



‘Worship at home’ Sunday September 1st 2024



As you prepare yourself for worship, you might bring a **bowl of water** in which you can wash your hands, and a **small towel**.

If possible, position yourself near a **mirror**, or find a small shaving/make-up mirror in which you can see your reflection.



We also remember that today is **Father’s Day**. We give thanks for loving and supportive fathers and for other men who have played important roles in our lives, while we pray for those who have been unable to be fathers, or for whom this relationship has been complicated or difficult.

Opening

Loving God, open our eyes to your presence, and draw us closer to you, in love. Teach us your ways of wisdom; that our lives might reflect your goodness, your holiness, and your love. Amen.

Reflect on the phrase

“Cleanliness is next to Godliness.”

What do you think this means?



There has been an increased awareness of cleanliness in our society since the Covid19 pandemic.

We still see signs reminding us to wash our hands, cover our cough, and use hand sanitiser. Clean hands have been shown to be important in limiting the spread of bacteria and viruses. Cleanliness can make a difference to our health and wellbeing.

What does the phrase “a clean heart” mean for you?

What factors might shape your inner cleanliness?

Inner cleanliness might otherwise be called “godliness” or “holiness”. The Hebrew word for holy is *qdš* (*qadesh*) which means ‘to purify or set apart’. We talk of God being holy: we too are called to be holy. This means we are made clean or pure by God’s grace, in Christ. Psalm 51 expresses this image. 1

Psalm 51 selected verses

Be merciful to me, O God, because of your constant love. Because of your great mercy wipe away my sins! Wash away all my evil and make me clean from my sin! I recognise my faults; I am always conscious of my sins. Sincerity and truth are what you require; fill my mind with

your wisdom. Remove my sin, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Create a pure heart in me, O God, and put a new and loyal spirit in me. Give me again the joy that comes from your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

Good News Bible

James 1:17-27

Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.

He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession. Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. But don't just listen to God's word. You must do

what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.

Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

New Living Translation

These are wise words about living in a way that is holy and pure, yet humble and compassionate towards others. We are invited to reflect on the integrity between what we believe, who we are and how we live. As we seek to become more like Christ, and to reflect his holiness, we are to put aside the things that distract us and embrace God's ways. We are not simply to hear God's word, but to live it out.

Take a look at your reflection in the mirror.

How do you see yourself?

We might see that our hair needs brushing, or our face is dirty. That might prompt us to go and tidy ourselves up. Sometimes we need to look not just at what we see on the outside in the mirror, but who we are on the inside, and how we live.



**Reflect on what you might see if you held
a mirror up to your inner self.**

How do you think others see you?

In what ways do you show Christ to those around you?



What we look like on the outside is not so important as who we are on the inside. How we act reflects who we are. God calls us to live in ways that are kind and

friendly and loving, so that what we see on the outside reflects our values and beliefs on the inside.

**Is there integrity between what you believe,
who you are and how you live?**

**Prayerfully reflect on the things
you would like to get rid of from your life.**

Be honest with yourself. Ask God to help you with these things.

Read again the verses from Psalm 51, as a **Prayer of Confession**. Remind yourself that in Christ you are loved and forgiven, that God's grace washes you clean inside and gives you the chance for a new start.



Wash your hands in the bowl of water and think about God washing away the things in your life that are not consistent with God's love and holiness.



Dry your hands on the towel and hear these words of grace:
YOU ARE CLEAN, YOU ARE LOVED, YOU ARE FORGIVEN

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, giver of every good gift, light of our world, source of all truth; we come to you in prayer, knowing and trusting in your faithfulness.

We pray for ourselves, that we may seek your ways; that we may hear your Word and put it into action; that we may be quick to listen and slow to anger; that we may be people of integrity, and our actions and our lives might reflect the people you call us to be.

We pray for our church, that together we may reflect your love to others so that they too may come to live in you; that we may care for orphans and widows and other who struggle.

We pray for our world, that even with its systems of injustice and oppression, its conflict and politics and pain and suffering, people will rise up in your name to bring hope, healing and love to those around them.

Gracious God, may we walk in your ways. May we know your truth, may we live in your love: wisely, graciously, with integrity. We pray in Christ's name. Amen



Closing

Go in peace; may you carry God's Wisdom, speak forth God's Word, and embody God's Presence wherever you are. In the name of Christ. Amen.