

EVERYDAY LIFE

Monday, October 20, 2008

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart." Deuteronomy 6:5 NIV

"Life is not well lived, if lived without great passion."

My thoughts today are, **"you've got to have heart!"**

Too much time and energy is often wasted with things that cannot warrant your whole heart, and worse yet, things to which you have no intention of giving your heart. A little bit of heart is never enough. I am **not sure that would be wise in any area of everyday life you truly value** - friendships, marriage and family, education, career. But the one area of your life in which that is guaranteed to fail badly is your relationship with God.

Your friends or family may not notice at first. You may settle for passing grades without gaining an adequate education. You might give sufficient effort for a paycheck, but never quite enough to gain promotion and success. In every case, **you are the one who will be the most shortchanged.**

In the world of sports, Michael Jordan, considered the gold standard by which other athletes are gauged, or Michael Phelps, the recent winner in 2008 of more gold medals at a single Olympics than anyone else, or Lance Armstrong, seven time winner of the Tour de France in consecutive years (1999-2005), represent a host of others in diverse careers and pursuits **who were whole hearted, single minded in their endeavors.** Dare you offer the King and His Kingdom any less? See Matthew 6:33.

Life is not well lived, if lived without clear purpose and great passion. My Dad told me, *"Anything worth doing is worth doing well."* The lesson was clear. Don't do a job halfway; finish what you start. Don't pursue a goal halfheartedly; give it your full effort and energy. I think that is **good advice for life**, whatever you choose to do. People that are exceptionally good at what they do are good because they consider that important enough for their clear priority, best effort, and whole passion. They give themselves completely to their task. You can see this principle working every day in business, athletics, writing, art, entertainment, and science. **The best give their best!**

Nowhere is this practical truth more important than in your spiritual devotion and disciplines. Investing your whole heart in no other area of life will give you such satisfaction and reward, now and eternally. *"Physical exercise has value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next."* 1 Timothy 4:8 NLT. Make the King and His Kingdom first and foremost in your heart and practice. **Dare we offer the Almighty God less?**

Jesus said that this **issue of wholehearted devotion is the "first and greatest commandment . . . you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind, and all your strength."** Matthew 22:38/Mark 12:30. God does not need just whatever you give him of yourself, unless it is your best and your all. **Would you want to give God any less?** Can you believe that such wholeheartedness is asked simply because God desires the highest and best for you, so He expects the best from you? **You've got to have heart!** *"Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name."* See Psalm 86:11 NKJV.

How do you love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? This is **far more than theoretical or emotional - love is actual and practical.** Love is not merely an emotion; love is practical and observable - a firm commitment and conviction that wills and demonstrates the highest and best for the one beloved. When Jesus asked Simon Peter to affirm his love, with each

confession of love Jesus gave Peter a practical way for that profession of love to be lived out, "*Feed my lambs . . . tend my flock . . . feed my sheep.*" See John 21:15-17 NLT. **That's both practical and observable.**

If you love the Lord with your whole heart, you will love His Word, desire His will, pursue His purpose, obey His commands, love His Church and people, and that love will touch a world, lost and looking for love that is real and whole hearted.

My prayer for you is that you make your heart a sanctuary, wholly the Lord's. See Ephesians 6:5-6.

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