

“A Matter of the Heart”
All the Feels: When Emotions Get the Best of Us
Proverbs 4:23-27
Dr. Mark Foster
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The Problem

We think we want self-_____, self-reliance, and self-_____.

What we need is to be loved, _____, supported, and cared for by a power greater than ourselves.

*“God does not deceive; but man is deceived when he places too great a trust in himself.
God walks with those whose hearts are simple.” – Thomas á Kempis, 1380-1471*

*“We don’t get in trouble because we won’t take advice.
We get in trouble because we take our own advice.” – Andy Stanley*

What I Want You to Know

God’s law is not to make God _____. God’s law is to help _____.

Religious folk have a terrible inclination to interpret scripture in a way that _____ themselves and holds others accountable.

Religious leaders try to trick and _____ Jesus.

The tradition of the elders is the oral rabbinical exposition/interpretation of the Law of Moses.

Jesus answers their question with a _____ about the written Torah.

Scripture is best used as a _____ and not a weapon.

It is not about what happens to us, it is about our openness to what God wants to do through us.

What is coming out of your mouth these days? _____

What Is Most Important to God

Jesus says it is your _____.

Jesus later says, “And no _____!”

Don’t keep people _____!

Don’t think you can _____ your way into heaven.

Don’t think you can _____ God with good behavior in front of the preacher.

“Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.” – Thomas á Kempis

The condition of your heart does not _____ God’s love for you.

The condition of your heart determines your _____ to participate in the Kingdom of Heaven.

We are all in this _____.

What is most important to God is what you say and do to _____.

Action Step

What is the emotion that competes for control of your life? _____

Offer that emotion to Jesus and let him do with it whatever he chooses for your good.

Daily Reading & Reflection

August 2-8, 2020

Monday – Proverbs 4: *“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (4:23)*

Yesterday Pastor Mark reminded us it’s not the things which we put into our bodies that defile or us or separate us from God. Instead it is the things we say, the words that flow from our mouths, which can separate us from God and one another. In much of the wisdom literature in the Bible we find exhortations to guard and tend our hearts, to incline our ears towards sound listening, and to allow these things to shape the core of our character. It is quite a challenge for us to expect that the Gospel would fill our speech if it hasn’t first filled our souls.

In your readings this week, write down one verse or thought that stands out to you. Allow whatever that may be to fill your thoughts and influence the way you speak to someone today.

Wednesday – 2 Corinthians 4: *“For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (4:6)*

Just as it is important for us to check in with one another to see how we are doing, it’s just as important – if not even more so – for us to check in with ourselves. If we are resentful, angry, or sad about something, we may be tempted to bury those emotions and not share them with others. We do this because we might be afraid of how people will respond or we’re concerned that we may make someone else experience these uncomfortable feelings. However, if we are not authentic and vulnerable with ourselves, those emotions will find a way out of us, and when they do, it usually doesn’t go very well.

How are you really? Offer your response to God, and ask that God would show you a healthy way to share your feelings with someone else.

Wednesday – Proverbs 16: *“The wise of heart is called perceptive, and pleasant speech increases persuasiveness.” (16:21)*

If you were to scroll through your Facebook feed today, it is almost a guarantee that someone will have posted some sort of argument about something going on in the world today. There’s a chance that name-calling and finger-pointing is involved, and it is almost a certainty that no one’s hearts or minds will be changed on whatever the issue may be. The same can be said when we try to speak with people in person. The loudest and most passionate don’t always convince others of their cause. Instead we find that people are far more able to hear someone’s perspective or story if the words which are used are pleasant, peaceful, and open to experiencing the other.

Consider reaching out to one of your Facebook friends this week with whom you disagree. Invite them to a phone conversation or a cup of socially distant coffee to try engaging a topic offline. How does that experience compare to scrolling through your feed?

Thursday – James 3: *“Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth.” (3:13-14)*

As Pastor Mark talked about on Sunday, religious people are really good about telling how others they should feel and how they should act in response to those feelings, and when we inevitably fail to live up to whatever that standard is, we find ourselves being judged. One way that followers of Jesus may respond to that kind of behavior is to just ignore and try and turn off any emotions whatsoever. They’ll seek a humility blind of aspiration or contentedness even when their hearts yearn for something. Pastor Mark didn’t ask us not to feel. No, he reminded us that Jesus asked us to bring all of ourselves—including “all the feels”—and to offer them up to God, who is always working for our good.

What is something in your life that you want? Examine yourself and ask why you seek it.

Friday – Proverbs 23: *“My child, if your heart is wise, my heart too will be glad. My soul will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.” (23:15-16)*

Our entire journey of faith is a matter of the heart. If we only allow the grace of God to penetrate our outside selves and actions, over time we’ll find ourselves feeling exhausted and hollowed out. When we truly submit ourselves to the grace of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, we find that our souls will be filled and we won’t be able to help but spread the Gospel through all that we say and do. We must keep tending to our hearts, allowing God to nurture them through the affirmation, encouragement, and fellowship of our brothers and sisters in Christ. It takes each of us engaging in authentic and accountable community for us to remain as bulwarks against all of the things in the world that seek to tear us down.

Write a thank you note to someone in your circle of friends or faith community simply to express your gratitude for their being present in your life.