

God: Enlargen My Heart

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I. Introduction.

A. Christ describes growth in phases like a plant. In the lives of His disciples demand a similar kind of work. (Mark 4:28)

B. Christ's threefold objective as we live our lives.

1. Intense cultivation.
2. Prayerful pruning.
3. Abounding fruitfulness. (Ephesians 3:18-19)

II. Pray

A. God would enlarge your heart.

1. Augustine prayed this knowing the cavern of his heart was small.
2. When given an opportunity to receive what Solomon wanted he asked for wisdom. God began the work of the enlargement of his heart. (1 Kings 3:5-15, 4:29-30)
3. God wants us to make our heart larger than normal. Our cooperation helps Him to enlarge our hearts. (Psalm 119:42)
4. Why God wants to do this.
 - a. His heart embraces the whole world, and as He loves so we must learn to love.
 - b. All human needs are met in Jesus Christ.
 - c. To give us the capacity to love the unlovely.
 - d. In order to praise God as we ought to.
 - e. There are many more things that God wants to put in one's heart. (John 16:12)
 - f. God wants the double-hearted man to be single-minded for his glory and honor. (James 1:6-8)
5. How God enlarges one's heart.
 - a. Through daily growth in necessary spiritual elements such as prayer—praise and thanksgiving, confession, supplication and intercession.

- 1). Suggestions.

- a) Use a prayer journal.
- b) Study and mark prayers in the Bible.
- c) Pray while walking.
- d) Have a prayer partner.
- e) Pray over a world atlas.
- f) Pray while fasting.

2) Fasting.

- a) Fasting is to afflict and discipline the soul, to sacrifice the personal will, to bring into subjection the waywardness of the body, and to break the chain that grasps our physical being with power.
- b) It is a profound humbling before God, a practical confession of misery, and an act of humiliation before the Lord. (Matthew 6)

b. Through suffering—that which comes upon us which we have no control. (Psalm 119:67)

c. Through our mistakes and failures. (James 3:2, Proverbs 24:16)

- 1) The disciples failed over thirty times throughout the Gospel of Mark.
- 2) These are opportunities to enlarge the heart.

B. God would sharpen your relationships. (Proverbs 27:17)

- 1. Involvement with people taxes us to the limit but also sharpens us.
- 2. Paul was involved with all kinds of people. (2 Corinthians 6:11-12)
- 3. Three relationships God uses to sharpen us.
 - a. Faithful Christian men and women. Find a spiritual mentor.
 - b. Enemies. David is an example of one who allowed his enemies to sharpen him and not embitter him. (2 Samuel 16:5-14, Romans 12:19-21, Psalm 38)
 - c. Friends who become adversaries. We should also learn lessons from those who have braced themselves against us. (Psalm 141:5, 55:15-14, 2 Corinthians 7:2, 12:15)

Application questions.

1. What are the two elements of the prayer that the speaker suggests? Explain the reasoning behind both.

2. What is your role in God's enlargement of the heart? Explain.

3. What suggestions for praying stood out to you in the speaker's message? Which two principles will you practice in your own prayer life this week?
