

The Heart of God

by K.P. Yohannan

To truly serve God and experience lasting fruit, we must understand and align our hearts with His heart, as revealed in His Word.

Scripture: Revelation 2:4

Topics: "God's Heart", "True Motivation in Service"

Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the importance of aligning our thoughts and motivations with God's heart, particularly in the context of forgiveness and salvation. He highlights the example of the church in Ephesus, which, despite its initial fervor and dedication, lost its first love and became focused on duty rather than love. Yohannan warns that God values the motives behind our actions more than the actions themselves, urging believers to seek a genuine relationship with Him. He calls for repentance and a return to the foundational love that should drive our service to God. Ultimately, understanding God's heart through His Word is essential for true transformation and fruitful living.

Transcript

Once I watched a program on which a reporter interviewed passersby on a busy city street, asking each one the same question: "How can someone get forgiveness of sin and receive salvation?" You wouldn't believe the answers people gave just off the cuff. Most of them spoke totally out of their vivid imaginations.

The Bible has very definite and unchanging answers to these crucial issues. However, it seems people either don't know the Word of God or they just prefer their own opinions on the subject.

Unfortunately, this attitude is not just confined to those who don't know the Lord! Multitudes of believers cling to their own ideas when it comes to serving the Lord and exercising faith.

But this is of huge consequence. God cannot bless us, change our circumstances, heal our bodies, fulfill His promises or put His stamp of approval on our service to Him until we align our thinking with His thinking.

We can mark it down--God will wait and work with us until we change and come to a place where we abandon our own ways of thinking and accept His. However, we can only accept His ways if we know what they are. It takes us deliberately seeking to understand God's heart through the passages we read in His Word.

Let's look, for example, at the church of Ephesus in the book of Revelation.

On his second missionary journey, the Apostle Paul preached the Gospel in this city. Incredible miracles happened, and many who received Christ publicly confessed their sins and burned a mountain of costly witchcraft books. The believers born out of this mighty move of God suffered severe persecution and became known for their great love for Jesus, their perseverance and their hard work.

By all New Testament standards, they were far ahead of most of us, especially in the areas of love, dedication and spiritual discernment.

But as time went by, they became cold in their hearts toward the Lord. And we read in Revelation 2:4-5 these frightening words of warning from the lips of Jesus, the Head of the Church: "I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent."

If we are honest, it looks rather unfair to us that Jesus threatens to put the light out in this exemplary church. Why would He want to burn the whole barn down for one small rat? After all, this church in Ephesus had 99 things right and only one thing wrong.

What, then, is God's real reason behind pronouncing such a severe judgment? God's heart concerning work, sacrifice and service sharply differs from ours.

To God, everything we live, say or do as believers is valued by the underlying motive found in our hearts. When He looked upon the situation in Ephesus, He saw that the reason for their faithful service had changed. Their true motivation was no longer love, but duty. For them, the visible service had become most important, but for God, it was the internal condition that counted.

God saw an empty shell void of the wonderful life the church of Ephesus once had, and He was going to remove their lampstand. Yet in His mercy, He revealed to them His thoughts and showed them the way to recover their loss: Repent and do the first works.

Outwardly they didn't have to change anything, for they had always practiced the first works. But inwardly they needed to give up their own ideas about what successful ministry was all about. They had to realize that it was not work and more work, but loving the Lord--and then serving Him motivated by this overflowing love in their hearts.

The Lord knows that we so easily impress ourselves by the outward appearance of our accomplishments for Him: the hours we spend in prayer, the knowledge we acquire about spiritual things, the money we give for Christian causes, the position we hold at church or in a ministry and the number of people we teach or to whom we witness.

I believe the Lord wants us to examine closely the reason why we do all these wonderful things. After all, like the Ephesians, we also could end up building a structure made of wood, hay and stubble (see 1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

What, then, is the only safe measuring scale for our work for the Lord? It is finding God's heart about our service for Him--as revealed in His Word. His thoughts should permeate every aspect of our lives. God does not want us just to change our behaviors, but our very being. As we change our heart to His, He will change our attitudes, our actions and our very lives. Our life will then bring forth lasting fruit.

Today, seek to know your Lord's heart.

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