

## Day 34 Lead or Follow?

***Matthew 5:8 (CEV) God blesses those people whose hearts are pure. They will see him!***

The only thing constant about the human heart is that it is never stagnant. Our hearts either get better or get worse. **We cannot simply leave our heart alone and hope that we will end up in the right place.** If we don't guard our hearts and check our hearts, it is guaranteed that we will be worse off, spiritually speaking, as before. We need to be like a diligent farmer that sows the right seeds on the soil of our hearts, but also consistently eradicate the potential weeds that grow. We have to do the hard work of plowing up the fallow ground, watering the right seeds, so that we can reap a harvest we want. Keeping our hearts pure is not a one-and-done scenario. **If we pay no attention to what we allow in, and if we pay no attention to what our heart muses on, we are headed for trouble.**

There are two kinds of approaches that we could have when it comes to our hearts. It is like two kinds of dog walkers. There are dogs that are being walked by people, and then there are people who are being walked by dogs. **There are people who follow their hearts, and then there are people who lead their hearts. If you follow your heart, get ready for that sucker to be pulling you in all sorts of directions.** You have seen these scenes at the park, people being pulled by their dogs all over the park. The dog sees something and makes a mad dash for it. Then while they are running towards the thing they saw, they suddenly change direction because they found something else more stimulating. All the while, the human is holding on for dear life as the dog chases whatever it fancies. Then we have seen 80-pounds-plus dogs being walked by their owners, and they stop when told, they respond to whatever command is being given. They sit when told, they walk when told; they are simply following in the way they have been trained to follow. What has this to do with our hearts?

There are people who pay no attention to their hearts. You will find they have a new vision every other week, or a new relationship, or a new endeavor, they simply allow their hearts to pursue whatever they want. **Their hearts are pulling them in every direction never to land anywhere** because someone told them to follow their hearts. Then there are others who do not follow their hearts; they lead their hearts. They tell their hearts what they are going to value and pursue. This group of people rarely find themselves tangled up, and all disheveled and exhausted, because they lead their hearts; they don't follow them. Leading your heart means you change what you value and treasure, and then your heart will follow what you treasure. Jesus said, ***"Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be."* (Luke 12:34 NIV)**

**Whatever you value and treasure, that is what your heart will desire.** Value the Kingdom of God, and your heart will desire it. Value the kingdom of this world, and your heart will be drawn to it. To vacillate between these two choices is foolishness. It means we are not whole, but we are divided. James tells us what happens to the person with divided loyalty: ***"But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. 7 Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do."***

***James 1:6-8 NLT*** Divided loyalty comes from a divided heart. The problem with a divided life is that it is unstable; it cannot settle, like a wave of the sea that is being tossed by the wind and the current. That kind of divided loyalty produces instability in every decision that we make. A divided heart cannot be a pure heart. Divided loyalty, between God and the world, causes a person not to receive what they need.

We need to pray what the Psalmist prayed: ***“Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.” (Psalm 86:11 NIV)*** Instead of allowing our hearts to be divided, we learn God’s way and walk in the power of truth. God’s way always leads to an undivided heart. Undivided, because our Heavenly Father is worthy of all our hearts, all our minds, all our strength! **My heart will never find purity, satisfaction, rest or peace, until it is completely and wholly undivided and rooted in the fear of the Lord. An undivided heart is focused on one thing: to please God, not myself.** An undivided heart does not have mixed motives; it is not confused on where to place its loyalty. A pure and undivided heart makes the right decisions for the right reasons.

When we follow our divided heart, it is so easy to do the right things for the wrong reasons. Then it produces a tangled web of confusion. It does not make life easier. We think it would, but it only complicates life and it makes things difficult for ourselves and for others. **This lifestyle of mixed motives spins a web of confusion and twisted paths. When we lead our lives from a pure heart that is undivided and loyal to Jesus, it makes things less complicated.** The Proverb writer said, ***“Mixed motives twist life into tangles; pure motives take you straight down the road.” (Proverbs 21:8 MSG)*** When you go through life and don’t say what you mean or mean what you say, and people always have to decipher what you mean by it, that produces stress. When people have to read between the lines, they usually get it wrong. When we hide behind a facade of niceness, instead of true kindness, it confuses people. **Niceness is sometimes a cover for not telling the truth. True kindness, however, always tells the truth seasoned with grace.** A divided heart causes others to not really know where they stand. Have you ever had a conversation and you ask at the end of it, “What were they getting at?” It is because of mixed motives. **An undivided heart not only deals with my devotion to God, but also my motivation.**

**Jesus wants us to have a pure heart! A heart that is unpolluted, unmixed, undivided and fully persuaded that it needs to be purified and refined through the power of the Holy Spirit.** When we lead our hearts instead of following our hearts, we make no room for anything that will cause our hearts to be divided. Why? Because small things matter, and a little bit of bad; such as, leaven, can pollute a whole lot. Just like Schopenhauer’s Law of Entropy says, ***“If you put a spoonful of wine in a barrel of sewage you get sewage. If you put a spoonful of sewage in a barrel of wine, you still get sewage.”*** So we vociferously oppose any and all wrong pursuits or longings in our heart. We refuse to play games or to pretend. We refuse to let our hearts run around the proverbial park while it drags us along for the ride. We refuse to manipulate or confuse. **We live in the light of God’s truth, and we walk out the process of God’s testing and examination to bring about a pure heart; undivided and completely loyal to the One who produces truth in the inward parts of our lives.** We don’t wear masks (except for Covid) or play spiritual games. We don’t use the Word of God to our own advantage and twist it to make ourselves look better, or use it to get something from others. Our “Yes” is “Yes,” and our “No” is “No”. We don’t make commitments we do not keep. We do not follow rabbit trails that lead to nowhere but regret. We live our lives completely in the light. We live honestly, openly, truthfully, sincerely, and fully devoted to Him Who is able to keep us from falling. We echo our brother Paul: ***“Since God has so generously let us in on what he is doing, we’re not about to throw up our hands and walk off the job just because we run into occasional hard times. We refuse to wear masks and play games. We don’t maneuver and manipulate behind the scenes. And we don’t twist God’s Word to suit ourselves. Rather, we keep everything we do and say out in the open, the whole truth on display, so that those who want to can see and judge for themselves in the presence of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:1-2 MSG)***

What kind of heart walker are you? Will you simply follow your heart wherever it decides to roam not knowing where you will end up? Or will you lead your heart and tell it Who it belongs to and Who it will

be loyal to? **If you choose to lead your heart to the One who can purify your heart, you will find that you will see God!** Make a decision today whether you will lead your heart or follow your heart. Whatever you decide, remember it will determine the direction of your life.

#### **Reflection and Prayer:**

- Following our hearts might cause us to receive some temporary gratification and pleasure, but as Christ followers, we are supposed to lead our hearts. Do you lead your heart or do you follow your heart?
- Following your heart is easy because you just simply go along for the ride. Leading your heart is difficult because you have to be more deliberate about guarding and guiding. How deliberate are you about leading your heart?
- You cannot have a pure heart when your heart is divided. Is your heart fully devoted and loyal to God or is your loyalty divided between God and the world? What would your lifestyle say?
- We have to allow the Holy Spirit to do His divine surgery on us to have a pure heart. One of the primary tools He uses is His Word. ***“God’s word is alive and working and is sharper than a double-edged sword. It cuts all the way into us, where the soul and the spirit are joined, to the center of our joints and bones. And it judges the thoughts and feelings in our hearts. <sup>13</sup>Nothing in all the world can be hidden from God. Everything is clear and lies open before him, and to him we must explain the way we have lived.” (Hebrews 4:12-13 NCV)***
- How much of God’s Word are you allowing to penetrate your heart?
- When you are confronted by the truth of God’s Word concerning a particular arena of your life, do you bristle at it, dismiss it, re-interpret it, or do you embrace it and allow it to change your heart?
- Pray and ask the Lord to give you an undivided heart that is completely loyal to Him...