

SWORDS AND SHOVELS THEOLOGY CLASS



TOPIC 1: THE THEOLOGY OF THE HEART

Why should we study theology and how does it help increase our love for God?

LESSON 1: LOVING GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

Goals:

- To understand the relationship between our thinking, our hearts, and our daily living
- To understand how sin impacts our hearts
- To understand the relationship between knowing God's Truth, and loving God

WHAT IS OUR GREATEST NEED?

"And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:35-40

1. Everything flows from inside

- "But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person." (Matthew 15:18)
- Understand the heart → Understand yourself

BUT...

2. We don't understand the heart

- "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9)
- We struggle because we don't know our hearts

How do we understand the heart biblical? What does it mean? What does it include?

3. A biblical heart model (Adapted from Dr. Jeremy Pierre, SBTS):

- The heart is **dynamic**
 - Thinking (Matt. 19:4)
 - Feeling (John 14:1)
 - Willing (Mark 3:5)

When say it is **dynamic**, we mean that it is multi layered, active and yet unified.

Example:

- New ideas can give us new emotions, new desires and new plans
- New emotions sometimes give us new ideas - I feel down, therefore I suck.
- New goals shape our emotions and our ideas about the world.

The life of the heart is a constant three-way process.

How what this heart originally designed to work?

4. The original design

- This heart design is specifically created for life in relationship with God.
- Genesis 1 - how are the three aspects of the heart reflected in the text?
 - We depend on God for information
 - We are created to live in submission to his plan
 - We are created to receive blessing from God

5. The **dynamic** impact of sin

- Genesis 3:1-7

- New information, new perspective
 - New desires, new emotions
 - New intention, new will
- Sin cuts the heart off from dependence upon God, takes the focus away from God
- Sin locks the heart into a cycle of death
 - Romans 1:18-21, 24
 - "18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth**. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and **their foolish hearts were darkened.**"
 - "24 Therefore God gave them up in the **lusts of their hearts** to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves..."

Results:

- Our battle with sin is constantly on multiple levels in our hearts.
- The root of all sin is the sin of **unbelief**.
 - We do not trust God to be all that he says he is. We put our trust in a different source of knowledge.
 - Adam and Eve's rebellion started with a new source of truth, a new source of knowledge that led their hearts in a new way.

6. The dynamic process of faith and salvation

- Ez. 11:19-21
 - 19 And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 21 But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable

things and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads, declares the Lord GOD.”

- The very essence of salvation is the turning of the heart towards God. This is the core of what he seeks. He wants your heart to belong to him. He wants your heart to treasure, know and desire nothing more than him!
 - Turning the heart means turning the thoughts, desires and will back to God
 - God’s whole purpose is to call our hearts back to himself
- Notice three aspects of this. He gives you the tools for this new life.
 - New heart
 - New Spirit
 - He starts a process in us that is transforming our practical walk

7. The Practical Process of Heart Change

- Faith - an active process.
- Notice how the following passages describe the process of living faith:

*³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God’s power are being guarded **through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3-5)*

*¹³ Therefore, **preparing your minds for action**, and being sober-minded, **set your hope** fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ **As obedient children**, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.” (1 Peter 1:13-15)*

- Practical observations:
 - The new heart and new Spirit start a process of faith that continues on in our lives every day.

- Faith is the active engagement of the whole heart to the whole of God's word.
- Faith includes the active application of the whole heart to the truth of the gospel.
 - thinking
 - feeling
 - willing

How is this different from the common view of faith that we often assume?

- Faith is not merely agreeing with God's word, it entails actively receiving that Word into all aspects of the heart.

LESSON 2: THINKING AND LOVING

Goals:

- To understanding the relationship between thinking and loving
- To understand the different ways God brings knowledge to our hearts
- To develop a value of biblical books and teachers

What about people who have a lot of theology and no change in life? What is wrong? Is the truth not working in their hearts? Let's take a look at a great example text:

1 Corinthians 8:1-12

Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. 2 If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

4 Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one."...

7 However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their

conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8 Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. 9 But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? 11 And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. 12 Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

1. Two Kinds of Knowledge

- Sinful knowledge:
 - Self-centered, prideful, unloving, unbelief
- Godly knowledge:
 - Humble, dependent, building up, faith driven
 - Leads to love of God and man

Hebrews 4:1-2

"Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened."

Real faith always entails the application of God's Word to the heart, not merely the storing of it in the intellect. Having a mental storehouse of excellent theology that never changes your heart is not just "misapplication", its *unbelief*.

The biblical notion of faith is not just mentally agreeing with something. It is multifaceted and dynamic. It is active. It is a process in which we as created beings understand our position in relationship to the One who has made us. It is a willful submission of the thoughts, feelings and purposes of our confused and restless hearts to the thoughts, desires and purposes of Him who made us. To believe God is to treasure him and his word above our own. This is the faith that transforms the heart to new loves.

2. Godly Knowledge and Godly Love

"Therefore, the main reason God has given us minds is that we might seek out and find all the reasons that exist for treasuring him in all things and above all things. He created the world so that through it and above it we might treasure him." (John Piper)



- Knowledge = cutting wood for the fire
- Faith = hands that place the wood in the heart, applying it prayerfully and honestly to our feeling, thinking and willing
- Love = the fire that burns in our hearts for God and for his people, which results from the whole process as the Holy Spirit works through the Word to make our hearts new

The knowledge is NOT the fire. The knowledge leads to the fire. You cannot love God without knowledge.

Without any one of these there is no fire.

Takeaways:

- It does not matter how much you think that you have understood a single truth of Scripture, there are still many ways that that truth can challenge and change your heart.
- Accepting truth in faith means actively opening our hearts to be convicted and shaped in our thinking, our feeling and our willing.
- Our love for God only grows as our knowledge and faith in him grows
- As believers, we have a new heart and a new Spirit alive in us, therefore we are equipped every day to come to his Word in true faith

3. One Bible, Many Pathways into Our Hearts and Minds

Notice how the New Testament speaks of the process of the Word getting into our hearts:

Hebrews 13:7

"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."

Ephesians 4:11-12

"11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

Conclusion: godly teachers of the Bible are a God-ordained tool for God's people to grow in knowledge of his truth and love for him.

- How we fail in this area:
 - We fail to see that our teachers are seeking to bring to us the Word of God, rather than their own ideas
 - We value the word of the teacher over the Word of God
 - We fail to see our teachers as those who help us understand Scripture better (the focus is always Scripture, not merely the ideas of the leader)

How do we view the resources that we have today?

If you are someone who is hungry to know and love God more, you are living in the best time possible.

If we are truly moved by a desire to grow in our knowledge and love of God, we will be humbled by the fact that so often we do not know and love God as we must. And you will also be humbled and inspired by the fact that you are surrounded by voices of Christians who know God and love God more and better than you do. And you will want to listen and learn from them.

The question is not how smart I am in relationship to other people around me. The question is, how much do I want to know this God who has spoken to me?

Practical conclusions:

- Be humbled by the devotion and hard work of God's men and women over the years.
- Be grateful to God for giving the church people who's lives are dedicated to understanding and sharing the Word of God with the church.
- Develop a healthy appreciation for the amazing resources that we have today as christians.
- Build a healthy appetite for always seeking and receiving biblical instruction in our lives.

- Be humbled by the depth and richness of God's Word.