

3rd October 2018

Prayer and Study Group Week Two

Know the Heart and Critical Influences – Lessons 3 and 4.

Jeremiah 17:5-8

Thus says the LORD:

*“Cursed is the man who trusts in man
and makes flesh his strength,^[a]
whose heart turns away from the LORD.*

*⁶ He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good come.
He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.*

*⁷ “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.*

*⁸ He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit.”*

Proverbs 20:5

*The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water,
but a man of understanding will draw it out.*

Matthew 6:19-21

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust^[e] destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Ed Welch:

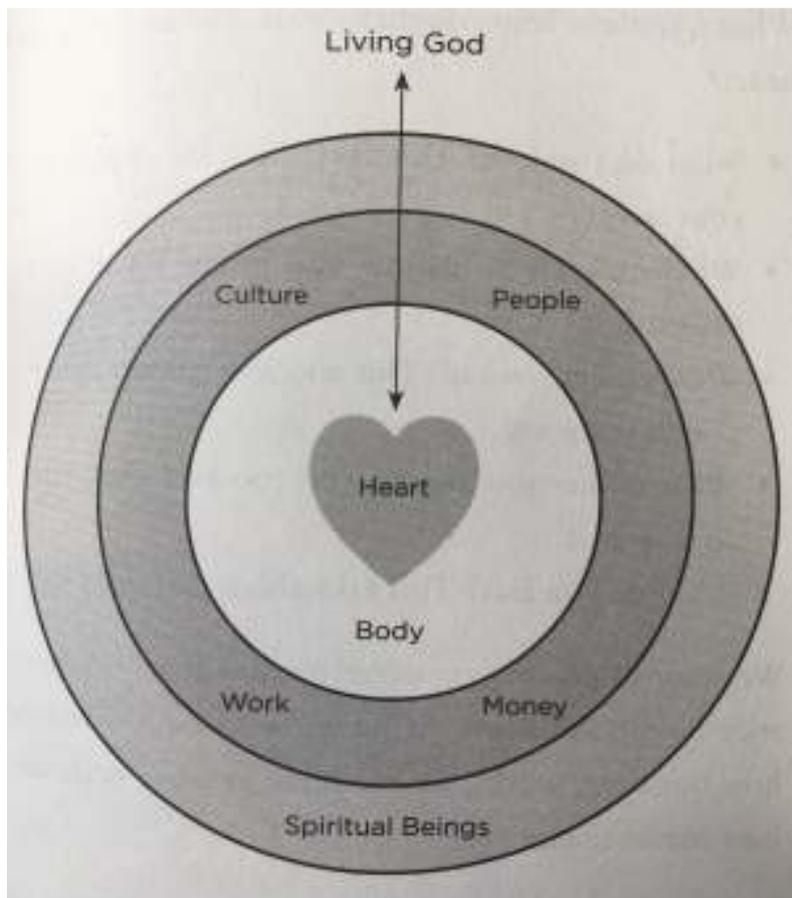
We don't want our conversation to cover only events. We want to know what is important to the other person, and this takes us into what Scripture calls the heart. These conversations are essential if we are to care for, help, and encourage each other.

Moving in the right direction:

"What has been the highlights of your day?"

"What has been especially hard?"

We trust in Jesus or we trust in ourselves and the objects of our affection. In the very depths of our heart it is not so much what we love but who we love.



The diagram shows examples of the shaping influences on our lives. The arrow shows there is constant engagement between our hearts and the living God. The arrow also shows that our hearts are affected by all the circumstances of life.

Questions to help you make your way into your own heart. As we grow in understanding of our own hearts we will learn to help each other better move towards the heart.

What do you love? This asks about the objects of your desire.

What makes you happy? This listens for desires satisfied.

What makes you sad? This asks about desires postponed or denied.

What makes you angry? This too asks about desires denied.

What do you fear? This asks about desires at risk.

Discussion

1. Do you have any questions about the diagram?
2. Can you see good in each other? Enjoy the good in each other. Notice when love, joy, peace, patience (Galatians 5:22-23), forgiveness is displayed and encourage each other with this.
3. What are some of the influences that shape our lives?
4. How has it affected your heart? Can you give an example?
5. Do you find it easy/difficult to move conversation from circumstances to the heart?
6. When you pray, do you move from circumstances to the heart? Read Psalm 130 as an example.
7. Pray together asking for God's help.