

“The Heart of the Matter”

Taken from the book The Ransomed Heart (A collection of Devotional Readings) by Jon Eldredge

Video Clip from the movie Shrek:

We can all relate to this scene in the movie.

- Like Shrek, during the course of everyday life we become involved with people, situations, and things that were not necessarily on our agenda.
- Because we experience life through our hearts (our emotions and feelings) we often get caught up into these situations before we have time to stop and evaluate them.

The heart is the key to a successful relationship with God and people.

Proverbs 4:23 “Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do.” (NLB)

What exactly do we mean by heart?

- The heart is the center of our emotions and feelings
- It encompasses:
 1. The mind; our intellect and ability to reason
 2. The will; determination, motivation, strength of character and self-control

To guard (keep) your heart means to be aware of what you think about, what you say, and what you do.

- Monitor what goes into your mind and your thoughts.
- Control your tongue. Be sure your words are edifying and encouraging. Become aware of your self-talk.
- Do your actions bring glory to God?

James 1:22 “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” (NKJ)

2. We were created to have a love relationship with God

Matthew 22:37-38 “Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.” (NKJ)

Jesus knew how important it was to capture someone’s heart.

- There were plenty of religions in His day, as there are today.
- But He did not come to bring another religion, but rather to bring the people into a love relationship with God.
- Which means that everything we do should be based upon our love for God and our desire to please Him.
- Not what we can get from God but what we can give to Him.
- As Christians we no longer can live just to satisfy our own needs and desires but must take others into consideration.

3. We prove our love through our actions

Many people say that they are Christians, but their behavior shows otherwise.

Matthew 15:8 “*These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*” (NIV)

- God is more interested in what we do everyday then what we do for two hours on Sunday morning.
- Yes, attendance at Sunday service is very important; however, that is not the be all and end all of our service to God.
- Jesus wants to be Lord of our (entire, everyday) life, not just be our ‘Sunday Savior’.

Matthew 5:16 “*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your moral excellence and your praiseworthy, noble, and good deeds and recognize and honor and praise and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.*” (AMP)

Galatians 5:22-23 “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*” (NIV)

4. Love requires a commitment

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

Webster defines commitment as: “The act of pledging or engaging.”

- God is looking for people who are fully committed and passionate about Him.
- People who are focused on promoting the kingdom of God and can stay the course.

Our commitment to God requires:

- Trust in Him
Proverbs 3:5 “*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;*” (NIV)
- Faith in His Word through reading the bible.
- Attending church services and bible studies.
- Praise and worship, it’s not just for Sunday only.
- Having a prayer life.

5. Love is deep

We have all heard the expression “Beauty is only skin deep”.

Man often makes judgments based upon what he sees; a persons looks, skin color, age, the way they dress, etc.

1Samuel 16:7 *For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*” (NKJ)

God is interested in our character, in who we are at the core.

- Are we truthful, honest
- Do we have integrity
- Do we keep our promises
- Are we respectful

6. God's love for us is unconditional

He loves us the way we are right now.

Video Clip from the last scene in the movie Shrek.

As believers in Christ Jesus we have all been touched by God "True loves kiss takes on loves true form" the image of Christ formed in us...

'I'm a believer I couldn't leave Him if I tried!'

Questions:

1. The heart is the key to a successful relationship with God and people. What does the heart influence?
2. We were created to have a love relationship with God. How does the heart effect how you relate to God and to people?
3. We prove our love through our actions. As single adults how do our actions show that we love God?
4. Love requires a commitment. What do you think our commitment to God involves?