

D1: The Heart – The discipline of shepherding my heart.

Introduction

What is "shepherding"?

Mt. 2:7; Jn. 21:16; Ac. 20:28; 1 Pe. 2:25; 5:2-4; Rev. 7:17; Nu. 27:16-17; 2 Sa. 5:2; Ps. 23; Ps. 28:9; Ps. 80:1; Is. 40:11; Jer. 17:16; 31:10; Ez. 37:24; Mic 7:14; Jn. 10:11-14; Jer. 23:4

Is. 56:11; Jer. 10:21; 12:10; 23:1ff; 50:6; Ez. 34:2-3; Nah. 3:18; Zec. 10:2; 11:5, 7, 15-16; Mt. 9:36; Mk. 6:34

Considerations for the discipline of shepherding my heart.

- Ingredients
- Preparation—where?...when?...how long?...distractions?

Some focal points in the spiritual discipline of shepherding your heart:

I. The approach—entering into a time of prayerfully meeting with God in His Word.

- worship
 - just scratching the surface—Ps. 63:3; Ps. 135:3; Rev. 4-5, 7:9-17; 15:1-4; 19:1-8—KEEP ADDING!
 - singing worship songs, hymns
- Psalms (e.g. Ps. 119:18)
- memory verses
- review previous reading/study
- attributes of God
- the gospel
- other resources (*The Gospel Primer, Valley of Vision, etc.*)

- *"Why am I coming before You in prayer with my Bible open?"* (e.g. Phil. 3:7-11; Ps. 27:8-9)

a sample of Scriptural encouragement to pursue God (add to this from your daily reading):

1 Chron. 16:27; 17:20; 2 Chron. 20:6; Psalm 5:4-7; 16:8-9; 25:15; 27:8-9; 31:19; 36:5-10; 40:16; 42:1; 57:1; 63:1; 73:25-26; 86:5-10; 89:11-18; 91:14-16; 105:3-4; 113:4-9; 116:5-7; Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 30:18

II. The centrality of the gospel as I shepherd my heart.

- Romans 6
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-21
- Galatians 1:6-10
- Galatians 3:1-9
- Galatians 6:14-15
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- Ephesians 4:17-24
- Philippians 1:6 and 2:12-13
- Philippians 2:5-11
- Philippians 3:1-14
- Colossians 2:8-15
- Colossians 3:1-11
- 2 Timothy 1:8-12
- Titus 2:11-14
- Titus 3:3-8
- Hebrews 9:11-14
- Hebrews 10:11-18
- 1 Peter 1:2-5
- Isaiah 53

III. The truth about sin as I shepherd my heart.

"Light thoughts of sin breed light thoughts of the Savior." C. H. Spurgeon

- prayerfully rehearse the character of sin and my vulnerability to it:

1. My sin is offensive to God.

Psalm 69:5; 90:8; Proverbs 5:21; 15:11; 16:2; 17:3; 21:2; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Proverbs 6:16-19; 8:13; 11:20; Mark 7:20-23; Psalm 7:11; 9:7-10; 11:4-7; 25:8-11; 31:9-10; 32:1-5; 38:1-5; 51:1-13; 78:36-39; 79:8-9; 103:8-14; 118:18; 130:1-4; Isaiah 6:3-7; 59:1-2; Jeremiah 2:22; Mark 3:4-5a

2. My sin is powerful to entangle me.

Psalm 19:13; 40:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2

3. My sin is dangerous to me.

Proverbs 9:13-18; 14:16; 21:16; 27:12; Matthew 5:29-30; Psalm 40:11-12; 139:23-24; Isaiah 6:3-7

4. My sin is deceptive to me (concerning 1-3 and more).

Psalm 19:12; 78:36-39; Matthew 7:3-5

Other passages about sin in general:

Proverbs 3:11-12; 10:17; 13:1, 18; 15:5, 10, 12; 19:27; 29:1; 20:9, 30; 28:13; Psalm 141:5; Psalm 119:9-11

IV. A strategy to fight against specific sin as I shepherd my heart.

1. How can I identify my sin?

- Ask God to reveal sin (Ps. 139:23-24; Ps. 19:12-13).
- Examine my life for sin—incidents/patterns (Lk. 6:41-42).
 - what...how (e.g., tone of voice)...why
 - thoughts and assumptions, motives
 - responses
- What sins have been addressed in my Bible reading? Are they present in my life?
- Consider coming temptations and ongoing battles with sin.

2. How can I get to the root of my sin and a place of godly sorrow and repentance over my sin?

- What is my view of my own source of righteousness right now?
- What is my view of my sin compared to someone else's right now? (Lk. 6:41-42; 1 Ti. 1:15; Ep. 3:8)
- What is my view of someone else's source of righteousness right now (if they are a believer)?
- What is my view of my own sinfulness right now, and how costly it was to God?
- What is the foundation for my degree of willingness to extend mercy right now...God's character, or someone else's "worthiness" in my eyes? (Lk. 6:35-38)
- Does my sin reveal any wrong thinking about God, myself, or others?
- In what ways am I cooperating with or hindering the Spirit's fruit in my life (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)? Gal. 5:22-23
- What do my responses to circumstances reveal about my heart?
 - anger—frustration, bitterness, yelling, rehearsing others' wrongs
 - fear—worry, anxiety
 - escapism—seeking to make myself feel better apart from God
 - depression—self-pity, hopelessness, fatalism
- What do these responses say about...
 - ...what/whom I love most?
 - ...what/whom I trust most?
 - ...what/whom satisfies me most?
 - ...what/whom I rely upon for righteousness?
 - ...what/whom I value most?
 - ...what/who comforts me most?
 - ...what/whom do I fear?
 - ...what/who is ruling me?
- What does Scripture call this sin, and say about this sin?

- How is this sin offensive to God (what aspect of His character)?
- How horrific was Christ's suffering for my sin—this particular sin I'm convicted of right now?

3. confess and repent

- 1 Jn. 1:9; Acts 3:19; 2 Cor. 7:10; Mt 3:8

4. What has God done for me in the gospel concerning this sin (positional gospel realities and/or conversion realities)? Preach to yourself these gospel realities. See this sin and yourself rightly in light of the finished work of Jesus at the cross.

- Refer back to our 2nd lesson (Oct. 6), *conversion events*.

5. What has God done for me in the gospel so I can fight against this sin and fight for holiness (practical gospel benefits)?

- Refer back to our 2nd lesson (October 6), *new strengths and abilities in Jesus*.

6. What are the gospel-empowered commands for me as I fight for obedience?

- NOW I am ready to set before me commands from Christ to obey. Watch for both commands to "put off" sin and for commands to "put on" righteous behavior. Both are necessary. The new condition we are in by God's grace in the gospel is equipped with power and desire to do just this. Trust God by obeying these commands from Christ. Meditate on these commands. Trust God's promises in the gospel (that you are a new creation capable of obeying Jesus and saying "no" to sin) more than you trust how you currently feel.

7. What are the blessings of repentance/obedience/righteousness/holiness?

- Proverbs 13:13; 14:14, 26-27; 15:3, 9, 29, 31-33; 16:3, 6, 7, 17, 20; 19:8, 16, 20, 23, 25; 20:7; 22:5, 17-21; Luke 11:28; Ac. 3:19; 1 Jn. 1:9; Ps. 1

IV. The role of thanksgiving in shepherding my heart.

- 2 Sa. 22:50; 1 Chr. 16:7-8, 34-35, 41; 2 Chr. 20:21; 30:22; 31:2; Ez. 3:11; Neh. 12:24; Ps. 7:17; 9:1; 18:49; 30:4, 12; 33:2; 35:18; 44:8; 45:17; 52:9; 54:6; 57:9; 75:1; 79:13; 86:12; 92:1; 97:12; 100:4; 105:1; 106:1, 47; 107:1ff; 108:3; 109:30; 111:1; 118:1, 19-29; 119:7, 62; 122:4; 136:1ff; 138:1-8; 139:14; Ps 140:13; 142:7; 145:10; Is. 12:1, 4; 25:1; Dan. 2:23; 6:10; Mt. 15:36; 26:27; Lk. 2:38; 17:16; Ac. 27:35; Ro. 1:21; 6:17; 7:25; 14:6; 16:4; 1 Co. 15:57; 2 Co. 1:11; 2:14; 4:15; 8:16; 9:15; Ep. 1:16; 5:4, 20; Phil. 1:3-6; 4:6-9; Col. 1:3, 12, 3:15-17; 1 Th. 1:2; 3:9; 5:18; 2 Th. 1:3; 2:13; Heb. 13:15; Rev. 4:9; Rev. 11:17

V. The requests I must bring to God as I shepherd my heart.

- **How do I pray?**
 - Pray (adapt) the prayers of Scripture. NT: Mt 6:9-13; Jn 17:1-26; Ac 4:24-30; Rm 10:1; Eph 1:15-23; 3:14-21; 6:18-20; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-12; 4:2-4; 2 Th 1:3, 11-12; 3:1-2; 1 Tm 2:1-2; other passages from your Bible reading
- **For whom do I pray?**
 - **Myself**
 - **My household (D2) - roommates, family, the challenges/trials/gospel goals you face there. . .**
 - **The lost. . .**
 - **Work/school - the people and relationships/challenges/trials/gospel goals you face there. . .**
 - **Grace Bible Church**
 - Elders
 - Deacons and other ministry leaders
 - Smallgroup members
 - Ministries like BUILD, H3, Wellspring, NGM, Sunday's worship service, Discovery Dinner, Smallgroup ministry, etc.
 - Missionaries and those in training
 - Etc.
 - **Leaders of Government - 1 Tm 2:1-4; 1 Pt 2:13-17; etc.**
 - **Friends**
 - **Other specific needs**
 - **Etc.**

VI. Interacting with God's Word as I shepherd my heart.

- read prayerfully, interacting with God as I read and/or after I read
- study (more on this in future lesson)
 - Ask questions—What does it say? What is the context? Why is this here at this place in Scripture? What does it reveal about God? ...about man? ...about sin? Are there commands to be obeyed, warnings to heed, or promises to trust? To whom are they given? How should I apply it?
 - take notes, make lists
 - topical—use a concordance or cross-references to understand more of what the Word says about a particular issue, struggle, sin, hurt, trial, character trait, etc. (be sure to look at references in context)
 - other books and study guides
- memorize
- meditate
- remember WHY!!

VII. Shepherding my heart throughout the day—the overflow of D1 into D2, D3, and all of life.

- **When nothing is “wrong”...**

- rejoice, praise, thanks, set my mind on things above (1 Th. 5:16-18; Col. 3:1:3; Ps. 145:2)
- notice His specific kindnesses and grace
- notice His creation—what does it display about God?
- be a good steward of mental “down time” (driving alone, folding laundry, etc.)
 - Scripture—listen, meditate, memorize
 - rehearse the gospel
 - pray
 - worship, sing
 - biblical heart evaluation and/or preparation
 - looking/praying for witnessing opportunities
 - whatever you do, do all to the glory of God

- **When things are “wrong”...**

- rehearse the gospel, believe God’s Word and His character
- trust Him by obeying Him in thought, attitude, word, and deed
- **the battle for renewing my mind**—in the face of sinful fear, worry, anxiety, anger, bitterness, keeping a record of wrongs, criticism, judgment, discontentment, idolatry, lust, etc.
 - “For as he thinks within himself, so he is.” Pr. 23:7a
 - “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Ro. 12:2
 - a sample outline for renewing my mind:
 - IDENTIFY my thought or attitude as sinful (2 Co. 10:5; Phil. 4:8).
 - CONFESS my thought or attitude as sinful (1 Jn. 1:9).
 - REMEMBER your freedom from sin through the gospel (Ro. 6), and that you were created in Christ Jesus for GOOD works (including God-honoring thoughts and attitudes) (Ep. 2:10). You have everything you need for life and godliness through Christ (2 Peter 1:3).
 - DIRECT your mind to change from the sinful thoughts or attitudes to godly ones (Phil. 4:8, 9).
 - REPEAT this outline when sinful thoughts or attitudes occur again (Gal. 6:9).

“Whatever your story, I say to you - never stop being a student. There are two reasons. First – the depth of God’s wisdom. It has no boundary. It has no bottom. It has no ceiling. If for ten million years you sat for 24 hours a day at His feet to listen, you would scratch only the surface of His wisdom. Here’s the second reason – the danger of the world. Falsehood echoes more loudly and repeatedly than the sounds of wisdom. Every day a thousand voices speak into your life, and the majority of those voices have not gotten the flowers of their insight from the wisdom garden of the Lord. You see, we live in the middle of a raging wisdom war. It’s so easy to be taken captive. It’s so easy to have divine wisdom corrupted by human wisdom. It’s so easy to breathe in the polluted air of a culture that no longer actually thinks that God is, let alone that He is wise. I’ll say it again, never stop being a student. Morning after morning, bow your head and humbly pray – ‘Lord, please teach me your way.’” (Paul David Tripp)