

Where God's Responsibility Ends and the Believers Begins

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Can God create a pure heart? Yes.

But can He do it without the cooperation of the believer? Not really. There is a place where God's responsibility ends, and the believers begins.

Create me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10, NASB)

King David knew how easy it is for us to turn our hearts away from God. The King of Israel allowed his heart to be drawn away from God. David understood that only God could give him a pure heart.

A quest for purity is noble.

The age-old tension is where God's responsibility ends and where the believer's responsibility begins. This is a huge paradox. It is like walking a tight rope — knowing you can fall any second. Every Christian knows that God draws us, leads us, gifts us, and empowers us. The believer's role is to respond to God.

For believers to experience all of God we must give God our heart to God and cooperate with His promptings. God gives us an open invitation. These invitations are quintessential for the believer to find and fulfill God's plan.

A few invitations include:

- *"If you have understanding, hear this; listen to what I say. (Job 34:16, NASB)*
- *"Hear, O my people, while I admonish you! O Israel if you would but listen to me." (Psalm 81:8, NASB)*
- *For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice." (Psalm 95:7, NASB)*
- *As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." (Hebrews 3:15, 3:7, 4:7, NASB)*
- "If" is the most powerful smallest word in the Bible. Yes, God provides His power, but is His power enough? Yes, "if." If we respond to God's word.

God expects the believer to respond and cooperate with His Word.

There is no question of how a true believer responds to God. The true believer sets their own choices aside. The believer's life belongs to God, and God is at work in their life.

"it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."
(Philippians 2:16, NASB)

So, we see God is working in us. God works through us by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our teacher, comforter, and friend. Every student knows that responding to the

teacher is how we grow, change, and mature. God expects us to respond to His instruction. This response is the process of spiritual maturity and personal transformation.

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. (Psalm 119:9–11,)

Notice how the young man changes his ways. The young man gives his attention to God's Word. He does not wander from what God said. You see, the young man allowed the Word of God into his heart and mind.

We can, therefore, see how God has a role, and we have a part. The cooperation is mutual, and the result is spiritual growth. When believers take action to God's Word, we call that faith. We must not forget that it is not our human effort that draws us to God, but faith imparted by grace.

Salvation by grace through faith is not a difficult thing, in that it's not a formula to follow but rather a miracle to believe and receive. Salvation is God's righteousness at work in us when we say yes to His plan. Saying yes is how we demonstrate faith. We get saved by grace through faith, but we also live by grace through faith.

We respond to grace by faith. Faith describes how we respond to God's promptings and leadership. So, faith always produces action, always.

God gives everything we need in life, but He does not make choices for us.

God provides us with the desire for a pure heart. That desire pulls us toward God, and we say we "yes" to God. When believers consistently say yes to God, our hearts become steadfast toward God.

Steadfast means "fixed in purpose, unwavering direction and resolution." The believer's heart must be fixed and focused. The Christian life is not for the faint in heart. Christians are not to waver in their faith. Doubt and unbelief mimic the waves of the ocean and are symbolic of the doubting Christian.

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial. (James 1:12, NKJV)

Can you see the link between a pure heart and a steadfast spirit? When our heart is pure before God, we have confidence toward God. That confidence births a steadfast spirit. When God has purified our hearts, He has also purified our faith.

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let, not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:6–8, NKJV)

A pure heart leads to a doubt free faith. When we "drive out doubt," our heart is steadfast before the Lord. A steadfast heart is fixed on obeying the Lord. So, let's ask..." create in me a pure heart." It all starts there.