

Summer With Jesus - Week 2

God Time – A Deeper Look at the Heart

Use a prayer journal. After you read the passages jot down what “jumped out” at you while reading. Then take a few minutes to write a prayer response to what you have read.

There are only five days of reading provided so if you miss a day, you have time to catch up. Do not get legalistic! If you miss a day or even a week...God still loves you!

Monday: Hebrews 4:12 NLT

Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Wednesday: Romans 12:1-2

Thursday: Psalm 51:10-13

Friday: James 1:12-14

Diving Deeper

July 18 – A Deeper Look at the Heart – Matthew 5:22-30

This week Pastor Scott will continue his teaching series on the Sermon on the Mount. We are using Josh Hunt’s “Good Questions Have Groups Talking.” These questions are designed to assist you as you lead your group through Pastor Scott’s Teaching Series on the Sermon on the Mount. Answers to the questions are provided. Let’s look at who God desires us to become and what it means to follow Jesus.

1. How does your translation have verse 22? What does Raca mean?

One of the best tools we have for Bible study is the wealth of great translations available to us.

Matthew 5:22 (NIV) But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’

is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Matthew 5:22 (ESV) But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

Matthew 5:22 (MSG) I'm telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. Carelessly call a brother 'idiot!' and you just might find yourself hauled into court. Thoughtlessly yell 'stupid!' at a sister and you are on the brink of hellfire. The simple moral fact is that words kill.

Comparing these various translations, what would you say Jesus is getting at here? What is he saying? Jesus is warning against saying something like: "You are nothing. You don't matter. You are insignificant. You are not important."

2. Verses 23ff. Can you come to God and have peace with God and not be at peace with men?

Fulfillment of the next characteristic is conditional; in that it partly depends on the attitudes and responses of our enemies. If possible, Paul therefore says, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Whether between nations or individuals, peace is two-way. By definition, a peaceful relationship cannot be one-sided. Our responsibility is to make sure that our side of the relationship is right, that our inner desire is genuinely to be at peace with all men, even the meanest and most undeserving. Short of compromising God's truth and standards, we should be willing to go to great lengths to build peaceful bridges to those who hate us and harm us. We must forsake any grudge or settled bitterness and fully forgive from the heart all who harm us. Having done that, we can seek reconciliation honestly. — MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Romans 9-16.

3. Verse 27-30. God is concerned about the condition of our heart. When we do something that causes us to stumble, God takes it seriously. When does a look become lust? When does admiring God's beautiful creation become sinful desire?

When the look is for the purpose of satisfying one's evil desire, then it is lusting. Everything flows from the heart and when your desires are evil your heart is evil and will cause you to stumble. Looking lustfully does not cause you to commit adultery in your thoughts. You have already committed adultery in the heart. It is not lustful looking that causes the sin in the heart, but the sin in the heart that causes lustful looking. The lustful looking is but the expression of a heart that is already immoral and adulterous. The heart is the soil where the seeds of sin are imbedded and begin to grow. — MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew 1-7.

4. Read Matthew 5, Verse 8. What does it mean to be pure in heart?

IN THE BIBLE the heart is considered something far more complex than a bodily organ. It is called the seat of the emotions. Fear, love, courage, anger, joy, sorrow, and hatred are ascribed to the heart. It has come to stand for the center of the moral, spiritual, and intellectual life of a person. The "heart" is said to be the seat of a person's conscience and life.

Jesus said, "Happy are the pure in heart." Now, we should be able to take that for just what it means. If the heart is the seat of affection, then our love toward God must be pure. If the heart is the center of our motives, then our motives must be pure. If the heart is the residence of our wills, then our wills must be yielded to Christ. We are to be pure in love, pure in motive, and pure in desire. — Billy Graham, *The Secret of Happiness* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011).

5. "Heart" in the Bible does not refer to the organ that pumps our blood. What does it mean?

The heart is central. That we would even need to be reminded of this only shows how far we have fallen from the life we were meant to live—or how powerful the spell has been. The subject of the heart is addressed in the Bible more than any other topic—more than works or service, more than belief or obedience, more than money, and even more than worship.

Maybe God knows something we've forgotten. But of course—all those other things are matters of the heart. Consider a few passages:

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Deut. 6:5) [Jesus called this the greatest of all the commandments—and notice that the heart comes first.]

Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. (1 Sam. 16:7) Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Luke 12:34)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. (Prov. 3:5)

Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You. (Ps. 119:11 NASB)

For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. (2 Chron. 16:9)

All a man's ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart. (Prov. 21:2)

6. How does the biblical idea of “heart” differ from the way the world uses the word?

We tend to think of the heart as the seat of emotion. We speak of “heartthrobs,” “heartaches,” and “broken hearts.” But when Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart,” he was speaking in a different context. To Jesus' listeners, the heart was the totality of the inner person—the control tower, the cockpit. The heart was thought of as the seat of the character—the origin of desires, affections, perceptions, thoughts, reasoning, imagination, conscience, intentions, purpose, will, and faith.

Thus, a proverb admonished, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

To the Hebrew mind, the heart is a freeway cloverleaf where all emotions and prejudices and wisdom converge. It is a switch house that receives freight cars loaded with moods, ideas, emotions, and convictions and puts them on the right track. — Max Lucado, *The Applause of Heaven* (Dallas, TX: Word Pub., 1996), 124.

7. How can we discern the condition of our hearts?

That is why the state of the heart is so critical. What's the state of yours? When someone barks at you, do you bark back or bite your tongue? When your schedule is too tight or your to-do list too long, do you lose your cool or keep it? When you are offered a morsel of gossip marinated in slander, do you turn it down or pass it on? How you respond to these situations depends on the state of your heart. The state of your heart dictates whether you harbor a grudge or give grace, seek self-pity, or seek Christ, drink human misery or taste God's mercy. No wonder, then, the wise man begs, "Above all else, guard your heart."

David's prayer should be ours: "Create in me a pure heart, O God." — Max Lucado, *The Applause of Heaven* (Dallas, TX: Word Pub., 1996), 125–126.