

Mobilizing You to Love God (UP)

I. INTRO

- A. About ten years back I proposed a hypothetical situation to a few of the men I was discipling. What would you teach someone who you only had access to for a limited time?
 - 1. When all was said and done, we realized that you needed to teach people how to read the Word (hear from God), and obey what God says
 - 2. If you can teach someone to hear from God and obey him, they can figure everything else out → INPUT & OUTPUT
 - 3. You see the fruit of that exercise in our mission statement: We mobilize all people to hear, obey, and share God's truth. Hear, Obey, Share...
- B. That's a generalization of all you need to know, obviously, but it is a strong foundation. If we were to go another layer deeper, I would tell you that you need to hear, obey, and share in three primary relationships
 - 1. You need to HOS the Lord in your relationship with God
 - a) Reading the Word, obeying it, praying and worshipping in response
 - 2. Corporately, with God's church, your family, you need to HOS
 - a) Reading the Word together, obeying it together, sharing it with one another for teaching, encouragement, edification, and mutual love.
 - 3. Out in the world, you need to HOS too.
 - a) Reading the Word, obeying it, and proclaiming the Good News among the least, the last, and the lost
- C. As a church, we exist to glorify God by being disciples who make disciples of all nations. The way we do that is by teaching you to HOS in those 3D...UP IN OUT
 - 1. Put another way, we want to help you be a healthy disciple who lives out the Great Commandment (love God, love your neighbor) and the Great Commission (make disciples of all nations)
- D. This week, we are going to talk about that UP relationship → Loving God

II. Proverbs 4:23–26

- [23] Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life.*
- [24] Put away from you crooked speech,
and put devious talk far from you.*
- [25] Let your eyes look directly forward,
and your gaze be straight before you.*
- [26] Ponder the path of your feet;
then all your ways will be sure.*

- A. Hindsight is always 20/20, but when you are in the thick of it, sometimes it can be difficult to see where you are actually headed
- B. A few years back, I was in a real spiritual high. I felt like I was riding a wave w/ God, experiencing his joy, seeing a ton of victory, etc.

1. In the moment, you think, "I'm going to be here forever. How could anyone let this drop?"
 2. As months go by, however, and life gets in the way, you naturally go through spiritual valleys.
 3. Sometimes those valleys turn to pitfalls, traps filled with spikes
 4. And occasionally it's only AFTER you fall in that you stop and say, "How did I get here?"
- C. This is why the author of Proverbs writes these words: *[26] Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure.*

D. POINT #1: If you want to be a healthy disciple who loves God, you have to be proactive... Ponder your path.

1. Consider where you are today → your habits, your secret sins, the lusts you entertain, your times of quiet with the Lord in prayer and his Word (OR your lack thereof), your flirtations with that co-worker, your lackadaisical commitment to anything spiritual, your spending habits
 2. Ponder your path, church. Where does it end up?
 - a) Does it end up closer to God, more in love with his Word, more craving of his presence, a greater desire to know him?
 - b) Or does your path end with you on a throne in your own tower of babel as it's crashing to the ground? (e.g. King Solomon)
 3. Too many people wait to careen off a cliff before pondering their path
 4. We need to begin with the end in mind, proactively pondering where we are headed
 5. As we consider the call to equip you to be a healthy disciple, to love God well, I implore you → ponder, be introspective, embrace self-awareness
 - a) If you never deviated from your current path, would it culminate in a life lived for Christ, for his glory, with limited regret?
 6. So once you have pondered your current path, your current mess, your current situation (whatever), step back and now answer this question: How's your heart? How are your affections for God? When you think about him (do you), what thoughts come to mind?
- E. *Proverbs 4:23, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."*
1. Anatomically the Hebrew word לֵב (lev) refers to the "heart." But abstractly it can refer to one's inner self, will, understanding, affections or mind.
 2. The Ancient Israelites did not see the heart and mind in opposition, as we often do. For them, it was the seat of one's thinking and feelings.
 3. Consider some of these verses:
 - a) *Luke 6:45, "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."*
 - b) *Proverbs 27:19, "As [still] water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart."*

c) *Matthew 15:18-19, "But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander."*

4. The path may be the visual evidence of where you are headed, but it all begins with your HEART

F. POINT #2: If you want to be a healthy disciple who loves God, guard your heart

1. To guard your heart is to guard your mind, your thoughts, your affections
 - a) It isn't just important what you THINK about God (that's crucial)
 - b) It's also important how you FEEL about God
 - c) What you think impacts what you feel
2. How do we guard it?
 - a) *[24] Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. [25] Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you.*
 - b) Guard your INPUT
 - c) Guard your OUTPUT
3. INPUT → be careful little eye what you see
 - a) Jesus explained it this way in Matthew 6:22-23, *"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"*
 - b) The eye functions as the entry point for what influences you
 - c) The "eye" has to be focused on good and righteous things to fill you with light and purity
 - d) A "healthy" eye refers to clear, focused, and godly intentions, indicating a life directed by faith and moral clarity.
 - e) When the "eye" is unhealthy, it is distracted, or focused on sinful desires, and it corrupts the individual. (sinful covetousness)
 - f) The phrase "how great is that darkness" implies the seriousness of spiritual decay when one persistently focuses on sinful or worldly things.
 - g) The point is that what one chooses to gaze upon, focus on, or desire impacts their inner being.
 - h) **What captures your focus shapes your heart and, therefore, your actions.**
 - i) In other words: guard your INPUT because it becomes your OUTPUT

4. POINT #1: If you want to love God, proactively ponder the path of your feet → where is your current walk with Christ taking you?

5. POINT #2: If you want to love God, guard your heart by being aware of what you behold, what you feast on, and what you gaze upon

6. POINT #3: If you want to be a healthy disciple who loves God, nurture your heart, by beholding the beautiful glory of God as revealed by the Spirit during prayerful meditation of the Word

- a) Church, it's not rocket science. You love what you behold.
 - (1) If you spend all your free time looking at ESPN, you will love sports.
 - (2) If you spend all your time browsing Zillow, you will love real estate
 - (3) If you feast your eyes on flesh, you will love flesh
 - (4) If you browse cupcakes on instagram, you will want one
 - (5) But if you fix your eyes on the King of Glory, you will know him more, love him more, obey, proclaim, and reflect him
- b) Consider Moses... *Exodus 33:18-19, "Then Moses said, 'Now show me your glory.' And the Lord said, 'I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.'"*
- c) Consider David... *Psalms 27:4, "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple."*
- d) Consider Isaiah... *Isaiah 6:1-3, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim... And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'"*
- e) Consider Christ... *Hebrews 12:1-2, "1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses [like Moses, David, and Isaiah], let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

7. Fix your gaze on the king of glory. INPUT the Word, and you will OUTPUT the fruit of the Spirit

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Oh Church, how I want to mobilize you to love God. How I want to love God.
- B. And as a man trapped in a body of death, I know all too well the struggle against sin and flesh, and how it fights to keep us from doing what the Spirit in us desires
- C. Friends, consider your path... ponder it... guard your heart... fix your gaze on the King of Glory

- D. Do this and the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Helper, will fill you and pour out of you like an artesian well (John 4)
- E. Your INPUT determines your OUTPUT
- F. *Philippians 4:8, Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*
- G. **What captures your focus shapes your heart and, therefore, your actions.**
 - 1. Be captured by, obsessed with, entranced with Christ
- H. If you don't know where to begin, this is what Revolve's classes and trainings are all about. (Doctrine, Hub, ABCs, Woman's Prayer Gathering, DGs, etc)
- I. Or, come and talk with a member of the prayer team or the elders after the service. We would have no greater joy then showing you how.