



Parkway Fellowship

6 TRUTHS YOU CAN COUNT ON • MEDIA INFLUENCES ME •
MATTHEW 15:18-19; LUKE 6:45-46; PROVERBS 4:23 • 9/27/2020

MAIN POINT

Jesus wants me to have the right kind of influences in my heart and in my life.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What do you like about technology today? What do you dislike about it?

Agree or disagree with the following statement: Our deepest problems exist inside of us, not outside of us.

As we discuss the influence of media in our lives, why isn't it enough to merely analyze our behavior? What do we miss when we only focus on changing our behavior?

Our key verse in this series is John 18:37b where Jesus says: "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." And Jesus spoke about how things in our world influence the condition of our hearts. So if we want to know the truth about media, then we need to listen to what Jesus says about how influences, like media, can alter the condition of our hearts. We might think the topic of media would center on things we should stop doing and things we should start doing. However, the gospel is not about editing behavior or gaining information. Real gospel change starts with a transformed heart.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A COUPLE OF VOLUNTEERS READ MATTHEW 15:18-19 AND LUKE 6:45-46.

What do these verses teach you about your heart?

Do you tend to think of media as a big deal in your relationship with the Lord or not a big deal? Why?

How do these verses speak to you about the media you allow in your life?

Have you ever heard the saying “garbage in, garbage out”? Why does the mess inside of us always work its way to the mess outside of us?

Is it possible to act out of accordance with our beliefs? Why or why not?

The heart is inextricably linked to our actions. We cannot behave out of sync with what we believe. When we act sinfully or poorly, the problem is not with our behavior—it goes much deeper than our actions and into the core of who we are. Jesus used the metaphor of treasure to describe this. What we treasure the most is made evident by the words we say and the things we do. The gospel does not change our behavior, it changes our heart! Heart change then works itself out into our life. When we treasure Jesus above all else, everything else falls into place.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PROVERBS 4:23.

What would it look like if you were to drive good things—godly things, kind things, thoughtful things, non-racial, peaceful, and unifying things into your heart?

How much better off would your life be if you took Jesus seriously and really guarded what media you let influence you? How would your life change as a parent? How would your kids' lives change if they did the same thing?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How do certain media sources influence you negatively?

Which of these 4 suggestions would have the biggest payoff for you and why? Listen only to Christian music for 1 month. Use a Scripture memory app. Turn off the news for awhile. Be part of Bible Study.

Why would being in a Bible Study or a Small Group be helpful for the condition of your heart?

PRAYER

Praise God for healing and fixing the mess inside your heart. Pray that you would value and treasure Him above all else. Ask God to show you which sources of media are a negative influence in your life and to use new sources of media to change the condition of your heart.

COMMENTARY

| MATTHEW 15:18-20

Jesus then revealed that it is not the mouth of a person that is the source of defilement, but the heart. The heart represents the invisible, “inner person.” The inner person includes the mind and will—those components that determine moral character. The heart (not any external influence) is the source of all evil character, not the physical or spiritual “dirt” on a person’s hands. The “renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2) is critical for every believer. Christ detailed here the principle that a person is as he thinks in his heart. Entry into the heart is through the eye and the ear, not the mouth.

Jesus listed seven defiling sins that begin in a person’s heart. Some of these manifest themselves through avenues other than one’s mouth (e.g., murder, theft), but Jesus was not inconsistent here. Although the debate began over eating and washing, Jesus now began to broaden the discussion to encompass the whole-person expression of the evil in one’s heart. The mouth happened to be one of the most prominent tools for good and for evil (Jas. 3:1-12). Jesus’ list of sins was not meant to be comprehensive, but he gave a series of examples. Jesus mentioned adultery, a sexual sin that defiles a marriage vow. Sexual immorality is a broader category that includes all kinds of sexual sin. Slander includes all abusive speech, whether against God or other people.

| LUKE 6:45-46

Go to the orchards. Look at the fruit trees—old trees, limbs just barely hanging on, leaves dried and withered, infested with bugs. What kind of fruit do you expect from trees like these? Then look at the strong tree—limbs rising to the sky, loaded with beautiful green leaves, no bugs in sight. What kind of fruit will you look for on these trees? Now look in the mirror again. What kind of fruit do you expect from what you see there? Do you have a spiritual mirror to look at yourself? Does God’s Word reflect back at you the kind of person you are and the kind of fruit you are bearing? You must fit some category. Fig tree or thornbush, grapevine or brier?

Listen carefully to fellow believers. Study God’s Word diligently. Find out what category you are in. Get the real picture of the real you. Want to know what kind of person you are? Listen to

yourself. God has a spiritual rule. You are what your heart is. An evil heart produces evil results. A good heart produces good results. How do you know what the heart is producing? Listen to the mouth. Your daily conversation issues from your heart.

| PROVERBS 4:23

The heart, v. 23 says, is “the wellspring of life.” “Heart,” here as always, refers not to the physical organ but to the mind and even the whole personality of the individual. It is “the wellspring of life” in that the capacity to live with joy and vigor ultimately comes from within and not from circumstances. The corrupt heart draws one down to the grave, but Wisdom protects the heart from that corruption. This verse, perhaps in conjunction with Ezekiel’s vision of the River of Life (Ezek 47:1–12), apparently was the source of Jesus’ perplexing citation in John 7:38.