



CREW LEADER GUIDE: TRUSTING THE HEART OF GOD - PROVERBS PART 3

Message Summary:

Drawing from Proverbs 9:10, Matthew 11:28-30, and Exodus 34:6, this sermon challenges believers to examine their foundational understanding of who God is and what He is like. It highlights that true, lasting wisdom cannot be walked out over a lifetime without a clear and accurate understanding of God's heart. Using the only passage in the four Gospels where Jesus describes His own heart, we establish that Jesus is gentle and lowly at His core, and that this understanding is not merely an add-on to one's theology but the very foundation upon which all trust in God's wisdom must be built. The enemy's primary strategy, seen as far back as Genesis 3, is not to attack what we know God has said, but to corrupt our understanding of why God says it, causing us to doubt His heart and therefore distrust His wisdom.

Key Points:

- The second half of Proverbs 9:10 is often overlooked, but the knowledge of the Holy One is described as insight, making a correct understanding of God's character foundational to walking in wisdom
- A.W. Tozer's principle that the most important thing about a person is what comes to mind when they think about God frames the central question of the sermon: Who is Jesus to you, and what do you believe His heart is toward you
- Matthew 11:28-30 is the only passage in the 89 chapters of the four Gospels where Jesus explicitly describes His own heart, identifying Himself as gentle and lowly, and this self-description must serve as the base of all Christian theology rather than a supplementary detail
- The enemy's strategy in Genesis 3 was not to defeat Eve through a misquote of God's words, which she was able to correct, but to attack her understanding of God's motivations and heart, causing her to distrust His wisdom
- God's anger must be provoked, appearing 42 times in Scripture as something triggered externally, while His love and kindness are never described as needing to be provoked because they are His natural, unchanging disposition
- Sustaining a lifetime of obedience and wisdom is not a matter of growing strong enough to resist temptation, but of growing in a deeper and deeper understanding of the heart of God, which provides the ongoing motivation and strength to keep following Him

Key Scripture:

- Proverbs 9:10, which describes the knowledge of the Holy One as insight
- Matthew 11:28-30, in which Jesus invites the weary and burdened to come to Him, take His yoke, and find rest, describing Himself as gentle and lowly in heart
- Genesis 3:1-5, in which the serpent shifts his attack from misquoting God's words to questioning God's motivations and heart toward Adam and Eve
- Exodus 34:6, in which God proclaims His own name before Moses, describing Himself as merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness
- John 14:9, in which Jesus tells His disciples that whoever has seen Him has seen the Father



EIGHTEEN DAY DEVOTIONAL

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Discussion and Reflection

1. The enemy's primary strategy is not to attack what you know about God's word, but to attack your understanding of God's heart toward you. In what ways have you experienced this kind of spiritual attack in your own life? Where in your life might you be unconsciously believing a distorted version of God's intentions toward you?
2. Matthew 11:28-30 is the only place in the four Gospels where Jesus reveals what his heart is like, describing himself as gentle and lowly. How does this change or deepen the way you approach prayer and your relationship with God?
3. We are encouraged not simply to add gentleness and lowliness to our existing picture of Jesus, but to rebuild our entire understanding of him on that foundation. What would it look like practically to make that shift in your own faith?
4. God's self-description in Exodus 34:6 includes being merciful, gracious, and abounding in steadfast love, yet also just. How do you hold these qualities together without minimizing either his mercy or his justice?
5. Scripture records God being provoked to anger 42 times, but never once records him being provoked to love, because love is already his nature. How does understanding love as God's natural disposition rather than a response to your performance affect the way you live out your faith?
6. Ps. Joe connects taking on Jesus' yoke in Matthew 11 with the Jewish concept of a rabbi's teaching and wisdom. What does it mean for you personally to submit to Jesus' wisdom in an area of life where you have been relying on your own understanding?
7. Ps. Joe uses the image of holding a weight for 24 hours to illustrate how long obedience becomes impossible without a clear understanding of God's heart. What spiritual practices or truths help sustain your obedience to God over the long term?
8. A.W. Tozer is quoted as saying that the most important thing about you is what comes to mind when you think about God. If you were completely honest, what image of God most naturally surfaces in your mind during difficult or failing moments, and how does that image compare to the God described in this sermon?

Practical Challenge:

Here are a few ways to help activate key next steps this week:

- **Reread Matthew 11:28-30 every morning this week.** Before you get out of bed, read it slowly and ask God to help you receive His invitation not as a theological concept but one directed at you.
- **Identify one area of your life where you have been operating in your own strength rather than trusting God's wisdom.** Bring it to Him in prayer this week, specifically acknowledging His gentleness and His approachability as you do.
- **Have an honest conversation with a trusted friend or your group leader about a lie you have believed about God's heart. Name it out loud.** Ask someone to pray with you and speak the truth over you.
- **Study Exodus 34:6-7 alongside Psalm 103:8-14.** Both passages describe God's character in similar terms. Journal what stands out to you and what it means for how you relate to God this week.