

The Heart of Discipleship

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The Lord Jesus Christ, his spiritual presence, is the lifeblood of the Christian life, and if Jesus is the blood of discipleship, prayer and reading, knowing, and understanding God's Word is the heart which pumps more and more of our life's blood throughout every area of our lives, over and over again continually.

I say continually and not continuously, sadly, because unlike our physical heart which pumps our blood continuously throughout our bodies, the heart of discipleship is not automatic, and we sometimes shut it off or don't remember to attend to it and merely cause it to beat the life-giving Spirit throughout our being. We can dissect this further:

Word and Prayer = Heart and Soul of Discipleship (Word=heart/prayer=soul)

Hearing and understanding God's Word is the heart of Christian discipleship and prayer and communion with the God of the Word is its soul, its life force. This is because the Word pumps Jesus throughout every area of our lives, and this refers to Jesus in the tangible sense, the life he lived, the words he truly spoke from his historic human lips, the examples he established for all of us, the death that he died for us, his resurrection, ascension, and glorification as our Great God and Lord manifested in true humanity.

What prayer does is it actually radiates, shoots, and guides the spiritual presence of the living Jesus himself to various areas of our selves and our lives as we have need, and, ideally, his Spirit permeates every area of us and our lives in this sense as well. But the tragedy is that we determine when and where we allow Jesus to abide in us. Because we are autonomous beings, God never overpowers our wills in a forceful or manipulative way. What he does is he works to influence our wills for the good and the better, working both to draw us to him and to enable us to draw near to him, as well. He only directly affects, changes, and repairs the parts of our lives that we invite him to take control of and influence, and his influence is only effective when we faithfully, truly, completely, and unwaveringly open up those areas of ourselves to him and him alone.

Ideally, Christian disciples open every area of ourselves to him in this way. He can only change our hearts when we are opened to the idea of our hearts being changed by him and we open our hearts fully to the reality of being changed by his life-giving presence and power. This same concept—the concept of surrender to God—also applies to our minds, our wills, our desires, our necessities, our actions, and every aspect of what we are and what we do. For Paul writes in Colossians 3:16-17:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.