

WELCOME TO THE GREATER RENO CHURCH OF CHRIST

S E R M O N O U T L I N E & B U L L E T I N

Sunday, January 30, 2022



Today's Study Focus: Discovering True Devotion - What Christians Are Missing Part 4 When we stop to remember that God exists — that He created all that is from nothing; that He sustains everything we know, moment by moment, with just a word from His mouth; that He governs every government on earth; that He entered into his creation, taking on flesh, enduring weakness and temptation, suffering hostility to the point of death, even death on a cross, all to shower us with mercy, cleanse us of our sin, and secure our eternity with Him in paradise — it is stunning, isn't it, that we ignore and neglect him like we do. It is stunning, amazing, and perplexing, and yet so painfully familiar. Everyone who has followed Jesus knows what it is like to be distracted from following Jesus. Now, let's discover what true and unrelenting devotion to Him really is!

☑ **devotion** (noun) religious fervor; stressing zeal and service - **devotion** and the verb **devote** come from the act of taking a vow, **devoted** refers to one's commitment to another through love and loyalty. Miriam Webster

When It Comes To Devotion Are You 'In Theory' Or Are You 'In Practice'?

☑ **in theory** (idiom) used to say that something seems to be true or possible as an idea but may not actually be true or possible Miriam Webster

☑ **in practice** (idiom) used to say what is actually done or what the actual effect or result of something is Miriam Webster

- 21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Matthew 7:21-23 (NIV)
- 24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." Matthew 7:24-27 (NIV)

"in your name...prophesy...drive out demons...perform many miracles":

"everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice":

☑ This warning of Jesus applies to people who speak or say things to Jesus or about Jesus, but don't really mean it. It isn't that they believe Jesus is a devil; they simply say the words very superficially. Their mind is elsewhere, but they believe there is value in the bare words and fulfilling some kind of religious duty with no heart, no soul, not spirit – only bare words and passing thoughts. In the end, there is one basis of salvation; it isn't mere verbal confession, not "spiritual works," but knowing Jesus and being known by Him. It is our connection to Him – by the gift of faith that He gives to us – that secures our salvation. Connected to Jesus we are secure; without connection to Him all the miracles and great works prove nothing. **Enduring Word Bible Commentary**



Scripture Passages For Further Personal Study: Psalm 31:1-24 Into your hands I commit my spirit. 1 John 4:7-21 We love because He first loved us.



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Why You Should Take Comfort That God Knows Your Heart Crosswalk.com

God Knowing Your Heart Establishes the Foundation for Your Relationship ❤️

The fact that God knows your heart sets the foundation for your relationship with him. Here are two things God says about the heart.

- *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" – Jeremiah 17:9*
- *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." – Ezekiel 36:26*

A relationship with God can only be established when you come to the realization of what is in your heart. On our own, our hearts are as Jeremiah says, deceitful and wicked. I know we don't like to use these terms to describe our hearts because most people like to say they have a good heart. The problem is that a good heart is not good enough. We need a perfect heart and none of us have that. You are probably thinking, how can you find comfort that God knows your heart when it is in this condition? The reason is that God knows your heart, he sent a remedy to deal with it. We can take comfort in knowing that Jesus came to remedy our wicked and deceitful hearts. When God redeems us, he gives us a new heart so that we can follow him. This is what becomes the foundation of our relationship. A new heart, birthed by the Holy Spirit living inside us.

Because God Knows Your Heart it Allows You to Take the Mask Off ❤️

Of all the comfort you can find in God knowing your heart, perhaps this is the most important one. Since God knows your heart, this allows you to take the mask off. I cannot tell you how often we as believers wear masks around each other (this has nothing to do with covid by the way), and we also carry these same types of masks when we go before God. I just don't know why. In case you have forgotten, you cannot fool God nor can you hide your true intentions from God because as we saw in the verse above, God is looking at your heart. For this reason, you can take the mask off and be real and honest before God. In other words, tell God what is really in your heart because he knows what is there anyway. By hiding, you may fool yourself, but you are not fooling God. You can take comfort in knowing that God knows what is in your heart and yet he invites you to come before him anyway. No matter how you feel or what you are going through, tell God about it.



- If you are **weak**...tell him.
- If you are **hurt**...tell him.
- If you are **disappointed**...tell him.

Regardless of what it is, whether you are high or low, whether you feel defeated or victorious, or anywhere in between, get into the habit of pouring out your heart before God. He already knows and he can handle it. When you do, what you will find is comfort and grace and most importantly help in time of need. God cares for you and God knows your heart so take the mask off and start being honest before him.

God Knowing Your Heart Is the Basis for Reward ❤️

- *"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven." – Matthew 6:1*

It is so easy sometimes to focus on what you do. What you must also focus on is why you do it. Have you ever felt overlooked? Have you ever poured your all into something only for your motives to be questioned? One of the other reasons you can find comfort that God knows your heart is because it is the basis for your reward. In this verse in Matthew, Jesus is telling us there are people out there who do the right thing for the wrong reasons.

Outwardly they may look holy, selfless, prayerful, humble and any other type of spiritual look. However inwardly they are only doing it to be seen or some other selfish motive. They have the wrong heart. Isn't it good to know that when you do something with the right heart and motive that God sees it? When you help in secret not because you want to be seen but you want to be a blessing, God sees that. Everything you do for God that is done with the right heart and attitude, God sees it and will reward you for it. The reward may not come in this life, but God will reward you, nonetheless. That's why you don't need to search for validation from others, but you can find validation from God who looks and sees what you do and knows the motives of your heart.

When God Knows Your Heart it Positions You to Experience God's Grace ❤️

The final thing I want to share with you is because God knows your heart and it positions you to experience his grace. We often think of grace as God giving us what we don't deserve, which is true, but God's grace also refers to his strength to help us in time of need. Do you remember this verse from Corinthians?

- *"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'" – 2 Corinthians 12:9*

God's power of grace is made effective in your life when you are aware of your weaknesses. What makes this verse more amazing is God knows our heart and weakness and, despite that, is ready and willing to pour out strength to help us overcome them. However, to access that strength he is looking for people that will acknowledge their weaknesses. We can make the critical mistake of running from God because of our weaknesses, in effect, we are running from grace. We need to run to God with our weaknesses because there we will find grace.

You will ultimately discover that God who knows your heart will make his power perfect in the place of your greatest weakness. When you are honest about what is in your heart, which God knows anyway, this will not push God away. The opposite happens because God responds to you when you are honest about what is in your heart and that positions you to receive his grace.

- *"My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise." – Psalm 51:17*

So where do we go with these hearts that we have? You go right to God. Just the way you are with no pretenses. Simply put, God is looking for people who will examine their hearts, acknowledge what is in there, and come to him to allow him to deal with it. Best of all God already knows your heart and you can take comfort in knowing that he sees what is in your heart and he is willing to help anyway. This is just how wonderful our God truly is.