

## Sharing What He Loves

During my first year in high school, Dad used to take me to the coffee shop every morning before school. We'd spend a few groggy-eyed and un-caFFEinated minutes sitting at a table, talking about our upcoming day. We didn't have many routines together back then, but that one seemed to stick. It's funny in hindsight, when we started visiting our newly opened neighborhood Starbucks, Dad was a big coffee lover, but I *hated* it — who knew?! The longer we went, the more I came to love it like he did — not just because of the chocolate, sugar, and foam, but mostly for the excuse it gave us to spend some time together.

As we follow Jesus and seek to grow closer to him, we want to bond with him by sharing what he loves, delighting in his delights (Ps. 1:1-2). If knowing the truth is the first dimension of discipleship (see [last week's article](#)), what comes next in training to be Christ's disciple? We need to let the Lord direct our affections so that what Jesus values shapes our whole inner life.

### What You Need to Know

When the Bible talks about the "*heart*" it refers to the center and source of the whole inner life — our emotions, but also our thoughts and will.

When King David was a young nobody, God sent Samuel to anoint the next king. As each of David's brothers came before Samuel, he thought, "Ah, here's the one! I'm looking at the next king of Israel!" But the Lord said to Samuel, "*Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart*" (1 Sam. 16:7). After doing that song and dance seven times, Samuel asked, "Is this everybody?" And they sent for the youngest, who was out tending the sheep. When David ran up, the Lord said, "*Arise, anoint him, for this is he*" (1 Sam. 16:12). God called David "*a man after my heart, who will do all my will*" (Acts 13:22). Why did God so value a person "*after*" his heart? Why does he ignore what we tend to value and look "*on the heart*" (1 Sam. 16:7)?

Your life flows from your heart. "*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life*" (Prov. 4:23). Like a fountain, your heart bubbles up and spills out into the world (Luke 6:45). It's no wonder God cares about your heart more than all the stuff that occupies most people's time.

### What You Need to Do

Jesus' disciples must pay constant attention to transforming our affections and attitudes to reflect the Lord's character. In John's gospel, the first words of Jesus are "*What are you seeking?*" (John 1:37). Have you ever asked yourself that? The reality is, you'll often get what you're looking for (cf. Matt. 7:8).

At times, we all fight against our desires to choose the *right* thing (Rom. 7:19). But a significant change comes in a Christian's life when what we want changes (cf. Rom. 8:5-7). It's not an automatic switch that "just happens" one day. Keeping our heart with vigilance requires us to recognize what's happening in our hearts (Prov. 4:23) and do the daily work of exposing ourselves to God's transforming power. The Psalms begin with a blessing on those who meditate on God's instruction (Psalm 1), envisioning a tree planted by the water. A drizzle on the surface won't change our hearts. Like a tree whose roots get soaked in a flowing stream, we need to get drenched in God's nourishing word. While Bible study helps us understand the truth, Bible meditation lets it seep into us so that our response begins to change in the moment of action. Take the time to think deeply about it, pray it, and talk about it.

Finally, it's a daily practice — catching ourselves going down the wrong mental pathways and redirecting. Our mindset slowly changes from frustrated to grateful, from bitter to forgiving, from covetous to content, and from irritable to patient. God's word gets etched onto our hearts, and his Spirit brings fruit into our lives (Gal. 5:22-24).

### Through the Week

- **Read** — Luke 2:41-52; Prov. 4:23; Acts 13:22; Matt. 7:7-8; Gal. 5:22-24
- **Reflect** — Ask yourself, "What do I really want? Is that the same thing that God wants?"
- **Request** — Pray, "*Lord, create in me a clean heart. Renew a right spirit within me.*" (Psalm 51:10)
- **Respond** — Write a letter to yourself describing who you want to be.
- **Reach Out** — Ask someone, "How have your aspirations and attitudes changed as you've matured? What future 'heart' changes do you want to make?"