

THE HEART

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

—COLOSSIANS 3:12 & 14

The heart is the core of our being, the seat of where the mind, the will and emotions come together and form the basis of character. As discipline of the mind and the will are to be applied in the Christian life, how does one apply discipline of emotion, especially in the world we live in today?

We can turn on the news any day of the week and hear again and again how corruption and greed are the currency of our times. On every level we can think that our world is in strife. War, calamity, crime, disease, abuse and poverty are rampant all over the globe. Though we claim to be rich in knowledge, equipped with the most sophisticated technology and a wealth of natural resources, the desperate state of humanity only appears to escalate. It is no surprise we shake our heads and wonder what this world is coming to.

There are many New Testament verses that speak of how Jesus was filled with compassion. His mission was not a cold, calculated agenda for the salvation of souls, but it was the ultimate expression of a sovereign God’s love for us. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes

in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” That is probably one of the first verses many of us learned because God is love.

A disciplined heart comes spontaneously when love for Christ permeates our lives. Something deep inside us resonates with the heart of God and we grieve the suffering of others. Stephen Olford, a 20th century Christian leader, was asked, “What is the secret of ministry?” He replied, “Bent knees, wet eyes, a broken heart.” The needs of our broken world can only be met by people with broken hearts.

Until we feel the pressure of God’s compassion deeply within our souls, we will not fully participate in the work of God. We will not weep over other people if we do not weep over ourselves first. It is this brokenness, the very depth of touching the heart of God, and God touching our hearts that will sustain and energize us. We are actually fed by our tears. It is not out of pity, but out of genuine sorrow and compassion that the love of Christ within us becomes a driving force. When our hearts are united with Him and His agenda, we are clothed in compassion and become the instruments where God is at work in this world.

PRAYER: Precious Lord, be the means in me that will make a difference. Clothe me in compassion and allow me to share your heart.

TO REFLECT UPON: How deeply am I affected by the troubled state of this world?