

A SMALL GROUP STUDY FOR PARENTS

THE
FIVE
DOORS
OF THE
HEART

TEACHING CHILDREN
BIBLICAL PURITY BASICS

JENNIE BISHOP

AUTHOR OF *THE PRINCESS AND THE KISS*
AND *THE SQUIRE AND THE SCROLL*

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The Five Doors of the Heart: Teaching Children Biblical Purity Basics

Written by Jennie Bishop

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A Note to the Reader:

Optimally, this book is intended for parents to study in a group setting, as they learn and teach their children ages 6–8 at home. Parents may also use this guide to study the topic individually if they prefer.

To get the most out of this study, we recommend that you consider purchasing:

The Five Doors of the Heart: Teaching Children Biblical Purity Basics
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About the Author:

Jennie Bishop has been studying the subject of purity for more than 15 years. After graduating from a Bible college, then becoming a wife and mother, she recognized a passion for pure hearts that led to an international ministry. Bishop's first three books, *The Princess and the Kiss*, *The Squire and the Scroll* (both children's books), and *Planned Purity for Parents*, quickly generated requests for her to hold conferences. To date, the author has traveled to Ukraine, Namibia, Nigeria, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, as well as throughout much of North America, to present biblical concepts on purity of heart and body.

Visit Jennie's website: purityworks.org

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Introduction

When my daughter was six years old, she came home from kindergarten one day and announced, “I need a boyfriend!” At that moment, I recognized I needed to pray and seek God for my kids’ purity.

My prayers that night resulted in a storybook called *The Princess and the Kiss*, in which a princess saves her kiss for a prince.

This story about “waiting” and “saving” that was innocent enough for young children brought a flurry of needy parents who were very concerned about their kids saving sex for marriage. But the more I studied the Bible and spoke on the topic of purity, the more I recognized that purity wasn’t about sex—it was about the heart.

With the clamor to write a similar book for boys, I decided to write a story based on what I’ve called the Five Doors of the Heart, taken from Proverbs 4:20-27 where we are charged to guard the heart above all else. The Squire in *The Squire and the Scroll* retrieves the Lantern of Purest Light for his kingdom by completing five quests based on the doors. This storybook became the primer for purity in young hearts, focusing on the five doors of the senses and the need to guard them to keep the heart pure.

Many years have passed since my daughter’s kindergarten announcement, and since then, the challenge to help our children live in purity grows increasingly difficult.

As parents, we have our own family stories that reflect those challenges. That’s why this six-week small group study has been created—for you, the parents, to come together in the power, purpose, and presence of God to encourage, support, and share in the battle for our children’s hearts toward purity.

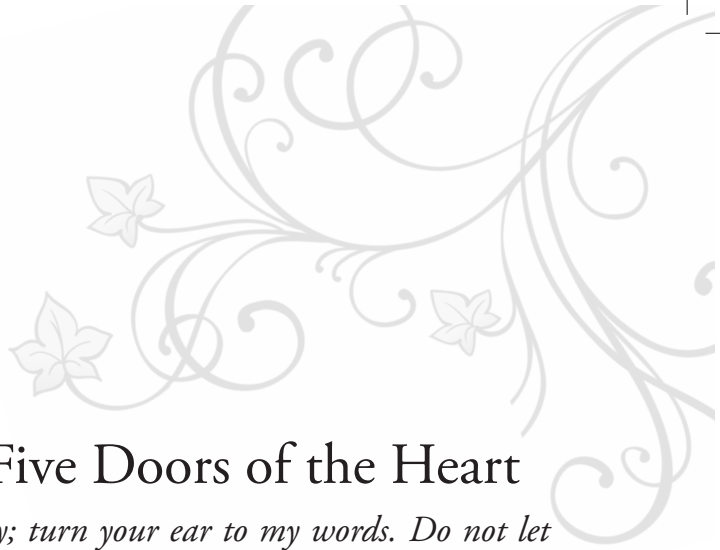
As we share openly and honestly with other parents who, like you, seek God’s absolute best for our children, please cultivate a sacred space of confidentiality and safety. It is only when we feel safe that we can let down our guard, be vulnerable, and share openly about our struggles.

The small group setting will provide a great way for you to expand the culture of virtue that your family needs to pursue purity successfully. Sharing your struggles in community with others who have the same goal will make for some terrific conversation and opportunities to discover what is working or not working for you. So much happens when we just talk about it!

Remember, the ultimate goal of pursuing purity is to be able to *see God* (Matthew 5:8). That is my prayer for all of us—that as we guard the doors of our hearts, we may see Him, love Him, and live for Him by loving others.

In Christ,
Jennie





WEEK 1

Purity: Guarding the Five Doors of the Heart

“My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one’s whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.” Proverbs 4:20-27 (NIV, emphasis added)

A Definition of Purity

A pursuit of purity begins with the definition of the word. Unfortunately, most of us associate the word with sexual purity alone—waiting until marriage to have sexual intercourse or to interact sexually. I know I did.

When my daughter came home from kindergarten announcing that she needed a boyfriend, I freaked out to Jesus a little, and then I wrote a book. *The Princess and the Kiss* became a bestseller that led to all the resources we offer now through PurityWorks, including this study. As those resources developed, God made it more and more clear through His Word that purity had much more to do with the heart than the body.

Building on that “body only” foundation will only increase frustration and anxiety in us and our children. Sexual purity is one small part of the whole definition of virtue. Our tendency to focus *only* on sexual purity is part of the reason that more of us aren’t *achieving* sexual purity.

More than 80% of our children aren’t following through on commitments to sexual purity.¹ 66% of men ages 20-30 report being regular users of pornography.² Women are becoming addicted to porn as well.³ Statistics indicate that 40-50% of marriages aren’t lasting until “death do us part.”⁴

1 http://world.wng.org/2007/08/sex_and_the_evangelical_teen

2 *The Culture of Pornography*, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., Baptist Press, 28 December 2005

3 <http://www.covenanteyes.com/2013/08/30/women-addicted-to-porn-stats>

4 www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/marriage_divorce_tables.htm

Those scary statistics give us good reason to be concerned. But a wrong definition of purity is part of the reason these issues continue to escalate. A good heart is the first “floor” when constructing a household of purity and virtue (see Planned Purity Diagram, p. 11). And a right definition of purity is our very foundation. Three key concepts in that definition follow:

1. *Purity is a lifestyle of continual “inner housekeeping” that is taught over a lifetime*, beginning with a clean heart and working its way from the mind and thoughts into the life and actions.
2. *Purity is important at all ages*. Too long have we put all our emphasis on training our teens, missing the occasions to teach prerequisite purity of heart material in our children’s younger years. Purity applies at every age.
3. *Purity is about much more than sex*. As stated earlier, the heart is the true center for the roots and practice of purity. If our minds and thoughts aren’t clean, our bodies won’t act that way.

Getting Ahead of the Game

The Princess and the Kiss focuses on saving the kiss, both symbolically and physically, until the appropriate time and situation. *The Squire and the Scroll* focuses on guarding the heart. That’s a good start for initial discussions with children about boundaries in relationships. But maybe a more important role of books like *The Princess* and *The Squire* is the way they lead us into a *culture of virtue*, not just a sexual purity club.

Feeling a part of a culture of virtue creates a greater desire to *pursue* sexual purity. This enthusiasm can be built over time in a relaxed way, without talking about sex too early. A child needs to know he’s part of a Kingdom community, that his heart is a treasure to God, and that he’s able to maintain integrity in the simplest matters.

The good news for parents is that approaching the concept of sexual purity is easier if a framework for basic virtue is already in place. *The Princess* and *The Squire* stories were written to build that kind of prerequisite understanding.

Purity starts with a heart of virtue, which naturally opens the door to the embrace of sexual purity. The pursuit of a virtuous heart can begin at any time; but ideally it starts in the preschool/elementary years and dovetails

into training on sexual purity as a child grows. Stories are the perfect means to start a continuing discussion. Just as Jesus used simple parables to teach a crowd of all ages, so we can use stories in our families to feed and nurture virtuous imaginations and hearts.

Keep in mind that a transformative relationship with Jesus is the only way to be saved. Although we will practice the spiritual disciplines of the five doors together, they will not save us. They are simply tools to lead us to the loving Christ who gave us our senses in the first place, and a way to practice loving Him and becoming like Him through acts of obedience in agreement with Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

Young people who find their place in an authentic relationship with Jesus and a culture of virtue are world-changers. They aren't perfect, but they develop into men and women who understand honor and integrity, protect one another, guard their hearts and bodies, and are rooted in a well-rounded understanding of purity.

Introducing the Five Doors

So how do we keep a heart "clean"? None of us will live a perfect life. Everyone stumbles into failure and selfishness in moments of weakness. With an understanding of this need for many new beginnings as we form habits, let's discuss the basics of a pure heart.

Simply put, our heart is equipped with five "doors," referred to in Proverbs 4:20-27 and demonstrated in *The Squire and the Scroll* as well. Our choices in keeping our hearts pure rest upon our decisions to open and close those doors, allowing honorable influences in and keeping dishonorable influences out.

The five doors relate to the five senses that we learned about in our youngest years. The senses are a gift physically in that they allow us to experience the world in all its color and sound, textures, tastes, and aromas. Life would be bland at best without our senses. But each sense also represents a spiritual door of opportunity for our hearts, thoughts, and inner person.

As an example, to physically guard the sense of sight, someone would choose to wear sunglasses on a hot, bright day. But in viewing the **eyes** as a door of the heart, that person would consider his viewing habits in the context of how the things he views form his thought life and character.

We shut the door to what corrupts the heart, and open it to the things that build virtue.

The **ears** can physically be guarded with ear muffs, but as a door to the heart, we consider our listening habits. What music, speakers, conversations, or scripts will elevate and contribute to the development of a pure heart, and what will erode it?

The door of the **breath** is associated with smell, physically. We protect ourselves, if we're wise, by steering clear of dangerous inhalants and keeping plastics bags away from our infants. But as a door of the heart, the breath is our greatest gift of all—life itself. So we choose to honor and respect life in all its forms.

Who would deny that the door of the **mouth** is difficult to manage? We're careful to guard physically what we put into that opening, but maybe we're not as choosy about guarding what comes *out* of it in regard to its function as a door of the heart. As one teaspoon of poison taken into the mouth can destroy the body, so one well-timed word can either disable its recipient for a lifetime or be held forever in the heart as a token of love.

Finally, the door of **touch** plays a vital role in the condition of our hearts. Just as we would guard the hand with an oven mitt when taking a fresh pizza from the oven, we must guard the sense of touch as a door to the heart by refusing to use it selfishly. Each of us chooses to be ennobled by encouraging others with our sense of touch, or to become a user by ignoring others' needs for sacrificial, sincere affection.

These are the five doors of the heart. As we make careful choices to open or close them, we protect the heart from impurity and contamination, and can teach even little ones to do so, preparing them for a lifetime of love, service, and honor.

Questions to Consider and Discuss:

- How have I understood purity as more than a sexual issue? How do I need to adjust my thinking?
- Discuss the dangers of limiting an emphasis on purity—body and heart—to the teen years.
- When I think of purity, do I include the regular celebration of sex in a marriage? Abstinence as a single parent?
- How may my pursuit of virtue or lack thereof affect future generations?
- Discuss this thought-provoking phrase: “Purity is always redemptive.” Is it accurate? Share your comments with the group.

CHILD'S LESSON 1

Purity: Guarding the Five Doors of the Heart

(Note: These lessons may be done with a child as young as five or six if you feel he/she understands the concepts.)

Use the following lesson with your child to clarify his/her understanding of a pure heart as we prepare to teach each of these five doors specifically in future lessons.

Supplies:

- A crown or supplies to make two—one for your child and one for you!
- A glass of drinking water
- A quarter cup of dirt
- Cake, cupcake, or treat (Put a frosting or paper crown on it if you can!)
- Lesson 1 downloadable activity page. You will make a heart with five doors that open to reveal the different senses we will be learning about as they relate to purity. You will want to keep the heart you make for use in future lessons. Memory verse cut-out: Proverbs 4:23 (NIV1984). You may also create your own memory card using an index card.

Craft

Buy a simple crown for your child, or make two out of construction paper, foam sheets, or other materials you have at home. Have fun wearing them together as you talk about today's lesson.

Read 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV): *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Ask your child if she understands she is part of a royal family. If she says she does, ask her why and explain that we are sons and daughters of the King of kings, and that makes us princes and princesses. Put a crown on and explain that you are one as well.

Book Reviews

1. Read or remind your child of the story of *The Princess and the Kiss*. (Have the book handy to flip through or review the story briefly, focusing on the fact that the final suitor did not choose the Princess because

- of her looks alone.) Ask: Why do you think this man chose the Princess? Was it just because of her looks? (No, he saw that her heart was pure and “sparkled like diamonds.”) Why did the Princess want to save her kiss? (To keep her heart pure.)
2. Read or remind your child of *The Squire and the Scroll*. Ask: Did the Squire become a knight because he was handsome, rich, or cool? (No, he understood what the scroll said and did what was right.) What was his reward in the end? (A princess for a wife, a happy family.)

Salvation Message/Reminder

Ask your child what he or she has to do to have a “pure heart” that “sparkles.” Ask: Does it mean you have to wash your heart with a hose? Are we talking about our physical heart or the special part inside of us that God has given to make us unique from everyone else?

Clearly explain the salvation message—that God sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins and that when we ask Him into our hearts, He will make our hearts clean. Take time at the end of this lesson to ask if your child would like to ask Jesus to come into his/her heart. What a great opportunity!

Object Lesson

Pour a glass of water. Have your child take a drink. Now add some dirt to the water. Ask: Why wouldn’t we want to drink from the glass now? (germs, sickness)

Explain that this is why a pure heart is important. When we let dirt, or sin (explain sin clearly as wrongdoing or wickedness with brief examples), into our hearts, we get them dirty. Dirty hearts make other people dirty. We aren’t acting like royalty anymore. And that’s when we need Jesus to forgive us. He died on the cross so we could ask Him to come into our hearts, and He forgives us when we are truly sorry for our sin. When we let Jesus take away our sin, we have clean hearts that will help keep other hearts clean, too!

Scripture Verse

Look up Proverbs 4:23 in your Bible and read it with your child. Make sure he understands what it means. Talk about words like “guard” and “well-spring” and define if needed. Ask: What does it mean to guard our hearts (to keep them clean)? (Put the verse on a bathroom mirror or refrigerator

for daily and weekly review. When reciting the verse, have your child point at the heart you made together.)

The Five Doors of the Heart Activity

Work with your child to make the heart from the downloadable activity page for Lesson 1. You will introduce the Five Doors of the Heart using the heart you've made. Start with the eye, ear, nose, mouth, and hand covered by the doors. Only talk about the doors—don't open them yet. Use a nearby door and ask your child if he would open it if a monster were outside. (Have fun! Go outside and roar and make a fuss! He will probably say he won't open the door.) Then ask what your child would do if it were an ice cream cone. (Act it out again. The answer should be that he would open the door.)

Don't go into detail, but review the five senses as you open the doors on the heart, and explain that this heart is a way we remember to keep our real hearts clean after they are safe in Jesus. Let your child know that you will be using your heart project every week and learning more about one of the five doors each time.

These suggestions may help with your brief descriptions:

1. The door of the eyes: open to look at good and helpful things; close to things that are private or impure.
2. The door of the ears: close to bad words in songs, movies, and mouths; open to kind, good words, songs, and shows.
3. The door of the breath: close to acts that hurt others; open to respect and care for all living things.
4. The door of the mouth: open to say words of truth and help; close to stop saying hurtful words or lies.
5. The door of the skin: open to touch that helps; close to touch that hurts.

Snacktime and Prayer

Have cake or a treat! Pray together and thank the Lord that He sent His Son for you and enabled you to be part of His royal family. Pray for a pure heart so you can honor your King every day with the choices you make and the thoughts you think.

WEEK 1: PURITY

Homeplay (Instead of homework!)

Let your child play with the cup and dirt this week as well as the heart you made. Remind him/her of the lesson you shared. Read the storybooks again. Recite the child's Scripture verse together once a day, and then try to say it to each other without looking.

Salvation Opportunity

If your child has not yet made a decision for Christ, ask if he/she would like to. Don't push, just make sure your child understands and is prepared to do so one day. If your child is willing, pray with him to ask Jesus into his heart. This is an awesome opportunity that you can make available or refer to anytime throughout the coming lessons.

1.1 Devotion: Pure Hearts See God

What Is Purity? Memorize Proverbs 4:23 (NIV1984)

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Matthew 5:8 (NIV)

“I used to think that purity was all about saving sex for marriage—but now I understand that purity is really about being able to see God.”

Sexual integrity is almost always our first impression when the word “purity” is spoken, and that’s unfortunate. Anxiety is naturally our emotional response to a hyper-sexualized society when our child is involved.

It’s time to look at purity in a different way, setting aside the worthy pursuit of chastity for just a moment as we consider a broader view of what God wants for us. In reading Matthew 5:8 above, we find that Jesus makes the reason for purity clear. The reason we should guard the heart above all else and keep it pure is because *God wants us to see Him!*

Seeing God is what transforms us from the inside out. When we keep our hearts clean, we see through the window of our physical world to the other side where God is waiting for us to look. He *wants* us to see Him.

Isn’t that reason enough to pursue purity? In securing a glimpse of the God of the universe, won’t we be forever changed? Won’t we be motivated and empowered for anything when we see the love in His eyes? When we see that He accepts and forgives us, won’t we be devoted to Him forever?

God isn’t looking to beat us up because we continuously make poor choices. God wants to show us the way to freedom and joy. And the thought of seeing Him should be what motivates us to pursue purity, not a fear of lost physical virginity. *The Princess* is not just a chastity parable, but a story of a heart that longs to be pure.

When we see God’s face, all our efforts will be worth it. And any stumbles will be swallowed up by the look in His eyes that says, “I love your heart.” Now *that’s* a reason to pursue purity.

Are you able to set aside the idea of purity as being related to sex alone? How does the idea of seeing God motivate you so much more in your own life,

and in teaching your child? If sexual purity is not the end-all, but rather the natural result of getting a good look at God, how would your focus change?

1.2 Devotion: Above All Else

What Is Purity? Memorize Proverbs 4:23 (NIV1984)

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?
Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV)

“I’m understanding that I can start training my child in purity of heart before we get into the body stuff. Nobody taught me that when I was growing up, so I might have catching up to do.”

God doesn’t just ask us to guard our hearts—He asks us to do so *above all else*. Nothing is more important. Why? Our hearts are incredibly vulnerable, and as we’ll learn in the next couple of sessions, everything we do springs from our hearts. If we make a pure heart our goal, we can help our children strengthen the foundation for pursuing sexual integrity in the years ahead.

But, just as Proverbs 4:23 brings a sigh of relief for us as a parent, Jeremiah 17:9 should motivate us to examine our own hearts. Have we been deceived in any way? Are we missing the basics of purity? Have we spent most of our time wondering about sex-related issues and forgetting about our basic heart condition? As we consider aspects of purity, we may find that we are missing a little groundwork ourselves.

When we examine the reasons for our choices, we strengthen and purify our hearts and faith so we can accomplish the awesome things God wants to do through us (see 2 Corinthians 13:5). Be willing to replace a few bricks in your own foundation as you teach your child from scratch, so your whole family will pursue purity more successfully.

Our culture is flippant about the guardianship of the heart. But we can’t afford to live on cultural autopilot, where we simply adopt the practices of mainstream society. We have a high calling, and we’re called to guard the heart *above all else*.

Why study the topic of purity?

Because purity allows us to see God. Keeping our hearts clear of distractions clears the way for falling in love with Jesus and living to love others.

Because purity is a lifestyle. Purity begins with the heart, not the body. It works its way from the mind and thoughts into the life and actions.

Because purity is important at every age. When we focus only on training teenagers, we miss invaluable opportunities to begin teaching in the younger years.

Because purity is about much more than sex. Our sexuality is only one aspect of the pure heart that forms every aspect of our lives.

The Five Doors of the Heart Bible study by bestselling author and speaker Jennie Bishop is an interactive training guide for parents who want their families to pursue lifelong virtue and purity. It allows parents to capture and mold children's hearts in the early years, preparing them to embrace sexual purity as they grow.

In this 6-week study, parents will learn about the Five Doors of the Heart, found in Proverbs 4:20-27, that God has given us to guard and protect our purity. A step-by-step weekly lesson is provided for parents to enjoy with their children, sharing what they have learned in a simple way kids can understand.

To maximize your study, these other books and resources are also available:

The Five Doors of the Heart: Teaching Children Biblical Purity Basics
Small Group Leader's Guide | ISBN: 9781593179984

The Five Doors of the Heart
Introductory DVD | UPC: 730817357973

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