

## MATTERS OF THE HEART

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12/1/2019

Proverbs 4:20-27

1. Here we have an important admonition that must be taken seriously if we desire to live and experience life as God intends us to.
2. We are to watch over our hearts (the seat of who we are) with all diligence, for from it flow the springs (source) of life.
3. The single most important heart related issue is the degree to which we love the Lord and are controlled by that love as He rules and reigns in our hearts.
  - a. Jesus taught that first and foremost we are to love the Lord our God with all our hearts. Mark 12:28-30

One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'"

- b. Paul pointed out that the love of God must fill our hearts and motivate all that we do.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

2 Corinthians 5:11-15

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. 12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. 14 **For the love of Christ controls us**, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf

- c. Jesus' issue with the church at Ephesus had to do with the fact that they were not properly motivated; they had left (forsaken) their first love. Revelation 2:1-5  
NOTE: They were doing the right things for the wrong reason. Many, without even knowing it, are motivated by self-love, a desire to be blessed by God, rather than by love for God and a desire to be a blessing to God and others.

4. Notice that we are to give attention to the right words:
  - a. By inclining our ears to them.
  - b. Focusing our eyes on them.
  - c. Internalizing them.

5. David understood this truth.

a. Psalm 119:2

How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart.

b. Psalm 119:9-11

How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. 10 With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your commandments. 11 Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.

c. Psalm 119:18

Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law.

6. Those who take to heart God's word will benefit spiritually, socially, and physically.

7. Earlier we saw that the springs of life flow from our hearts.

NOTE: Who we are, what we do and don't do, and how we view and live life all spring from our hearts.

### **I. How we talk is a matter of the heart. 24**

A. Jesus clearly stated this fact in Matthew 12:33-37.

"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. 35 "The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. 36 "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

B. We are to put away a deceitful mouth and devious speech. (Perversity and a perverse mouth).

"Put away from you false and dishonest speech, and willful and contrary talk put far from you." (AMP)

C. We are not to be one with the world in the area of our morals, values or speech.

Ephesians 5:3-5

But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and **there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.** 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

D. The degree to which we are one with the world is a matter of the heart.

### **II. What we look at, focus on, is a matter of the heart. 25**

A. Someone has said that our eyes are the window of our souls.

B. Jesus emphasized this truth in Luke 11:33-36.

"No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar nor under a basket, but on the lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. 34 "The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear (single, fulfilling its purpose), your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad (blind, diseased), your body also is full of darkness. 35 "Then watch out that the light in you is not darkness. 36 "If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it will be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays."

C. Our minds are engaged by what our eyes see and our ears hear.

D. Our focus matters. Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

E. Eve's undoing took place because, "(She) saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and that it was a delight to the eyes (lust of the eyes), and desirable to make one wise (the boastful pride of life), she took from the tree and ate." Genesis 3:6

F. We would do well to "fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith." Hebrews 12:2

### **III. Where we go and what we do is a matter of the heart. 26-27**

A. We are to look straight ahead and walk straight ahead.

B. This truth is reinforced in Proverbs 3:5-8

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.

C. Jesus pointed out that two ways are before the religious person. Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are **many** who enter through it. 14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are **few** who find it."

NOTE: One of the troubling implications of Jesus' teaching is that many who think they are on the right path are not, and that many who are do great things in Jesus name are going to find out they were deceived. Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"

**NOTE: Jesus knows whether or not He is really Lord in a person's life.**

### **APPLICATION:**

1. There is a little poem I quote from time to time that goes:

"There is a way, ways, and the Way.  
The high man walks the high way,  
The low man walks the low.  
And in between, on misty flats,  
The rest run to and fro."

2. Jesus pointed out that just before His return the church will be filled with many people who reside on "misty flats." Revelation 3:14-22

3. In the end they will find out that they had no real relationship with Jesus Christ at all.

4. Those who truly know Jesus will love Him, and those who love Him will obey Him.

5. Their lives will manifest their love: intellectually, emotionally and volitionally.