

6. The Heart of the Matter

6.1 Biblical Truths about the Heart

What is the heart?

6.1a The natural heart is wicked and cannot be trusted

Genesis 6:5 *The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.*

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

"We are more able to stop the sun in its course or make rivers run uphill as by our own skill and power to rule and order our hearts." - John Flavel

Contra, "just follow your heart."

6.1b God searches and tests the heart – God knows the heart

Deuteronomy 8:2 *Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.*

Deuteronomy 13:3 *you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.*

1 Samuel 16:7 *...The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

1 Chronicles 28:9 *...for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts.*

Psalms 26:2 *Test me, O LORD, and try me, examine my heart and my mind;*

Proverbs 17:3 *The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.*

Jeremiah 17:10 *"I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."*

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

6.1c The heart is the wellspring of all actions and consequences

Psalm 13:5 *But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.*

Proverbs 4:23 *Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*

Proverbs 27:19 *As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.*

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

Matthew 5:28 *But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

Matthew 6:21 *[Store up treasure in Heaven, not earth]... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Matthew 15:18-9 *But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.*

Luke 6:45 *The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.*

Romans 10:10 *For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

1 Timothy 1:5 *The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

6.1d We seek and respond to God with our heart

Deuteronomy 6:5 *Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

Deuteronomy 10:12 *And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,*

Psalm 19:14 *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

Jeremiah 29:13 *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

Matthew 22:37 *Jesus replied: " Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*

6.1e We have the responsibility to influence our own heart for the good

Psalm 119:11 *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

Proverbs 3:3 *Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.*

Proverbs 4:4 *he taught me and said, "Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live.*

Proverbs 4:23 *Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*

Ezekiel 18:31 *Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel?*

Luke 12:34 *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Hebrews 3:12 *See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.*

6.1f God works on our heart for the good

Deuteronomy 30:6 *The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.*

Psalm 51:10 *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

Psalm 73:26 *My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

Psalm 86:11 *Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.*

Jeremiah 24:7 *I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.*

Ezekiel 11:19 *I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.*

Ezekiel 36:26 *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.*

Ephesians 1:18 *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,*

Hebrews 10:22 *let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

6.2 The Heart and motivation

Just as sin starts with an internal desire and then manifests in an outward action,
So also virtue starts with an inward love and then manifests in an outward action.

“...the Christian life and true spirituality are not to be seen as outward at all, but inward. The climax of the Ten Commandments is the Tenth Commandment in Exodus 20:17: ‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his [donkey], nor anything that is thy neighbor’s.’ The commandment not to covet is an entirely inward thing....Any time that we break one of the other commandments of God, it means that we have already broken this commandment, in coveting....Coveting is the negative side of the positive commands, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind;...and shalt love thy neighbor as thyself’...Love is internal, not external. There can be external manifestations, but love itself will always be an internal factor.” - Schaeffer, True Spirituality pp. 7-8

“These are the areas of true spirituality. These are the areas of true Christian living. They are not basically external; they are internal, they are deep; they go down into the areas of our lives we like to hide from ourselves. The inward area is the first place of loss of true Christian life, of true spirituality, and the outward sinful act is the result. IF we can only get hold of this - that the internal is the basic, the external is always merely the result - it will be a tremendous starting place.” - Francis Schaeffer, *ibid* p. 14

“The inward thing is to be positive and not just negative; and then sweeping out of the inward positive reality, there is to be a positive manifestation externally. It is not just that we are dead to certain things, but we are to love God, we are to be alive to him, we are to be in communion with him, in this present moment of history.” *ibid* p. 17

“Resolved, to endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness, in the other world, as I possibly can, with all the power; might, vigor, and vehemence, yea violence, I am capable of, or can bring myself to exert, in any way that can be thought of.” - Jonathan Edwards

1. The longing to be happy is a universal human experience, and it is good, not sinful.
2. We should never try to deny or resist our longing to be happy, as though it were a bad impulse. Instead we should seek to intensify this longing and nourish it with whatever will provide the deepest and most enduring satisfaction.
3. The deepest and most enduring happiness is found only in God.
4. The happiness we find in God reaches its consummation when it is shared with others in the manifold ways of love.
5. To the extent we try to abandon the pursuit of our own pleasure, we fail to honor God and love people. Or, to put it more positively: the pursuit of pleasure is a necessary part of worship and virtue. That is to say: The chief end of man is to glorify God BY enjoying Him forever.” - John Piper

“All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.” - Blaise Pascal

“If you asked twenty good men today what they thought the highest of the virtues, nineteen of them would reply, Unselfishness. But if you asked almost any of the great Christians of old he would have replied, Love. You see what has happened? A negative term has been substituted for a positive....The negative ideal of Unselfishness carries with it the suggestion not primarily of securing good things for others, but of going without them ourselves, as if our abstinence and not their happiness was the important point. I do not think this is the Christian virtue of Love. The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire.

If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” - C.S. Lewis

“There once was in man a true happiness of which now remain to him only the mark and empty trace, which he in vain tries to fill from all his surroundings, seeking from things absent the help he does not obtain in things present. But these are all inadequate, because the infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God Himself.” - Blaise Pascal

“But the most obvious fact about praise- whether of God or anything- strangely escaped me. All thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise....The world rings with praise- lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game.... My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing, about everything else we value. I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation.” - C.S. Lewis

“You have made us for yourself, and our heart are restless, until we find our rest in you.” - Augustine

“The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One. Many ordinary treasures may be denied him, or if he is allowed to have them, the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that they will never be

necessary to his happiness. Or if he must see them go, one after one, he will scarcely feel a sense of loss, for having the Source of all things he has in One all satisfaction, all pleasure, all delight. Whatever he may lose he has actually lost nothing, for he now has it all in One, and he has it purely, legitimately and forever. - A.W. Tozer

“True Religion, in great part, consists in Holy Affections...The affections are no other than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul. God has endued the soul with two faculties: one is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns, and views, and judges of things; which is called the understanding. The other faculty is that by which the soul does not merely perceive and view things, but is some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers; either is inclined to them, or is disinclined and averse from them; or is the faculty by which the soul does not behold things as an indifferent unaffected spectator, but either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names; it is sometimes called the inclination: and, as it has respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the will: and the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the heart.” Jonathan Edwards - Religious Affections pp. 24-25

6.3 Trusting, relying upon and walking with a real Person

Like a child with a parent, trusting and following out of love and trust,
not forced outward duty, but delight

“Do not attempt to confess and forsake your old ways apart from the love of God manifested in a crucified Lord. Instead, look to the risen Savior who intercedes at the Father’s right hand for you. As the Spirit exposes the evils of your heart, observe the wounds in Christ’s hands. They are the absolute, unshakable promises of the Father guaranteeing full access to the crushed in spirit.” - C. John Miller, Repentance and 21st Century Man, 8

6.4 Promises & warnings - how the warnings function

6.5 Centrality of the Gospel

brief review of previous stuff to show connections with this week’s stuff

6.6 Repentance and faith - rhythm of Christian life - throughout life

brief review of previous stuff to show connections with this week’s stuff

6.7 Replacing sin with superior affections

Fill your hearts with the Gospel/Jesus and there will be no room for idols
what we put in our heart is what will come out in our lives

Scripture or MTV?

Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy (Phil 4:8)

or

whatever is selfish, arrogant, cynical, pornographic, relativistic, secular, humanistic, sensationalistic, etc.

You are what you eat

addressing idolatry by worshipping the 1 True God

Mark Driscoll to people struggling with porn -

“You worshipped your way into this, you will worship your way out”