

Katy Bible Church

16 August 2009

Katy Bible Church is committed to the ministry of the Word of God through authentic relationships, so all would mature in Jesus Christ for the glory of God.

We are giving the month of August ...

to communicate our ministry strategy of Gospel-saturated, heart-level relationships in the church and in the home.

Last week we considered what the Great Commission means for us.

We disciple others by our example.

We disciple others by our Scriptural instruction.

Discipleship is a process, not an event.

A few CDs are available on the front table.

Also streaming audio and notes are available on the website.

Today we want to consider heart-level communication.

Heart level communication "is the careful ministry of Christ and his Word to the struggles of heart that have been uncovered by good questions from a committed friend. This means that effective, God-honoring, heart-changing personal ministry is dependent upon a rich base of personal information. You cannot minister well to someone you do not know" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 165).

"We are too easily lulled into concluding that people who smile back as they are running into church are really okay, when this is often not the case. The same guy sitting next to you Sunday morning that smiles and says everything is fine may also be having an affair with his secretary at work. The lady we look at and think has no problems at all may actually hate her husband and may be considering a divorce. The 16-year old who dresses modestly at church may flirt with the boys and even cross sexual lines with her friends at school" (Wallace, *Implementation Guide*, 21).

"Most of the conversations you had today were mundane and rather self-protective. We spend most of our time talking about things that are of little personal consequence—the weather, politics, sports, and entertainment. There is nothing wrong with this except that it allows us to hide who we really are. A person may be terribly distraught about her marriage, yet when people ask how she is, she will quickly answer, 'Fine, how are you?' The person asking doesn't really want to know and the person answering doesn't really want to tell. They are co-

conspirators in a casual relationship. Whether it's over the back of a pew, in passing at a school function, or over the phone, we are all skilled at newsy but personally protective conversations" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 163–164).

Our relationships must focus on reaching the heart.

"We are all in danger when the heart is not the focus" (Wallace, *Implementation Guide*, 44).

What is the heart of man?

Biblical words describing man

English	Hebrew	Greek
soul, life	<i>nephesh</i>	<i>psyche</i>
heart	<i>lev</i>	<i>kardia</i>
mind	<i>lev</i>	<i>nous</i>
spirit	<i>ruach</i>	<i>pneuma</i>
body, flesh	<i>basar</i>	<i>sarx, soma</i>

Heart is not to be differentiated from other perspectives on manhood, such as mind, soul, spirit, body. As G. E. Ladd states, "such terms as body, soul, and spirit are not different separable faculties of man but different ways of viewing the whole man" (Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 457).

The term 'heart' "encompasses all the other terms and functions used to describe the inner person (spirit, soul, mind, emotions, will, etc.). These other terms do not describe something different from the heart. Rather, they are aspects of it, parts or functions of the inner person" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 59).

The heart of the matter.

"More than any other Old Testament term, the word *heart* stands for man at the deepest center of his existence, and as he is in the depths of his being" (Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 211).

"The heart is the real 'you' and is behind everything we think, everything we say, and everything we do. Our lives spring from the heart which is full of sin, desperately wicked, and in need of redemption" (Wallace, *Implementation Guide*, 40).

The heart is the seat of

reason, thinking, cognition

"But Jesus, knowing what they were **thinking in their heart**, took a child and stood him by His side" (Luke 9:47).

"[I pray that] **the eyes of your heart may be enlightened**, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:18).

"For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but **they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened**" (Romans 1:21).

"If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but **deceives his own heart**, this man's religion is worthless" (James 1:26).

affection, feeling, desire, emotion

"But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while--in person, not in spirit [heart]--were all the more eager with great desire to see your face" (1 Thessalonians 2:17).

"Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them" (Romans 1:24).

"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for [their] salvation (Romans 10:1; cf. 2 Corinthians 7:3).

because of evil (Romans 9:2; 2 Corinthians 2:4)

idolatry, covetousness, greed, desires

"As John Calvin said, our hearts are 'idol factories,' and our words and actions are shaped by our pursuit of the things our hearts crave" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 67).

"An idol of the heart is *anything that rules me other than God*. As worshiping beings, human beings always worship someone or something. This is not a situation where some people worship and some don't. If God isn't ruling my heart, someone or something else will. It is the way we were made" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 66; cf. Romans 1:21–25).

"A lie is powerful not because it is deceptive but because it is delicious" (Dr. Douglas Bookman, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, 58).

Ezekiel 14:4

Colossians 3:5

Romans 1:21–25

Ephesians 5:3–5

James 4

volition, willing

"Each one [must do] just as he has **purposed in his heart**, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

"Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, [but wait] until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose **the motives of [men's] hearts**; and then each man's praise will come to him from God" (1 Corinthians 4:5).

"But because of **your stubbornness and unrepentant heart** you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5).

"But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, **you became obedient from the heart** to that form of teaching to which you were committed" (Romans 6:17).

Why, then, do we focus on the heart? Principles of heart-level relationships

"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it [flow] the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

It is from our hearts that we speak and do (Proverbs 4:23).

"There is an undeniable root and fruit connection between our heart and our behavior. People and situations do not determine our behavior; they provide the occasion where our behavior reveals our hearts" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 64).

"teaching them to observe" (Matthew 28:19)

Acting out of a heart of love for God.

"their hearts are far from Me" (Isaiah 29:13)

"A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

"Too often, we settle for outward conformity rather than inward transformation. We set up rules about how we should live at home and at church. We follow those rules because many times they do have some biblical justification. The problem is, people can say and do the right thing, following the rules, but with the wrong heart. It is not enough to do the right thing. We must do the right things with the right heart. Better said, God wants us to have a right heart so that we will do the right things, rightly" (Wallace, *Implementation Guide*, 41, italics in original).

"You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart" (Matthew 12:34; cf. 15:19).

"Change that ignores the heart will seldom transform the life. For a while, it may seem like the real thing, but it will prove temporary and cosmetic" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 63).

"What one is determines what one does—a theory opposed not only to Pharisaism but also to classical Greek ethics, especially those of Aristotle. According to Aristotle, habit is the product of constantly doing the right thing; if one does it long enough, it becomes habitual, and one ends up being good. Aristotle and the Pharisees could agree that goodness is achieved by doing right until it becomes a habit. Jesus declares this to be impossible; only a good tree can produce good fruit (a point to be elaborated later by Paul in Rom 7:4–6 and Gal 5:22–23)" (Hurst, "Ethics of Jesus," 215).

"Since the heart is regarded as the center or focus of man's personal life, the spring of all his desires, motives, and moral choices—indeed, of all his behavioral trends—it is not surprising to note that in both Testaments the divine appeal is addressed to the 'heart' of man" (Brandon, "Heart," 499).

"Lasting change always takes place through the pathway of the heart. Fruit change is the result of root change. Similarly, in Matthew 23, Christ says, 'Clean the inside of the cup and dish and the outside will become clean.' Any agenda for change must focus on the thoughts and desires of the heart" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 64–65).

"Therefore, the heart is our target in personal growth and ministry. Our prayer is that God will work heart change in us and use us to produce heart change in others that results in new words, choices, and actions" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 65).

"The deepest issues of the human struggle are not issues of pain and suffering, but the issue of worship, because what rules our hearts will control the way we respond to both suffering and blessing" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 71).

How do we reach the heart?

Be together in various situations.

Jesus was "with" His disciples in all kinds of situations: private and public, in peace and crisis, at meals, with friends and with enemies, morning and evening, etc.

Quality time vs. Quantity time

Our relationships may not be limited to Sunday morning only. This would only give us one perspective on one another's lives (e.g. seeing a librarian outside of the library).

We may have to change our daily and weekly schedules to allow us to relate at this level. We must be willing to sacrifice.

What could this look like?

- Participating in a small group meeting.
- Sharing a meal.
- Attending weddings, open houses, parties.
- Giving comfort at funerals.
- Playing games with one another.
- Vacationing with one another.

But it's not simply being together.

We shouldn't assume that everything is fine just because people come to all the meetings.

Read about Betty and Brad (Tripp, *Instruments*, 161–162).

Ask questions.

"The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge" (Proverbs 18:15).

To communicate is "to transmit information, thought, or feeling so that it is satisfactorily received or understood" (Merriam-Webster dictionary).

"When a person shares a concern or problem with us or when we simply ask questions in effort to get to know them more deeply, our tendency can be to quickly conclude that we understand. We make the mistake of listening so we can answer instead of listening so that we can *understand*. Whether someone is asking us for help with a problem or whether we are simply just getting to know them, questions are elemental to success" (Wallace, *Implementation Guide*, 48).

For example, in "The Fiddler on the Roof," when Tevye goes to Lazar Wolf assuming Lazar wants to buy his milk cow, while in fact Lazar wants to marry his daughter Tzeitel.

For example, today, August 16, is memorable day to my family. You could assume this is so because you know it's the birthday of T. E. Lawrence in 1888 ("What an amazing man!"), the date of Elvis Presley's death in 1977 ("What a sad death!"), or the occasion of the American surrender of Fort Detroit to the British Army during the War of 1812 ("I'm sorry for your loss."). Instead, this is the day five years ago that our family departed the States for a ten-month stay in Israel.

"[P]eople were made by God to be interpreters, and the questions we ask ourselves (sometimes almost unconsciously) are what we use to try and make sense out of life. The answers we give will profoundly affect the direction of our lives. So it is important to understand that when you bring well-constructed, creative, biblically-shaped questions [biblical lenses] to a person's life, you are doing more than getting to know them and uncovering where change is needed. You are, in fact, ministering to that person" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 172–173).

Questions can:

- teach, frame our perspectives
- convict, opening blind eyes and enlightening the heart
- stir up a hunger for truth
- encourage the wayward

Note how Jesus used questions (e.g. Matthew 9:4, 13:15; 15:8; 19:16–22; 22:41–45; Luke 10:40–42).

"A plan [counsel, advice, thoughts] in the heart of a man is like deep water, But a man of understanding draws it out" (Proverbs 20:5).

Don't be satisfied with simple answers: "How are you?" "I'm fine."

Tips for good questions

(Adapted from Tripp, *Instruments*, 175–180.)

Ask open-ended questions that don't have a "yes" or "no" answer. These survey questions help to uncover themes and patterns.

Who are some of the key people that have shaped your life?

What are some key events that have shaped your life?

What things in your life make you sad? happy? angry? Why?

In what ways do you think God is honored by your marriage?

What do you do on the weekends?

What things did you see in this person that made you want to marry him?

If you could change one thing in your life, what would that be? Why?

What do you think God is doing in your marriage right now?

What is important to you? Why?

What do you fear? Why?

Ask focused questions about events to discover roots and causes.

What happened?

How did you respond?

What did you want?

How do you view what happened?

How could you have responded differently?

What will you do next time?

Certain kinds of questions reveal certain kinds of information.

Type	Information	Question	Answer
What	General information	What did you do?	I talked to my wife.
How	The way something was done	How did you talk to her?	I yelled at her for fifteen minutes.
Why	Uncover purposes, desires, goals, motivations	Why did you yell so long?	I wanted her to know how angry I was at what she had done.
How often Where	Reveal themes and patterns	Where did this happen?	At the supper table. Suppers are hard. We are both tired. We have young children. Meals are not relaxing at all! The evening meal always seems to be tense for us.
When	Uncover the order of events	When exactly did you begin to yell during supper?	In the middle of the chaos my wife said, "How was <i>your</i> day?" She was obviously annoyed because I hadn't asked her about hers. I said, "Do you really care or are you just being nasty?" She said, "Well, you're the only one here with an interesting and important life, right?" At that point I blew up.

Ask a progressive line of questions, in which each question is based on information uncovered in the previous questions.

Let questions grow out of facts received.

Ask yourself, "What do I not know about what I have just heard?"

Listen.

Focus.

Avoid distractions.

Be willing to relocate to quieter area, or to postpone the conversation.

Don't just talk. "A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind" (Proverbs 18:2).

No longer live for yourself, focusing on yourself (2 Corinthians 5:15). This means that you must listen to others as you would have them listen to you. Consider their interests as more important than your own.

Don't assume.

Don't assume we know what they mean. Ask clarifying questions.

"Why don't we ask better questions and take the time to really listen? Why don't we ask people more often what they meant by what they said, or why they did what they did? Why don't we ask people to define their terms or explain their logic? Why don't we ask people more about what they are thinking and feeling? Why don't we get them to talk more about the purposes and desires that shaped their decisions? There are many answers to these questions, but one in particular seems to get in the way of our call to function as the Lord's ambassadors. It is the problem of assumptions.

"When you assume, you do not ask. If you do not ask, you open yourself up to a world of invalid conclusions and misunderstandings. You may try to be God's instrument but miss the mark because you are putting two and two together and getting five—and you don't even know it. Thanks to your assumptions, the person you *think* you are helping may exist only in your mind" (Tripp, *Instruments*, 168).

We extrapolate from the generic human situation.

The Bible teaches extensively about the human experience.

We do know a lot about humanity, which helps. But we must know about this particular human.

We extrapolate from our own situation.

e.g. family background, values, experiences

Ask them to define their terms.

"What exactly do you mean when you say you had a big fight with your husband?"

Ask them to explain their reasons, values, purposes and desires behind their behavior or thinking.

What to listen for

Repeated phrases

Thoughts and desires ... abundance of the heart ("I felt like")

Manner, tone of voice (halo data)

Blame-shifting ("He, she, they")

"can't (means "I won't, don't want to"), unable, too much, more than I can handle, I can't handle it any more (1 Corinthians 10:13)"

Consciousness of God

Calling sin "sickness"

Excuses ("If only")

Speak Scripture.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

"seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (2 Peter 1:3).

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:12–13).

"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms [and] hymns [and] spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Colossians 3:16).

Speak.

This is an imperative. This is not an extraordinary display of maturity: it is our duty.

You must speak: others cannot read our minds (1 Corinthians 2:11).

Speak even when you don't feel like it.

Speak truth.

Honesty is more than simply not lying: it is telling the truth.

"As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all [aspects] into Him who is the head, [even] Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:14–16).

"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one [of you] with his neighbor, for we are members of one another" (Ephesians 4:25).

"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

God is the source for man's reality, ethics and truth.

contra humanistic, man-centered teaching

"Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. 9 Then his wife said to him, 'Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!' 10 But he said to her, 'You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?' In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (Job 2:7–10).

Speak truth lovingly.

"Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; [each one] looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).

Speak in a way that will be easily received (as far as it depends upon you).

"The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly" (Proverbs 15:2).

"Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances" (Proverbs 25:11).

Conclusion

We can be God's instruments of change for one another, but we cannot change one another.

Discipleship is the life-long transformation of our entire being unto Christ-likeness, beginning with our hearts and extending to our values and behavior, by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God typically through personal relationships.

Discipleship is a process, not an event.

Our success is obedience, not results. Do your part and leave the results to God.

Effective relationships are messy.

real

transparent

We sin and are sinned against.

We have a constant need for repentance, confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

"I'm a mess. You're a mess. Messes are OK, as long as you bring them to the cross of Christ."

Remember to saturate your conversations with the Gospel.

Our only hope is the cross of Christ.

Our ultimate purpose is Christ.

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