

It's a Matter of the Heart – Nov. 3, 2021

Intro: Heart – essential to living. Nothing else functions without it. If it stops, the body stops; if heart doesn't supply blood to organs & tissues, they'll die.

In a day, heart beats 60-80 bp min - 100,000 times a day.

Heart pumps 5-6 liters of blood per min thru 60,000 miles of blood vessels

Heart sits fairly central in the chest, just left of the sternum.

Heart is central in our faith & essential in living for God.

It's thru the heart that God loves us, & wants us to love Him back.

Matt. 22:37 - "Love the Lord with all your heart..."

B/c God loves us, He pursues us... draws us with love. He wins us over.

John 6:44 NIV – Jesus said: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them"

God draws us w/ love & kindness. He doesn't lead us, pull us & drag us.

Hosea 11:4 CEV – "I led them with kindness and with love, not with ropes."

God never compels or coerces us to come to Him... He speaks to our hearts.

That's our example in how we help others come to know God's love.

1 Peter 5:2 - "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly"

Verse for pastors to serve – but it's insight into how we should live.

We're to shine a light ... **Matt. 5:16 NIV** - "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Shine a light of love so people see Heart of God, our changed hearts...

they'll praise God ... not us. It's all about the heart.

1 Peter 5:2 describes the heart of a Christian who serves God.

Q - What does it mean to serve not "under compulsion" or "for shameful gain"?

Compulsion in the Bible? 1 - Roman soldiers compelled Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus' cross (Matt. 27:32; Mark 15:21).

2 - Paul noted false teachers wanted to force Gentile Christians to be circumcised (Galatians 2:3, 14; 6:12).

Roman soldiers & false teachers don't appeal to the heart. They command/control.

God doesn't command or force us. Wants joy in serving Him... joy in our faith.

Phil. 1:25 NLT – Paul wanted to help others “grow and experience the joy of your faith.”

Joy comes from willingness. **Ex:** love to read books, not the list.

2nd Ex. Paul’s appeal to **Philemon** for former slave, **Onesimus.**

Philemon 14 - “I want your act of kindness to come from your heart, and not be something you feel forced to do.”

When actions are voluntary, willingly - there is Joy of your Faith.

Good deeds show God’s love - but most effective when our hearts are in it.

Gal. 6:10 NIV – “as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

The effective witness for God is the one whose heart is in it. Joy.

2 Corinthians 1:24 – Paul said we don’t “want to dominate you by telling you how to put your faith into practice. We want to work together with you so you will be full of joy, for it is by your own faith that you stand firm.”

To be full of joy ... **serve God willingly. Be eager** to use your gifts, talents.

When Paul invited the Corinthians to aid those in Jerusalem, he wrote:

2 Cor. 9:7 NIV – “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

It’s all about giving – doing - serving willingly, not reluctantly...pressured.

God isn’t exacting a toll. He doesn’t make demands on us.

When David prayed to get back right with God – he prayed for “a clean heart” ...

“Restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and give me a willing spirit.” **Ps. 51:12**

God wants willing followers, who act not b/c of obligation, but have heart.

God is not impressed with a sense of duty. God win us over w/ love; He wants to win us from within – heart – so we respond from the heart...

1 Peter 5:2 - “shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly”

“compulsion” / force comes from **outside**, but “**shameful gain**” comes from **within**

Don’t be forced to act ... but also - don’t be driven by wrong (selfish) desires.

Q- What does it mean to be motivated by shameful gain?

“dishonest gain” ... greed ... KJV says: “not for filthy lucre”

We don't live a Christian life to get rich... can't take it with you.

▶ Greed may not mean \$, but attention, praise... motive for payback.

Serve so God gets the praise; Do good deeds to glorify Him.

Don't do it for what you'll get out of it; do it b/c you're **eager** to serve God.

God is a willing & eager God.

Jeremiah 32:41 – *Good News Tr.* – “I will take pleasure in doing good things for them, and I will establish them permanently in this land.”

God's Word Tr. – “I will enjoy blessing them. With all my heart and soul I will faithfully plant them” NLT – “I will find joy doing good for them”

That's our example: God takes pleasure in blessing us; His heart is in it!

Apostle Paul is also an example of eagerness:

Paul was eager to preach the gospel (Romans 1:15),

eager to remember the poor (Galatians 2:10),

eager to see his converts face to face (1 Thessalonians 2:17),

eager to honor Christ in life and in death (Philippians 1:20).

Paul's heart was willing & eager to do anything for God.

Faith is all about the heart. Jesus asks us to let Him in our hearts. Change them.

He wants us to love Him back . . . and let His love flow thru us.

Blockage - arteries can cause a heart attack... damage to the heart muscle.

Acting w/wrong motives is like having a blockage in the heart.

People see insincerity. It causes damage... hypocrisy.

Heart contains "**pacemaker**" cells – they cause it to contract, produces a heartbeat. Each cell has ability to be 'band leader' & have everyone follow.

Irregular heartbeat (atrial fibrillation) - every cell tries to be the band leader; causes the cells to beat out of sync with one another.

Must have only 1 pacemaker cell in our lives – God. He's the leader. In sync.

Heart (a muscle) - needs **fresh supply** of blood, oxygen & nutrients to stay healthy; We need to receive a fresh supply of God to function.

Song of Week – “I Give You My Heart” – performed at a Hillsong conference.

This Sun. -- Nov. 7th – time change.

Stay positive. Test negative. Get vaccinated.