

Reconstructing Manhood

The Core Affections of the Heart

Rough Transcript

Patrick Morley

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Good morning, men.

Welcome to Man in the Mirror men's Bible study. So, if you thought you were being invited to a Rotary meeting this morning, let me apologize for that. We do have a number of men who join us online all around the world and I think on all the inhabited continents and so we always want to give these men a very warm, rousing Man in the Mirror welcome. So let's do that. On the count of three.=, Give them that big hoorah. One, two, three.

Hoorah. Guys, we are honored to have you with us. So, we are in this series, **Reconstructing Manhood**. It's been fascinating to me over the last decade or so with the increase in animosities of all kinds that many people have been trying to pit the generations against each other as though the generations are so different from one another. That's utter nonsense, and we know that's utter nonsense because the core affections of the human heart have never changed.

That's why a young man who is 18 or an older man who is 80 can pick up the book of Ecclesiastes and both feel like that book, those words, are connecting right down into the very core of their being, at the very center of their soul, as it were, that someone gets them. The core affections of the human heart is the topic for the day. In the Bible, when you see the word heart, it's a Hebrew word that really means everything that's going on inside of you. Today, we would probably use the word mind. Technically it's the intellect, the will, and the emotions, so really kind of everything that makes up what we would call you. Your heart.

The core affections of the heart or the affections. What are affections? Well, affections are your beliefs, your inclinations, your desires, your dispositions. And the core affections, then, would be those that are perhaps the most important to you, those that you use to help you make decisions, the determiner of what you say, what you think, and what you do.

SPIRITUAL CARDIOLOGY

So, I want us to do a little spiritual cardiology here today with you on the core affections of the heart. In this idea of reconstructing manhood, when we decided to do a few extra weeks, one of the most important things, reasons for doing that is just this idea that helping men think through what's really going on deep down in their spirit, soul, mind, heart, whatever you want to call it, and then how they might recalibrate that or reconstruct that would be something we definitely wanted to cover.

I went to the doctor this week and had my annual physical. Last year when I was there, they asked me the question, how are you feeling on a scale of one to 10? And I said, "I can't answer that. That is such a subjective question." So if I told you a two but a two for me is a four for you, then we're not really connecting at all. So this year, when I went for my physical, I went on Google images and I downloaded and printed out this pain assessment tool so that when I went in there, they said, "Well, how are you feeling on a scale of one to 10?" I said, "Well, let me show you how I'm feeling." And I pulled out this pain assessment tool.

Now, what was interesting to me, some of you know that I had been through an undiagnosed autoimmune situation, which is under control now. But during the time when I was not feeling so hot, I thought, well, with medication, I kind of thought I was only experiencing mild pain. Now, for me, mild pain is this yellow face. In other words, there's not a smile. There's not a frown. It's just sort of straight across. And so I don't feel great, but I don't feel horrible. Just kind of a straight across smile. I would've said that's mild pain. Do you know that out of 25 pages of Google images of all these different pain assessment tools, nobody considers that mild pain? That's considered moderate pain.

So, here I went around for about three years in moderate pain, thinking my pain was mild, and I was just astonished at that. So, I wanted to show the doctor because I've been telling him for years I've been mild pain. I said, "Hey, I haven't been in mild pain. I've been in moderate pain. I want a little more sympathy from you, my doctor."

So anyway, but the thing is here, this is not only a good tool to measure physical pain, but there are other kinds of pains as well. There is intellectual pain with problems that you just can't figure out. Intellectual, even things like, "Ex nihilo nihil fit", out of nothing, nothing comes. Why is there something instead of nothing? I mean, that's one that creates a lot of pain for me. Just the intellectual problems that we see, but also emotional problems and spiritual problems.

I am writing a new book, book number 23, and I just finished the introduction of it, the draft of it. This is a book to help men heal from childhood wounds. Whether it's mother wounds, father wounds. And in the introduction, to give the reader a reason to listen to what I might have to say, I give them the CliffsNotes. I want to read this to you. We're talking about the core affections of the heart. We're talking about spiritual cardiology. We're talking about heart care. We're talking about heart disease, maybe, in some cases. We're talking about the need for heart surgery in some cases.

There are a lot of men here in this room, online and at your workplace, at your schools, in your neighborhoods, in your families, who have heart problems, and there are reasons for them. So, in my 20s, I was, well, let me just read.

I loved my parents. And I honestly believe they loved my three younger brothers and me. That said, they were never trained or disciplined in how to parent. As a boy, I always felt like I was on my own. I have no recollection of anyone telling me they believed in me, loved me, or were proud of me. I don't even remember being hugged. I have no recollection of anyone telling me that life had meaning, that I was created for a purpose, or that I do something with my life. There's no recollection of anyone telling me about God, going to college, or career options.

Later in the first chapter, I'll make the note, I'm not so naive to think that these things never happened, just that I have no recollection of them. And even though they might have happened, the fact that I have no recollection of them happening is significant in and of itself. Reading on. My parents did the best they could, but all four of us boys went off the rails in high school. And some of you know that I quit high school and another brother followed in my footsteps and died of a drug overdose and so forth. And once I left home, I washed my hands of them and didn't look back. If not for the influence of my wife, I probably wouldn't have had any contact at all. And so forth and so on.

Then an interesting... So, just my heart was just so wounded and I was so angry and lashing out and not even know what I'm lashing out at. But my wife started praying for me. And we ended up at a small Methodist church about two blocks from this building called Asbury Methodist Church. And what happened is that there were some men there who understood that when a young man shows up at their church, he has a heart problem. Whether it's a big heart problem or a small heart problem, nobody shows up at a spiritual house of worship unless they're looking for, and they wouldn't be able to necessarily put it into words, but they're looking for some relief. They're looking for some help.

And what changed my life was that there were some men at this church who understood what was going on. Not the details, but they understood why I was there, and they took me under their wings and showed me the ropes. One man in particular, Jim, became a spiritual father to me. He saw something in me that frankly I'd never seen in myself. He believed things for me that I didn't have enough self-confidence to believe. And the encouragement and the words that he spoke into my life, it unchained something inside of me and released the spirit of God in me to change the core affections of my heart.

The reason that this Bible study is here, and the problems that we're trying to solve, and what we are trying to accomplish, whether you go a few inches to the left or a few feet to the right, it's all about helping men change the core affections of their hearts. In fact, your leaders, your table leaders have a written job description, and at the top of the job description is a sentence, and that sentence is our Big Idea for today.

First, though, I want to give you a couple of scriptures that speak to this issue of the heart. Luke chapter six, verse 45, and I'm putting it up in the NIV, just 1984 version, because I like the way it sounds. But so it, before this, it talks about how a good tree can't produce bad fruit and a bad tree can't produce good fruit, and a tree is known by the fruit that it produces. And then it goes on.

"The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart. And the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart." It's about the heart. "For out of the overflow of his heart, his mouth speaks." It's about the heart, what's going on in the heart.

Then Mark 7:20 and to 23, "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come. Sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person." So, when somebody's off the rails, it's the behavior.

David Delk and I wrote a book called *The Dad in the Mirror*, and we made a distinction between fathering for performance and fathering the heart. A lot of times the effort is, is that we try to help people correct their behavior, but we never actually get at the heart. So, the idea here is that want to be, as a group, men who are helping other men and ourselves and each other to transform or change the core affections of our hearts.

So we don't focus so much. Oh, sometimes you have to focus on the behavior, sure, and make the adjustments. But if you only focus on the behavior and you don't get at the core motivations of the heart, the core affections of the heart, then you will only see somebody behaving out of the strength of their desire at that moment, and then they're going to revert back to the behavior later because you haven't dealt with the real core issue.

So, the Big Idea for the day, **the greatest contribution we can offer man is to help him change the core affections of his heart.** As a group, reconstructing our own manhood, but also helping other men reconstruct their manhood. The leaders have it on their job description. I want you to have it, too. You guys online, I want you to have this as well. The greatest contribution that we can offer a man is to help him change the core affections of his heart. That's what changed my life is that there was a group of guys who understood that the mission was spiritual transformation. It was not behavior modification. Christianity is not behavior modification. It's heart transformation.

THE CORE AFFECTIONS OF JESUS' HEART

So, let's talk a little bit, then, about the core affections of Jesus's heart, because if we want to change our core affections or help another man change his core affections, then what we ought be looking to change them to would be the example of Jesus. A friend of mine once had lunch with a senior vice president at the Ford Motor Company. And he said, "How do you make a million Fords?" And the answer was, he said, "Well, we don't actually make a million Fords. What we do is we make one Ford and then we copy it 999,999 times."

And so we're not really trying to produce millions of men. What we're trying to do is we're trying to take one man, Jesus, and then reproduce his life over and over again. And so we don't draw attention to ourselves. So I told you my story, but I didn't tell you my story so that anybody would be attracted to imitate it. If anything, you'd want to be doing the opposite. But the point is, is that Jesus is the one that changed and is changing our lives.

So, what are the core affections of Jesus's heart? Well, you know what they are. We know that Jesus was a man of prayer. Intimacy with the father was one of the core affections of his heart. We know that the way he looked at people, that his compassion for people, his love for people. He saw some spiritual people getting ready to stone a woman who had been caught in adultery and he walks over and he tells them, he said, "Whichever view is without sin, you go ahead and cast the first stone." And Jesus sat down and started writing in the sand, and then these men, these righteous men, one by one, beginning with the oldest, dropped their stones and walked away until finally the youngest had walked away, too.

And the woman was standing there and he asked, "Well, where are the men that were accusing you?" And they were gone. And he said, "I forgive you." He said, "Go and sin no more." It's that kind of... That's the core affection. It's this forgiving spirit. It's this desire to see people reconciled with God and with other people, to be leading godly lives. Jesus got out of a boat one time. We've taught on this before. He looked on the crowds and he had compassion on them because he saw that they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd, like 20-year-old boys who grew up in a dysfunctional home. And he had compassion on them. Another core affection at the heart of Jesus, you see.

Jesus was constantly glorifying his father in heaven and worshiping his father in heaven. That's a core affection of his heart is to glorify God. A core affection of his heart is to worship God every day. One of my daily prayers, I've got six, as I've mentioned here before. I have six different routine prayers and one of them begins, "Father, you alone are worthy to receive all worship, praise, glory, honor, majesty, power, authority, riches, wisdom, repentance, faith, hope, love, adoration, affection, adulation, admiration, awe, reverence, obedience, surrender, service, sacrifice, blessing, and thanksgiving, for you are the God who is, who was, and is to come." But where do I get that from? I get that from Jesus, because that's the core affection of Jesus's heart.

Again, the Big Idea for today is that the greatest contribution that we can make is to offer a man the opportunity to change the core affections of his heart. **The greatest contribution we can offer man is to help him change the core affections of his heart.**

CHANGING OUR CORE AFFECTIONS

Lastly, then, changing our own core affections. What are the core affections of your heart? Or, to paraphrase Samuel Jackson and Jennifer... Can't think of her name. What's in your heart? What's in your heart? We all know that everybody has bad thoughts. Everybody has bad thoughts, but it's what you do with them next. And the way that we handle them in a godly way is we allow God to change the core affections of our hearts. Well, how do we do that?

The top of the outline is this. We bring ourselves into the real presence of Jesus and allow him to change everything about us. We just bring ourselves into the real presence of Jesus and allow him to change everything about us. Matthew chapter 11, verse 28 and 29. He talks about... What does Matthew 11:28 and 29 say? Somebody.

At verse 29 he says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Jesus has a humble and gentle heart and he says to take his yoke upon you and to learn from him. So, Jesus wants to give us an instructed heart, a heart that knows what to do.

Then another way we bring ourselves into his presence is through the Holy Spirit. John 14:26, Jesus says, "But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, will teach you all things and

remind you of everything that I have said. So, come unto to me all you who are weary and burdened, and you will find rest for your souls," you see.

Well, how do we do that? I've said it here many times in many ways on many occasions. A Bible, a small group, and serving someone else will solve 90% of your problems. It really will. Those three things really will. To be in the word of God for yourself. Jesus cannot instruct you if... Jesus, the normal way of Jesus is not to send radio waves or microwaves or Havana whatever waves your direction that kind of just transform you. But rather, it's to instruct your heart through the word. And so this is why Bible teachers and preachers like me are always hammering on reading God's word for yourself, because the word of God is God. The word of God is God. He speaks through his word to her hearts and helps change the core affections.

And then a small group like you have here because, honestly, in the small groups that I've... I've been in seven small groups, well, plus the table leader groups, but seven other small groups as well over the years. And I know that God is real because I'm able to see him working in your life. The power of a small group is so enormous.

And then serving someone else, helping others is... We didn't talk about that being a core affection of the heart of Jesus, but certainly service is a core affection of the heart of Jesus, too. Dwight L. Moody once said, "The reward of service is more service." Service is its own reward and it brings such joy, and it's the great antidote for pity party when you're feeling sorry for yourself. When you're feeling sorry for yourself, go help somebody. Go serve somebody. You will sense the core affections of your heart changing. That's why we're here. That's what we do. These are the problems that we're trying to solve.

So, what are we trying to learn? Well, you could look at it in many different ways, but you could just summarize it. Hey, how about the Sermon on the Mount, the 10 commandments, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit? Just work on that, just work on that. Once you get that right, then we can move on to something else. But the fruit of the spirit, this is what we all want. This is what we all want. It's a good representation of what we want as the core affections of our hearts. The fruit of the spirit. Love, joy, peace.

One of our former leaders, no longer with us, he said that his only prayer had been every day is that God would give him peace and joy. And you could see that God had changed the core affections of his heart, because he lived his life for 91 years with peace and with joy. Not without problems. Plenty of problems, but with peace and joy because of the core affections of his heart that he had allowed to be changed by bringing himself regularly into the real presence of Jesus and allowing the Holy Spirit to change him. Love, joy, peace, patience. Oh. Kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Exactly what the world needs. Exactly what a young man in his 20s needs. Exactly what a man in his 50s needs.

The Big Idea is that the greatest contribution is for a man, for us to help men change the core affections of their hearts. Carl Jung, who was not a Christian believer, but I think he was a theist, he said this. "I have treated many hundreds of patients. Among those in the second half of life, that is to say over 35, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life." What more could we do for a man than to help him change the core affections of his heart? That's the Big Idea. **The greatest contribution we can offer a man is to help him change the core affections of his heart.**

Let's pray. Our dearest father, first of all, we come to you and we humble ourselves. We all know, are so aware of these things that do come up out of us, and out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks, and sometimes we don't say the things that we want to say. But Lord, we repent and we plead with you for your forgiveness, which we receive. And we pray, God, that you would again today move us another step forward, another step closer to the core affections of Jesus, our one and only example. Lord, help each of us to process how we want to respond to your word and to your message about

personal transformation, and then, Lord, next time we'll talk about how we can actually help others in this process of transformation as well. We ask this in Jesus's name. Amen.