

D1: The Discipline of Shepherding My Heart

I. Shepherding my heart when my Bible is open.

An example of how the BUILD disciplines might shape your prayerful approach to God through His word:

Heavenly Father,

I intend this time in Your Word to be an expression of worship of You, desire for You, love for You, need of You, dependence on You. Any of this and all of this is only possible through Your Son Jesus Christ, who is my Savior. I approach You through Him, my Substitute and High Priest - the One whom I love but have not yet seen.

I have Your Word open before me because You have revealed Yourself there more clearly than any other place and I long to know You better. I desire to see You in all Your glory in the pages before me. I simply and humbly draw near to You to study You. Nearness to You through these pages of Scripture is my good.

I also have Your Word open before me because I need to learn more of the nature of my sin and fallenness before You, so that I might better understand what danger I truly was in and what dangers still lurk within me. I need to see both the sin that provoked Your righteous wrath toward Your Son and Your grace that moved You to act as Savior toward me in Jesus. If I do not fight to have Scripture's view of my sin today, I will easily be duped by sin's deception and become unaware of sin's nearness to me. I then will be vulnerable to sin's entanglements. Sin at that point can then become familiar to me - even tolerable to me. Finally, sin can then become a delight to me. Before I know it I will be in a position of weakness with sin. I will be in the fight of my life to be free from its entanglements. If I do nothing today concerning my view of sin, my view of sin will only grow cloudy.

Your Word is open before me so that I might undergird my life again today with Your saving heart and motive in the gospel of Your Son, who overcame the penalty of my sin and the power of my sin to enslave me. I need the foundation of Your gospel under me clearly so that I can see just how You have equipped me through it to fight against my sin and to fight for obedience to You through Jesus Christ. I am here to rehearse Your bedrock promises in the gospel to my soul. There are treasures in the gospel of Jesus that I have yet to discover in my own life and I long to find them. If I stagger today under the weight of my sin, the gospel will buoy me and provide me the gospel rest I need. And if I'm in a moment of gospel growth and success, rehearsing the gospel will lead me to humbly acknowledge that all the credit goes to You.

I have Your Word open before me to also study what righteousness and holiness of life looks like for one who has been made into a new creature in Christ. In the new man You have created a desire for obedience (Rm 6:17; Eph 4:24). I need to consistently feed those new God-given desires in my new condition so that they grow. If I do not study this righteousness and holiness of life and what the blessings of obedience are, I should not expect my desire for obedience to grow. Indwelling sin will do everything possible to quench that desire. By Your grace and power, as I see holiness of life placed in front of me in the pages of Scripture, I will long to better align my life and behavior with what pleases You.

I desire my heart and mind to be full of You because of what these pages reveal to me about You in all of Your triune greatness. I long for You to spill out of me into my home and wherever You lead me today. All who come into contact with me today must interact with a man whose heart has drawn near to You. Their best hope for salvation or for growth in the gospel will come from a man who has searched for You in Your Word and gazed upon Your Son in the gospel and who walks by Your Spirit.

In Christ's name I pray,
Amen.

Have a good answer to this important question: "Why have I prayerfully come before you with my Bible open?"

- to grow in my knowledge of You
- to express my love for You
- to enjoy and delight in You
- to express my fear of You
- to express my need for You
- to deepen my relationship with You
- Etc.

II. Shepherding my heart throughout the day (see diagrams).

Listening to myself, my thoughts, reasonings (diagram 1):

1. "I Desire + I Deserve = I DEMAND!"

i) Thinking biblically about my desires:

ii) What I might hear myself tell me throughout the day concerning my desires:

2. Disappointment, Discouragement and Despair (the cycle).

3. What can I expect if the cycle continues unbroken?

Shepherding my heart, thoughts, reasonings (diagram 2):

1. “I Desire + What I Truly Deserve = I Relinquish My Perceived Rights!! No Demands!

i) What I must tell myself throughout the day concerning my desires.

ii) What I must tell myself throughout the day concerning what I truly deserve.

iii) What I must tell myself throughout the day concerning my perceived rights.

2. Disappointment (short-lived), Dependent, Hopeful! (the cycle)

3. Going after the root!