

*What's Going Into
Your Heart?*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the spiritual meaning of the heart. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible directly speaks of the heart in eight hundred seventy-six verses; therefore, it must be an important subject to God. Most explanations concerning the heart, however, are limited and tend to deal with the affections of the emotions attached to the heart. This reveals a great misunderstanding of what God established the heart to be.

Simply put, the heart is the premise for all motivational thinking, the basis for all human operation, and the supreme center for all communication, feelings, and decisions. The content of our hearts drives our responses and reactions. That is why it is vital that we fill our hearts with the Word of God. If we do, we will have godly, Spirit-filled substance for our lives. Then, the Holy Spirit is enabled to govern our decisions because we have allowed truth to be hidden in

our inner parts.

This booklet, which examines the first ten verses of Colossians 1, is designed to motivate us to think with the Word of God, for it is by thinking upon and receiving the Word of Truth that our hearts gain substance. Our prayer is that this message will help us to develop habits of thinking God's thoughts *into* our hearts where they can be applied and become the bread of life for us.

Chapter One

GROUNDED IN GRACE BY THINKING WITH GOD

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,

“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you” (Colossians 1:1-3).

The apostle Paul was appointed by God to preach the Gospel, build churches, and teach men how to think with God. He addressed this letter to all “the saints” at Colosse. Every born-again believer is a saint, holy and set apart unto the Lord. In God’s eyes, we were made saints the moment we received Christ as our Savior.

Next, the apostle Paul writes, “Grace be unto you, and peace....” Paul understood that every-

one could use grace and peace, so he included these in his greeting. Then, he gave thanks to “God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” for those who had come to believe in Christ. It is a beautiful thing to give thanks for *every* member of the congregation, including those who are struggling. Why? I have never walked in their shoes. I don’t have their genetic dispositions. I do not necessarily understand their pain or the heartaches they have encountered in life. I do know that we have been called into one body and we stand in an even place at the Cross. Not one of us deserves the gift of grace, and every one of us depends on the mercy of God to stand.

In his greeting, Paul spoke of God as “the Father” because he wanted to emphasize the important reality of our spiritual family. I love to talk with young people and hear them say something nice about their fathers and mothers. I remember a great service when I preached a special sermon about the importance of honoring our parents. Afterwards, hundreds of people went straight home and called their parents, to love them and thank them. God understood His own authority as a father and the sacrifice of love that was required. Therefore, He made the family structure on earth a sacred institution to

be honored and protected with our lives (Exodus 20:12).

Then, Paul wrote that he was “praying always” for them. What a great statement! Paul was letting the Colossians know that his prayers were with them. We have instituted morning prayer meetings. Six days a week, a group of us gathers in our chapel to pray for all the activities in our ministry and for other ministries. Every pew and every seat is prayed over. We ask God to move by His Spirit and to heal individuals. We pray for the leadership in our city, our state, and our nation, and we pray for other countries. Great things are happening. We need to give thanks instead of criticizing, and then trust God to answer our prayers.

The Power of a Vision

“Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

“Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth” (Colossians 1:4-6).

I am often overwhelmed at what God has done. There is no way a man or a group of men can take the good news of the Gospel into all the world on their own. This type of work requires the involvement of the whole Church. It takes affiliated churches, and it takes Christians everywhere.

We sent our first overseas team to Finland more than twenty-five years ago. God spoke to our hearts and led us there. That ministry has reproduced itself again and again. When the communist bloc fell in Eastern Europe, the Finnish Christians were already in places that other people could never go. Suddenly, they were free to share the Gospel openly; and ever since, God has continued to move there freely.

God put this vision in our hearts, and obedience put the vision into motion. God leads our hearts to expand our love for our Jerusalem, just as we extend our love to our Judaea, to Samaria, even to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Chapter Two

THE HEART OF A FAITHFUL MINISTER

“As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; (Colossians 1:7).

What a thing it must have been for Epaphras to see his name here, in the letter Paul was writing to the whole church at Colosse. Paul called him a “fellobservant.” What a reputation to have in the heart of an apostle. “Fellobservant” meant that Epaphras served the Lord Jesus within the church and submitted to its table of organization. He labored to knit together the members of the Body of Christ.

Epaphras is also called a “faithful minister”—a very strong commendation from the apostle Paul. More than a minister, he was known as a *faithful* minister. In the Greek text, the phrasing indicates that Epaphras was always present and active to serve—one who was always there to

lead, to pray, to witness, to study, and to preach. He was faithful to care for individuals and to weep with those who were weeping. His heart was filled with God's love.

Seeing the Needs

"Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit" (Colossians 1:8).

"Your love" speaks of the love of God operating through the influence of the Holy Spirit. "Declared" in the Greek grammatical structure is an aorist active participle of the verb *deloo*. It refers to an action that started in the past and is continuing in the present. Simply, Paul was saying that the love of the Colossians was being manifested continually and had been evident to him for some time, based on what Epaphras communicated to him.

The love of God is not an impulse springing from the emotions. This love operates under the Holy Spirit's influence. It is a spiritual condition of the heart. This love spends itself not only by loving the lovely or deserving; it spends itself by loving everyone. This love is truly interested in people and seeks the welfare of all.

Recently, a precious woman went home to heaven, and we spent some time with the family.

One relative came to the house, and God moved my heart for him. I had an opportunity to talk with this man and we both were left weeping.

“That’s the first time anyone ever wept with me,” he said.

God brought him into the room to pour his heart out to me. What a precious opportunity God gave me, to share what He had put into my heart.

Chapter Three

THINK TRUTH INTO
YOUR HEART

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:9-10).

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not

with thee" (Proverbs 23:7).

"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12:30).

Most of the time, the heart is labeled as the seat of our affections. That is a shallow definition that exposes a lack of thinking.

The heart is the premise for all motivational thinking with Christ. It reflects the precise light of the impartation of the divine nature through the exceeding precious promises of God. The heart is the basis for all human operation in the application of God's precise thoughts. The decisions of the will are made in the heart, and it is the place where methods are established to produce control of the mind.

The mind directs the attitude of the soul as it receives divine information from God's Word. Then, the conscience begins to control and direct the will. To be Spirit-filled, a person must receive doctrine by *thinking* it into his heart. This means that through proper training and the Holy Spirit's control, you can receive truth into your

heart as a foundation from which to live.

The Heart Process

Here is how the heart works. We hear the Word of God. Then, we begin to think upon it and focus on specific areas of it. We meditate on the truth, churning it over and over in the mind until the milk (1 Peter 2:2) becomes butter (Proverbs 30:33). Then we masticate the words of truth, thoroughly chewing and breaking down the Word we have received so it can be assimilated and it becomes nourishment to our soul. Next, the truth we have received is circulated and taken into our hearts. We keep thinking and thinking, churning and churning, until the truth is established in the place where it can be used in my life.

Consider prayer. I think upon what the Bible says about it. I recall messages I have heard about prayer. I remember books written about it. I reflect some more. I consider the privilege, the provision, and the power that prayer brings to my life.

Recently, I began to think about prayer more specifically. When I recognize that certain thoughts on God's heart have not yet entered into my heart, I keep thinking, meditating, mas-

ticating, and assimilating. Finally, this process of thinking brings the truth into my heart, as it makes the truth a reality.

I do the same with love for my wife. I think about her. I think about what our love has produced. Then, I think about it some more. I think about what this love means to me. This is a spiritual understanding of the will of God. The love I have for my wife has gone from my mind into my heart, and I express it in my actions.

Children who have no respect for their parents are children who have never *thought* the value of their parents' lives into their hearts. Their love isn't right. There is love in their minds and in their emotions. But, this love must be thought into the heart.

People plagued by depression are those who, generally speaking, have not thought victory, grace, and peace into their hearts. Sure, these are ideas in their minds, but that is where the thoughts have stopped. Anxiety comes in because thoughts of victory and healing have never progressed beyond the mind. Even healing, which may or may not be God's will, must be thought through into the heart.

Take forgiveness, for example. If I need to forgive someone, I must keep thinking God's

thoughts about forgiveness. I consider His thoughts and reconsider them some more. Eventually, because of consistent thinking, I think forgiveness into my heart. After that, forgiveness is what comes out of me toward others.

Truth Warms the Heart

“...Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32).

Notice that the disciples spoke of their hearts burning within them. It wasn't their heads or their minds that were affected. Their hearts burned because of what they had thought into them.

The world has adjusted itself and refuses to think things through *into* the heart. Satan uses busy lives and strange schedules to stop Christians from thinking with God. The devil does everything in his power to hinder the process of thinking things into our hearts. Hell's goal is to have bitterness seep into minds and stay there, where it can seep out into the emotions and poison exchanges between people.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

The issues of life belong to the heart. Consis-

tently thinking God's thoughts will establish truth in our hearts. Consequently, our healthy hearts will feed our minds and control our emotions, taking care of the conscience and overruling any self-consciousness, while directing our volition to choose life (Deuteronomy 30:19).

CONCLUSION

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy [Spirit] which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5).

The things of God have to be thought into our hearts. We have to keep thinking about serving until service gets into our hearts. We have to think about worshipping God until worship has settled into our hearts.

Oh, how God wants His thoughts to be thought into our hearts. Let's focus on the pure, lovely, and honest things God has communicated to us. Once these things have made it into our hearts, then they will be reflected and circulated through our entire being as we manifest who God is, in this evil world.