

How to Love the Lord Your God with All Your Heart

Good morning! Thanks for joining us this morning in person and online. Turn in your Bible to 1 Samuel 24. If you don't have one... Let's Pray.

One of me and Alli's favorite restaurants to occasionally go to over the years for a nice dinner date is the **Cheesecake Factory**. If you're looking for a restaurant that has a huge menu of over 250 indulgent options, Cheesecake Factory is your place! First comes out the assorted breads with the light fluffed butter... and you start there... say grace, and start committing gluttony.

Then the crisp caesar salad comes out, the appetizers, and by the time your 24oz steak or heavy pasta meal comes out you can hardly breathe! You're sweating, thinking, "man I wish I was at home with my sweatpants on I can't do this!" People are trying to inconspicuously loosen their belts under the table trying to get down the main course.

And when you laugh you can't extend your diaphragm down because of your stomach so you have these little laugh, "HEHE", and then you're feeling sick because the oxygen is rushing to your head, and you're sitting there, feeling so guilty, can hardly move or breathe, **then you realize you made the mistake of sitting within eyeshot of the cheesecake display case with all 35 options... and it catches your eye... and you say to your wife, I'll split one with you...**

And your body is saying "I hate you! There's no room down here. I hope you eat it and split wide open and die!" The fact is that you have no capacity left in your stomach, your intellect should tell you this, but DESIRE wants half a piece of cheesecake when you should've barfed a half hour ago!

This battle between intellect and desire is the same with sex, money, all desires of the flesh. The flesh is never satisfied. It doesn't matter if intellectually, you have a PHD in food science, I understand my stomach is full... no you're sitting like the rest of us, "OOOHH I'll split that with you..."

Realize that often times our desires drive our thoughts and actions. Now thoughts and actions that we deliberately choose to pursue can also keep our desires in check. But where does all of this happen? In our hearts. This morning we are going to talk about our hearts. **The heart in the ancient Greek is the word "kardia" which means "the fountain and seat of all desires". The heart is also the center of all spiritual and physical life. The seat of all passions, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors is found in our hearts.**

So before we even get far into our study of God's Word this morning, consider this question, **What is on your heart?** What are your current desires? What is at the center of your life, physically and spiritually?

If we were to cut open your heart and look inside, would we find only Jesus? Jesus and some desires of the flesh? Let's look at what God says about our hearts and what we should do with them. In Matthew 22:37 Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment in the Law is and Jesus answered: **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."** We are going to focus our attention to the first part of Jesus' statement and determine **How to Love the Lord Your God with All Your Heart.**

And to love God with all your heart means To love God with all of your DESIRE! ALL of it. Desiring only Him above all else and having Jesus take seat at the center of your life! And some may say GOOD LUCK cause that's impossible! Luke 1:37 says that nothing is impossible with God! It is possible to love God with all your heart, and the Bible clearly teaches us how to do so through stories of men and women in this book who loved God with all of their hearts.

The Bible speaks of one man specifically, whom God says in Acts 13:22 is a “man after God’s own heart, who will do all His will.” That man is David. David loved the Lord with ALL of his heart! So we are going to look at a couple familiar stories from his life and draw 3 points on how to love the Lord our God with all of our hearts.

POINT #1: We must have a **PURPOSED HEART**. (BUILDS)

POINT #2: We must have a **PROTECTED HEART**.

POINT #3: We must have a **PLIABLE HEART**.

Let’s begin with point #1: A purposed heart.

If you haven’t already opened your Bible turn to 1 Samuel 24 and we will jump in... Let me give you some context of where we are at in the life of David thus far. David is currently on the run trying to escape the threat of death by the hands of King Saul. David and his 600 men have ended up in a large cave in the wilderness of Ein Gedi, hiding away in the back of the cave in the darkness. Saul and his 3,000 men have been tracking David through the Ein Gedi region, and Saul evidently needed to take a potty break and he went into the same cave as David to go and take care of business.

Let’s pick the story up in verse 3 of chapter 12, **3 So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) 4 Then the men of David said to him, “This is the day of which the Lord said to you, ‘Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.’ ” And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. 5 Now it happened afterward that David’s heart troubled him because he had cut Saul’s robe. 6 And he said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.” 7 So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way.**

8 David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, “My lord the king!” And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. 9 And David said to Saul: “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Indeed David seeks your harm’? 10 Look, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, ‘I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord’s anointed.’ 11 Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. 12 Let the Lord judge between you and me, and let the Lord avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you.

David portrays in this text that He loved the Lord with all heart WHEN David **PURPOSED** in his heart to follow God’s will. **The biblical definition of the word , purposed, is to fix, to determine, to direct towards. IN other words, to purpose IS TO make up your mind about something.** David is presented with a choice. Do I give into the purposes of the flesh and kill Saul, or do I give into the purposes of God and spare the Lord’s anointed?

It would make sense for David to seize this moment and take down Saul! Saul was literally there to kill David! Saul has his tunic hiked up using the restroom, defenseless, it would’ve been easy! David could have even felt justified in taking advantage of this opportunity, Saul was a threat to David. Saul made Davids life miserable! And David has never once stepped out against Saul.

David even knew that he was promised to inherit the kingdom of Israel once Saul was out of the picture. He had a chance here to fast-track the will of God and **FORCE** God’s Will to happen in His life... But David could see past this... He knew it would be disobedient for him to harm Saul. Saul had authority as the anointed king and God would remove him in time, not David.

David's men are excited; their lives as fugitives are about to end. But as David came close to Saul and put forth his sword he didn't bring it crashing down on Saul's neck or thrust it through his back. Instead he secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe, which he felt horrible about doing... This made no sense to David's soldiers!

And honestly it's hard to wrap our minds around HOW David could be obedient to God in the midst of this test on his heart. He was able to do not give into the flesh because David had already PURPOSED in his heart to uphold God's Will and God's purposes. Nothing was going to get in his way! His mind was made up!

Just like the heart wrenching story of Derek Redmond in the 1992 Summer Olympics. On the 400m semifinal Derek's hamstring tore in half and he fell to the track. He struggled to his feet and began to hobble, determined to complete the race. **His father ran from the stands to help him off the track, but the athlete refused to quit. He leaned in on his father, and the two limped to the finish line together,**

THAT is a purposed heart! Derek's heart was fixed on crossing that finish line, no matter what...

What is going to happen when your heart is put to the test? Maybe there's an opportunity for you to take advantage someone else whom you feel justified in taking advantage of, because they hurt you or because they deserve it... Maybe you see a chance to fast-track God's plans for your own life! He's promised you something and you see an opportunity to take God's Will into your own hands and make it happen on your timing... Will you?

Will you follow the desire of God or the desire of the flesh?

Remember the power of desire is real! Intellect won't save you! Here's an important point to remember: **We need to purpose our hearts towards God BEFORE the moment of testing and decision comes!** It is going to be much harder to choose God's Will versus the flesh if you haven't already determined and fixed your heart on obeying God. David determined to love and honor God supremely above all else BEFORE he even was in the cave.

Have you purposed in your heart to love God with all your heart? Establish God at the center of your life, physical and spiritually in your heart. Set ALL of your desire on Jesus! To have this kind of love for God requires devotion. SO that when you are put to the test, your heart will prove to be determined on loving and honoring God supremely. POINT #1 is purposing our heart towards the heart of God in order to love God with ALL your heart.

But realize, After that decision is made, don't pack up and leave the game to sit on the sidelines. There is still time left on the clock! Remember the Christian life is not a side line life, it is a battle, a war waging out on the field, which leads us to our second point...

POINT #2: to love God with all your heart, you must have a protected heart...

We can learn the importance of a protected heart from the time where David let his guard down and his heart was infiltrated by corruption in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. We won't read the entirety of it, as it is 52 verses long, but let me summarize this familiar story.

Here in 2 Samuel 11 we find King David of Israel sending his armies out to battle. Instead of going with the army to battle as most kings normally did, this time David stayed home alone at his palace in Jerusalem. And in his idle time, David walked out one evening to his rooftop patio overlooking the city, and on a rooftop below his, David saw a naked woman bathing, whose name was Bathsheba. Now instead of averting and bouncing his eyes away from this sensual image, David lingered and inquired more about the woman. Eventually she ends up in the bed of the King in an adulterous affair.

News comes later that Bathsheba is pregnant! He should have used this as a prompting to repent. Instead, David did what most unrepentant sinners do: he tried to hide his sin. Bathsheba was married to Uriah, one of Davids best soldiers who was out at battle. David concocted a plan to try and cover up the pregnancy but it ultimately failed and led David arrange the death of Bathsheba's husband.

Covering sin with more sin never works. Read with me in verse 26, the dust settles, [When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. 27 And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.](#)

HERE is the problem: David did not protect his heart from these enticing desires... [James 1:14-15 says, 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.](#)

David's unrestrained desire literally resulted in the death of Uriah, someone David would've called friend. DEAD. To love God with ALL your heart, we need protect our hearts from these enticing desires that want to steal parts of your heart away from God and unto death.

And the first line of Defense for our hearts, as seen in Davids life here, happens at our eyes...

Pastor Chuck Smith once said, ["The eyes and the ears are the gates that feed into my mind AND my mind is the filter into my heart."](#) Here's what happens, that sensual image comes into the eyes, and if there is no line of defense, no bouncing your eyes away and running the other direction, then that image feeds directly into your mind. If your mind has no defense either, then that image gets into the heart.

Are we putting up protection in the surround gates and courtyards that lead to our hearts? Are we bouncing our eyes away from temptation? Are we running away as fast we can from it like like Joseph did with Potiphars wife! We need to take an assessment of what we are allowing into our eyes, our mind, and eventually our hearts!

Proverbs 4:23 says , [Keep \(guard\) your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.](#) Solomon is referring to the principle reaping what you sow. If you are constantly being filled with corruption, corruption will flow out! If you are constantly being filled with the negative "all hope is lost" rhetoric of social media and news, chances are you're going to become a pretty negative person!

If you are intaking sensual imagery, watching videos that are laced with porn and profanity, unchecked those things will eventually flow out of your heart as you ACT upon those desires. If you are hanging out with people that usually draw you back into bad habits, you're probably going to end up slipping into the sinful habit again!

And here's my most famous excuse and I would always make when it comes to this idea... "Don't worry, I can handle it! I won't go that far!" Can you relate? How many times have we said- I can handle that r-rated sexual scene in a movie! I can handle being on the internet at night! I can handle being around this crowd. I can handle being at a bar. I can handle being alone with that flirty co-worker.

We are too quick to forget [the power of desire! If you put your face up to the glass of the cheesecake display case and start drooling uncontrollably and never leave, chances are you're eventually going to buy you a slice and go to town! Intellect won't save you from desire.](#)

So instead of sowing corruption and reaping corruption, we should sow to the Spirit of God! Read the Word, Hear the Word. Sow godly relationships! Those things will be our line of defense in protecting our hearts!

Isn't it true that we protect the things we value. We protect our family, our money, our reputation, our home... I take my garbage to the street every Sunday afternoon. It is picked up on Monday morning. It sits on the sidewalk all night, completely unguarded. Why? Because it is worthless. Not so with your heart.

Would you leave your heart out on the corner of your driveway unguarded? Vulnerable to the elements, to bypassers, to hungry critters who want to take a bite out of your heart. NO! We wouldn't ever admit to that, but that is what we are doing when we don't protect our hearts just like David didn't protect his from temptation.

Realize your heart is worth protecting in the eyes of God! He paid a hefty price to give you that new heart! **Ezekiel 36:26 says I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** When you accept Jesus as Your savior, he does open heart surgery on you and takes out the old stone heart, and gives you a heart of flesh! You are born again a new creation in Jesus Christ! HE paid for that new heart of yours on the cross! It was free to you, costed you nothing, but it costed Him a lot!

Did you know the typical cost for a heart transplant today is \$1.4 million dollars... Christian, it costed Jesus even more than that to give you your new heart, is it not worth protecting?

Are there things/people you know you need to protect your heart from? Guys lets face it there is corruption and enticing desires around every corner...

Now is it our fault there was a provocative image in his line of vision? NO. The problem more and more every day in our culture is that everything we see around us is becoming more enticing and sinful, and the line where things are accepted as normal is being pushed further into wickedness. You can't help that you're going to see these things in the world.

WALK: I am not telling you to walk the streets with your hands over your eyes... Protecting this new heart of flesh as a born-again believer is crucial if we're going to give all our heart to God in love, not just parts of it, not just the leftovers... ALL of your heart is deserved by God. Leads us to our 3rd and final point on loving God with all our heart.

POINT #3: to love God with all your heart, you must have a pliable heart.

The word pliable means easily flexible, moldable, adaptable. And though David did not protect his heart from fleshly desires, we do find in 2 SAMUEL 12 that David had a heart that was pliable and softened by the conviction of God's Word. At the opening of 2 Samuel 12, God prepares Nathan to go and speak to David about his sin.

Nathan tells the story of a rich man who had great possessions. This rich man stole the one prized lamb from the poor man to sell away to a traveler... Nathan is clearly speaking about the situation with David and Bathsheba in parable. David is the rich man who stole Bathsheba, the one prized lamb, from the poor man, Uriah the Hittite.

Read with me in verse 5 David's response, verse 5, So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this [g]shall surely die! 6 And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

David just assumes this is a true story and condemns the rich man to death for his actions, not realizing that the rich man is actually him... until Nathan drops the mic on David in verse 7 when he looks David square in the eyes and says, YOU ARE THE MAN! This wasn't today's atto-boy verbage of "aw thanks bro you're the man"

David heard those 4 words and knew exactly what Nathan was calling him, the rich man! Nathan dropped a bomb that shell-shocked David into seeing his sin for what it was. [Read with me the rest of what God says to David... verse 7](#) ,, Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! 9 Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.

Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' 11 Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.' "

Here is the crucial moment to find out whether or not David's heart is pliable towards God, he must choose how to respond to the conviction of his sin...

IN verse 13 David said to Nathan, **"I have sinned against the Lord."** FINALLY we breath a sigh of relief! David's heart bent back to the Lord as he confessed his sin and repented. The heart of David that was hardened against the truth of God, has now become pliable as the convicting words of the Lord cut deep into his heart.

Here's the glorious thing too! Read the end of verse 13, And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. God's forgiveness was immediate! There wasn't a probation time, it was instant!

His heart was softened, but now it needed to be molded into the image of God. And the way God molds our hearts after we confess and repent, is often through consequences of sin. Verse 14 reads, However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die."

These consequences including the child of David and Bathsheba dying, did occur. Why do we have to be molded in this way God... Why does God have to chasten us and face some painful consequences like this? It is to rid the sin out of our lives. To sanctify us. God's chastening hand is like a knife that is cutting out the sin in your life. Sometimes it hurts when the knife cuts through, and consequences of sin are there, but He is doing this so the disease of sin doesn't spread in your body and is killed off fo good one day... His chastening of your pliable heart, is an expression of His love toward you.

He wants you and I to love Him with all of our hearts, and to do that our hearts must be pliable. Is your heart pliable with God? Soft, repentant. Moldable. Do you flex your heart back to the Lord after you've fallen in sin again? Or do you harden your heart, against Him? Because you're guilt and shame is just too much to bear, so it's easier to put up a brick wall around your heart, and you become rigid...

Our final point on loving God with all your heart is you must have a pliable heart.

As we close here, I want to challenge you with a question I've intentionally saved for this moment. We've been talking this whole time on HOW to love God with all our hearts. We've worked through understanding what it means to have a purposed heart, a protected heart, and a pliable heart...

But the question we have yet to ask is WHY? **Why do we love the Lord with all our heart?** Why do you love God? 1 John 4:19 tells us our reason: **We love Him because He first loved us.** This is critical to understand and live out! Listen, we do NOT love God to determine our standing with God. NOT AT ALL! Your actions do not determine your standing with God.

Your decision to accept or reject the love of Christ is what determines your standing with God. Loving God with all your heart is the appropriate response to the great love of Jesus poured out on the cross. If your motive for loving God is to gain a better standing with Him, you've got it all wrong.

One person struggling with this concept was the **Tin Man from the 1939 classic film, The Wizard of Oz.** The tin man wanted to be like all of his friends, who had hearts. The tin man was hollowed out inside, his maker forgot to give him a heart. Once they finally made it to the Wizard at the end of their journey, the tin man pleaded that he still wanted a heart and the wizard of oz said to him, **"...back where I come from there are men who do nothing all day but good deeds. They are called, yes...good-deed-doers. And their hearts are no bigger than yours. But! They have one thing you haven't got! A testimony!"**

The Tin Man waits as the Wizard bends down and gets a heart-shaped watch from his bag. He gave him a testimony. A heart shaped testimony at that! The Tin man needed to learn that the goal was not to be a good-deed-doer but to have a testimony.

And every man and woman who has accepted Jesus into their hearts has been given a testimony in, a standing before God above. Though our stories may differ and our life experiences are distinct, we share a common standing and testimony.

I want you to remember this standing you have in Christ Jesus, if you've accepted into your heart... so lets do this, lets all stand and read aloud a verse that describes our testimony and standing before God. You ready?

2 Corinthians 5:21, read it with me, For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

THIS is why you should love the Lord our God with ALL of your desire, ALL of your passion, devotion, with ALL of your heart...

How can we not respond to such a great love as this? He became sin so that you can become the righteousness of God in Jesus. I pray that the truth of this standing you have as a believer in Jesus will drive you to purpose your heart towards God's heart, protect your heart from sin, and make your heart pliable and soft towards Him.

And if there is anyone here who has not accepted the love of Jesus on their behalf displayed on the cross, I urge you friend, to choose accept what He has done to save you today, and then begin loving the Lord with all of your heart too.

Let's pray...

If you need special prayer this morning, we would love to pray with you this morning, as we have some of our prayer counselors ready to pray over here. For those of you watching online you can text us at 678-960-9321 with any prayer requests, questions, comments, and concerns.

God bless you guys and have a wonderful Sunday.