

## **You Are What You Love – Chap 7**

Cathy Howie – Oct 24, 2019 – Trinity Church / NEIndy

### **2019 Overarching Big Ideas**

- Dependence and discipline must coexist in real discipleship.
- Dependence on Christ as the only true definer of our worth, sustainer for our work, and guide for the way we should go.
- Discipline in that God allows us to participate in the extrapolation and delivery of His will internally in our hearts and externally in the world.

**Series Big Ideas/Objectives:** Worship is a proactive shaping of the heart and a heart shaped correctly will display Christian hospitality.

**Main Objective:** To show that you can shape your heart through worship.

**Summary:** Your worship is your life ritual. We wrongly have assumed that spiritual formation is primarily about information. It isn't. Changing our thinking doesn't automatically change our doing. That's because we aren't primarily thinking-beings, we are desiring-beings. We are constantly acting in a way to pull us closer to a version of the world that we desire/want over what we know. That's why you don't eat what you know you should or stop looking at pornography, or give up alcohol, or change your spending habits. What you desire is stronger than what you know. How do you change what you desire? Habits. Life liturgy.

### **MATERIALS**

Slides

## **Cathy's Minutes**

Thoughts on GP –

Christmas give

Tuesday drop in hours – devo/laundry

Interested? Send me an email, let's get together and chat!

## **Prayer**

Your infinite knowledge has been in the world from the very beginning

Making it possible for us to live for you by the power of the Spirit

Teach us, change us, make us new in You

## **Introduction**

You Are What You Love

Important concepts throughout the series:

What the good life is? How to get it? (Same slides Mike has used)

Our good life as Christians is different from culture's good life

Culture's answer to the good life always leaves us unsatisfied

The good life of the world is meaningless (*Hevel* - meaningless, vanity)

Smoke, vapor, mist – things that are real, but unsatisfying

Can't hold onto it, can't support our deep longings

The Book of Ecclesiastes has two Voices

The Teacher - shares wisdom learned from all his experiments about life

The Narrator -

Starts the book and introduces the teacher

Closes the book with a short reflection on the teacher's wisdom

Today we will be looking at this closing section as the narrator speaks

We are going to go through the text quickly to get flow of ideas

Then go back and look at some important details

## **Ecc. 12:9-14 (NIV)**

The Narrator sums up the Teachers thoughts like this:

*<sup>9</sup> Not only was the Teacher wise, but he also imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. <sup>10</sup> The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.*

<sup>11</sup> *The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one shepherd.* <sup>12</sup> *Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.*

The narrator is endorsing what the Teacher has shared  
The entire book has been an urgent plea to listen and learn  
Like a mom or dad who has made huge mistakes  
Pleading with their kids to learn from their lives  
Listen and learn – so you don't have to go through what I did

The Narrator continues:

<sup>13</sup> *Now all has been heard;  
here is the conclusion of the matter:*

Ecclesiastes cover all the main human desires  
It has been a grand experiment by the Teacher's to find purpose/meaning

This is what we have been waiting for throughout the entire book  
Drumroll please....

***Fear God and keep his commandments,  
for this is the duty of all mankind.***

<sup>14</sup> *For God will bring every deed into judgment,  
including every hidden thing,  
whether it is good or evil.*

The Narrator summarizes all 12 chapters of the book --  
***Fear God and keep his commandments,  
for this is the duty of all mankind.***

It is simple, easy to remember and understand  
Simplicity of this statement echoes others in Scripture:  
Love the Lord your God with all your... (Dt 6:4)  
Which is Jesus answer to "What is the greatest Commandment?"

The foundation of being able to keep his commandments is to **fear God**.  
(We talked a lot about that June 2018 – YOLO, Choose Wisely)  
Fear: Deep reverence, unconditional love, profound worship

Matthew Henry explains the next phrase *"This is the duty of all mankind"*

“[Fearing God and obeying his commandments] is all [our] business and all [our] blessedness; our whole duty is summed up in this and our whole comfort is bound up in this.<sup>1</sup>

Our business, duty – responsibility

Our blessedness, comfort – peace

Doing what we were created for always leads to peace

Raise your hand if you know this is true

Raise your hand if you are *fully convinced* that God’s way is always best for you

Raise your hand if you don’t always act on what you know

We have spent these 6 weeks exposing this disconnect

I believe this disconnect is the source of all the tension in our life

Although we know this to be true

We believe a lie that surpasses this truth:

The lie that someone or something is keeping me from the good life

Satan tells us - God is the one who is ruining my life

After all, he is the one who asks me to sacrifice my desires

To give up what I see as comfort, pleasure, and meaning

In reality – true pleasure can only come from God

We have learned that everything else is *hevel* – meaningless

The foundational issue causing the tension and disconnect is

Control

We know what to do and why, but we don’t

We think we know what we want, what will bring us pleasure

Pleasure doesn’t come from control

We **only** find **true** pleasure when we trust God **completely**

Use of superlatives, intentional!

In my early years I grew up next to a big dairy farm in lower Michigan (before U.P.)

Mid-afternoon the cows gathered in the barnyard

They wanted to get milked – a full udder becomes painful

Most cows knew the way into the barn was through the big double doors

They even knew the way to their individual stalls

But some heifers didn’t get it at all

Yes, they wanted to be milked

But for whatever reason, they wouldn’t go in

<sup>1</sup> Henry, M. (1994). [\*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume\*](#) (p. 1056). Peabody: Hendrickson.

Farmer Brown would give them a push on their hindquarters  
If that didn't do it, he took his cattle prod out of his pocket  
and gave them a jolt (Cattle prod picture)  
Sometimes even that didn't work, and a cow would go berserk  
At that point, the only thing to do  
was turn her back out to pasture (or shoot her)  
That was the cow, who by morning, was moaning in pain  
She got what she thought she wanted  
... and ended up miserable

This is the picture the Narrator paints back a few verses to Ecclesiastes 12:11  
"the words of the wise are like goads"  
A goad is a long stick with a point on it (Goad picture)  
According to Wikipedia: The pain when stuck with the sharp point causes  
animals "to cease their current activity and move in the direction  
opposite the source of the pain."

Used properly, a cattle prod or a goad  
Directs an animal where it's supposed to go  
And in my story, this is good for the cows  
Un-milked cows are not happy cows

The Narrator says the words of the Teacher are like goads  
If we were living our best life, we wouldn't need instruction  
Many books, or more education won't fix the disconnect  
Turn it around: God's instruction lead us to our best life  
This is built through habit, rhythms (attitude, actions, habits, rhythms)  
Change our auto-pilot

Structure is not the enemy – boundaries actually provide direction and safety  
We often fight against the structures  
We seek to gain control  
To break free from what we see as prison  
We miss the freedom that structure gives  
We don't see the gift that structure is  
How it guides us toward Christ

Have you noticed the example during the Scripture reading?  
We removed the structure of limiting distractions  
How did you do on the first reading?  
I was never successful in truly hearing the Word for all 6 weeks

This is the purpose of working hard to develop life rhythms  
Not to box us in, but to free us up



Diagram 1 – We are a *feeling* society

We think that unless there is great feeling behind something we are being fake

Ex: as we worship together – lifting our hands  
as we give someone a hug  
as we ...

Our feelings determine our actions



Diagram 2 – The Bible works the other way

The Bible commands us to praise God and lift our hands  
There isn't anything about feeling being the motivation

The Bible tells us to love God and one another  
We confuse that with a deep emotional feeling  
Sometimes there is deep emotion, but it's not required  
In fact, often it's the action that grows the feeling  
Pastor Mike: "Do what's right over how you feel."

James Smith says it like this:

"The love that attracts us to God is something that grows through practice and repetition, and if we want to pursue God ... we need to immerse ourselves in rituals and rhythms and practices whereby the love of God seeps into our very character and is woven into not just how we think but *who we are*... Worship is not some escape from "the work week." To the contrary, our worship rituals trains our hearts and aim our desires toward God and his kingdom so that, when we are *sent* from worship ... [we go] with a habituated orientation toward the Lover of our souls." James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love*, p. 187

How do we recalibrate our hearts toward the things of God?

How do we change the cultural narrative to God's voice?

How do we find the good life?

We fear God – deep reverence, unconditional love, profound worship

We keep his commandments –

By giving him our attention

Which leads to actions

That develop into habits

That build life rhythms

That God uses to transform our hearts

One action at a time, we switch the auto-pilot of our hearts

From the worldly meaningless *hevel*

To following God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength

Starting/ending my day example

Way easier in community (like on a mission trip)  
Spur one another on to connect our beliefs with right action  
Resets our auto-pilot  
Awareness is crucial  
Requires vigilance

Rom 12:2 (Zach - Use the graphic Kelly made if the words are big enough to read.  
If not, just put this text on the screen.)

**“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,** that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

**Marcus/Mike S**

Next Steps Cards

Where do you need help from your community to build good life rhythms --  
Where you put your attention?  
Acting in obedience despite lack of emotions?  
Developing good habits, rhythms, rituals that transform your heart?

Bring meaning to communion – *means of grace* ritual in community

## Resources

### Extension during the week

Write a 6-day guide toward new rhythms with some info from above

Check out FB/IG – will be posted about midnight for the next day

Focus is relationship, not strict rules

Do at least three this week?

Morning/evening

Memorize (Rom 12:2, others)

Read/pray everyday

Live a life of gratitude, set timer, write on thing thankful for

Prepare for Sunday – read, pray, keep a list to bring with you

Pick one of the above to practice for the next four weeks (habit > rhythm)

Email:

This Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, we will finish up talking about the “good life” and how to get it from the Book of Ecclesiastes. The final chapter provides the answer *The Teacher* has been hinting at throughout the entire book. Reversing the cultural narrative is summed up in a single sentence that we will work through to be able to reject meaninglessness and live a life of purpose in our world today.

## REFERENCES

Cattle Prod

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle\\_prod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle_prod)

Wikipedia: "In an electric cattle prod, which is the precursor to the modern day stun gun, dual surface [electrodes](#) produce a very high [voltage](#)/very low [current](#) [electric arc](#) between them, which, when pressed against conductive skin, produces a painful but superficial electric shock which stimulates the target to cease their current activity and move in the direction opposite the source of the pain."

Goad

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goad#/media/File:Ploughmen\\_Fac\\_simile\\_of\\_a\\_Minature\\_in\\_a\\_very\\_ancient\\_Anglo\\_Saxon\\_Manuscript\\_published\\_by\\_Shaw\\_with\\_legend\\_God\\_Spede\\_ye\\_Plo\\_ugh\\_and\\_send\\_us\\_Korne\\_enow.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goad#/media/File:Ploughmen_Fac_simile_of_a_Minature_in_a_very_ancient_Anglo_Saxon_Manuscript_published_by_Shaw_with_legend_God_Spede_ye_Plo_ugh_and_send_us_Korne_enow.png)

Logos references cited in text