews@silverdaypress.com. I would love to get your feedback.]