



LESSON #2 THE HEART OF A LEADER

The word “heart” is used commonly in our everyday conversations, especially when it comes to the matter of love. *“I LOVE YOU WITH ALL MY HEART!”* As leaders who love the Lord, the heart is everything—to us and to God. Think of the many worship songs written and sung about the heart. One of my favourite Hillsong worship songs is *“Lord, I Give You My Heart”*, because it expresses so deeply how I feel about my relationship with God. *“This is my desire, to honour You, Lord with all my heart I worship You...”*

Another song of repentance of the heart is *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me”* Many beautiful songs have been written about the heart. Can you think of one or two more that have blessed you over the years in your relationship of love with Christ?

When we sing—*“I love You, Lord, and I lift my voice to worship You, O my soul rejoice, take joy my King, in what You hear, let it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear”* you are aligning your heart with God’s Word in Deuteronomy 6:5,

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength”. That is why we teach sinners to pray *“Lord Jesus, come into my heart”* In other words, take full possession of all that I am!

WHAT EXACTLY DOES THE HEART REPRESENT?

The word *heart* is recorded 884 times in the Bible—it represents the very essence of who you are as a leader in the House of God—your heart defines the very core of your being—it is the nucleus of your personality, nature, make-up, character, temperament, disposition and expression of who God distinctly created you to be.

That is why people say complimentary things about you such as, “*He’s got such a GOOD heart*” or “*She’s has such a SOFT heart*” They’re talking about who you really are underneath the outward exterior. That is why we must be careful as leaders not to wrongly judge others by their appearance because we do not know the spiritual condition of their heart. God warns us in 1 Samuel 16:7,

“The LORD sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart”. That is a powerful truth that we must take heed to, especially as leaders who can so easily appoint the wrong person for the position based upon outward traits. The prophet Samuel was all set to anoint Eliab, Jesse’s first born son to be king of Israel because he fit the bill—Eliab had all the outward features of a leader, and yet God refused him. An example of a misleading feature could be someone’s popularity. What are other typical qualifications we could assume in a potential leader rather than considering the candidate’s inner heart?

If misjudging happened with the prophet Samuel charged with selecting the next king, it can certainly happen with us! We’ll go deeper with this in our next lesson #3, “*The Qualifications of a Leader*”.

LET’S EXAMINE THESE SCRIPTURES ABOUT THE INNER HEART

Jesus stated in Matthew 12:34, “***From out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks***” Our words are the fruit of the condition of our own heart. It takes only minutes in conversation with someone to discern their heart, whether righteous or unrighteous by the content of their speech. Leaders need to speak the truth in love—they need to consider every word by keeping their hearts in tune with God, as David, the man after God’s own heart prayed in Psalm 19:14,

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my Strength, and my Redeemer.”

Another key verse to consider concerning the spiritual state of the heart is Proverbs 23:7 “***As a man thinks in his heart, so is he***” We do not think or believe in our HEAD—we believe in our HEART. It’s not enough just to believe—our minds acknowledge our belief but our hearts seal the deal. In other words,

what you OCCUPY your mind with on a continual basis is who you really are in your heart—many things in society today can easily captivate our minds such as

T.V. with all of its seductive and alluring images, along with a humanistic, secular influence which begins in the mind, enters the heart and proceeds out of the mouth, as the saying goes, “*garbage in, garbage out*”. And so what you DWELL on in your mind is who you become in your heart.

What are some actual areas leader’s must avoid to keep their minds sanctified and free from the philosophy of the world and false teaching of religious deceivers?

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS MEDITATE ON THE WORD

The Bible has much to say about the art of meditation which evolves in the mind, and affects the spirit. What you MEDITATE on in your mind shapes who you become in your heart—when you meditate on the word of Christ, your heart becomes Christ-like. Psalm 1:2-3 describes the Christ-like man or woman—

“His delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law does he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”

All of these precious promises of Psalm 1 do not apply to you if you are not regularly as a leader meditating upon the word of God. Meditation will keep your motives pure and free of selfishness. The #1 issue of the heart is the motive for why you do what you do—what is the real purpose that nobody sees? What is your true intention in desiring leadership? A good question to regularly consider.

A.W. Tozer was a prophetic voice to the Church 60 years ago, and his writings still speak- ***“The true and safe leader is likely to be the one who has no desire to lead but is forced into a position of leadership by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit. The person who is ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader. The true leader will be humble, gentle, self-sacrificing and altogether as ready to follow as to lead”***. Tozer was simply saying that the motive of your heart must reflect humility to be a true leader for God. That’s why Proverbs 4:23 tells us to

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

The New Living Translation expresses it like this-

“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life”.

Guard your heart from what? The devil’s #1 weapon- PRIDE—especially for

Leaders, for that is what the devil is after—our heart! The reality is as a leader in God’s House, you can expect spiritual attacks in an attempt to defeat you, and pride will do that better and quicker than any other weapon the enemy uses. Every attack of PRIDE begins in your mind and it must end in your mind, before PRIDE enters into the heart and begins to take root. At that point, the leader is on dangerous ground because the mind is the gateway into the heart. That is why Paul tells us in Philippians 4:8,

“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.” That is the safeguard to the heart of a leader during constant bombardment from the world, the flesh and the devil. Leaders must seriously consider this strong warning concerning our hearts in Hebrews 3:12,

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

Many great leaders over the centuries who started strong ended up departing from God because they allowed the root of pride to destroy their heart. King Solomon is a sad and sober example of a godly king who began well but ended in disgrace and shame as a result of pride. In 1 Kings 3:3, we read this powerful statement of the young leader’s spiritual heart for God. *“And Solomon loved the Lord”* Fast forward 30 years to 1 Kings 11:1 and we find a lost, defeated, rebellious leader memorialized by this shocking statement – *“Solomon loved many strange women”*

Pride was Solomon’s downfall because he failed to guard his heart to the applause and praise of men for his world-renowned wisdom and mighty accomplishments, which ultimately captivated him through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of his life. In 1 Timothy 3:6, Paul gives a stern warning to church leaders to not install someone into leadership before they’re spiritually ready. Why? Pride. ***“Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”*** A novice Christian is a new or young convert.

Anne Graham Lotz shares this unfortunate story in her book, "The Daniel Prayer" *“Recently, I spoke at a Christian gathering but before I spoke, a young Pastor walked up to the platform to lead in prayer. Then he prayed. With eyes wide open walking back and forth, gesturing to the congregation, he didn't miss a beat as he prayed. He was smooth, dynamic, polished, articulate and...proud? I hesitate to say that because only God could see his heart, but he came across as being almost spiritually arrogant. Haughty. There was no humility in his words, body language,*

or gestures. He seemed to be performing to impress instead of praying. And he certainly didn't lead me into God's presence.”

Identify two main influences that could cause a novice leader to stumble in pride.

GREAT LEADERS PREPARE THEIR HEARTS FOR MINISTRY

Ezra was a great leader at the time that the Jews returned from Persia to Jerusalem to rebuild the house of the Lord. What made him great? Ezra 7:10 “*Ezra prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it*” Notice what it doesn't say.

Ezra prepared his *SERMON*—Ezra prepared his *PRAYER*— Ezra prepared his *BOARD AGENDA*—Ezra prepared his *5 YEAR PLAN*—no, Ezra prepared his *HEART* and that is what made him a strong leader over Israel!

God does not judge a leader by his or her *PERFORMANCE* or *ELOQUENCE* or *WIT* or *CHARISMA* or *ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITIES* or *EDUCATION*—
He judges them by their heart.

In closing this lesson, what are some practical measures for leaders to set in place to guard their hearts from pride? For example, *BECOME A TEAM PLAYER*
