

Holy Spirit's Uncomfortable Key to Help You Obey Mark 12

"Do you love Me with all your heart?" I was just reading my daily Bible reading like a good girl and then, He had to ask me that question. I squirmed. The question caught me off guard.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30a).

Even though I knew the verse like the back of my hand, I also knew if God was asking me a question, it wasn't because He was. He didn't know the answer. It was because He was about to teach me something. That probably meant I didn't know the answer as I thought I did.

Heart

"Do you really submit your emotions to Me and let Me take care of them?"

The heart is said to be the seat of emotions, but according to the *KJV Bible Dictionary*, it is a lot more. It is defined as "the seat of the affections and passions and the chief part; the vital part; the vigorous or efficacious part." The heart is what makes everything else in the body work together. It also holds our will, our real intentions, our conscience, character, understanding and spirit.

The heart and our emotions are a big deal. Our emotions and how we handle them reveal the true intents of our heart.

Instead of an automatic, "Yes of course, Lord," I realized there are times I think I can handle this little bit of frustration. Then it grows into large angst and then full-

blown anger, all because I didn't take that first little frustration to God. It was a small cloud that I allowed to grow into a thunderstorm with tornado watches being called. Had I gone to Him when it was just a small gray cloud, it would have been easily dispersed and taken care of.

"No, Jesus, I admit. At times, I let tornado warnings be sounded around me. When I do that, loving You doesn't even appear on the radar screen."

Mind

"Do you love Me with all your mind or do you use your mind to question everything I do?"

OK, this time He was stepping on my toes. I was a born refiner. That means I question everything at least once. I call it researching all my options. But to love Him with all my mind means I follow without question.

At this juncture of my life, God is asking me not to lay aside my mind, but to use it to allow Him to fill it with things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy (see Phil. 4:8, NIV).

I hung my head thinking knowing I had allowed my mind to think about too many wayward things. They might be tame by the world's standards, but I knew God's Word tells me to "not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of [my] mind" (Rom. 12:2a). It all starts with the input I allow to occupy space in my mind. Even if it takes up a small space, I am not loving God with all my mind.

Soul

"Do you love Me with your soul, your very character? When I ask you to do something do you do it right away revealing a faithful character?" I had never thought of the soul as my character.

The online dictionary defines character as “the personality, nature, disposition, temperament, temper and makeup of an individual.”

The KJV Bible Dictionary defines soul in much the same way. “The spiritual, rational and immortal substance in man, which distinguishes him from brutes; life; power; spirit or essence.”

This felt like a repeat of the other two. I am prone to take some time to think and weight my options. However, I was beginning to see that God was asking me to follow His lead as my soul’s first response to Him.

I had to admit that the thought of doing that instead of wandering through the minefield of my heart, mind and soul was becoming more and more appealing.

Strength

“And do you love Me with all your physical strength, taking care of your body in every way possible?” I sat uncomfortably counting the ways I didn’t do that.

I definitely felt I could give myself credit for taking of my body better than say, even 10 years ago. I asked Him to show me what more He wanted me to do. He’s been talking to me about resting more and taking a Sabbath every week.

I have been resisting the Sabbath concept. Yet if God Himself worked six days creating the world and everything in it and then rested for a day, why do I think I shouldn’t? Last weekend I took a complete Sabbath, 24 hours without emailing, typing or even taking care of clients. I let others do that and I intentionally rested by enjoying time with family and friends.

At the end of my Sabbath, I took an hour to fully complete a book proposal and get it emailed for the Monday-morning

deadline. I had a rested, less confused mind, soul, heart and body. Had I not taken the day off, I'm sure I would have worked all day and not gotten as much done as I did in that one hour. God showed me exactly what to fix, add and change. He is my strength.

God Questions

I love God's questions because they always lead to answers I haven't even asked yet. God wanted me to understand that He is aware that even the things I consider small will lead me away from being fully sold out to Him if I allow them into my life. I'm so glad He wants ALL of me, every single part, fully abandoned to Him.

We just celebrated Easter, the day that Jesus demonstrated His overwhelmingly great love for us. That alone should be cause to pause.

I chose to sit quietly and ponder why He did that and what my actual response should be to what He did. Even the little parts of me I tend to hold back from Him are like daggers thrust into His side. Those things are the reason He died all those years ago.

The truth is if I had been the only person alive, He would have still come to suffer, die, rise again and ascend to heaven that I might one day join Him there.

That alone should be enough to make sure I love Him with every single part of me.

Selah. Sit quietly and ponder what your response should be to Him. {eo}

Teresa Shields Parker is a wife, mother, Christian weight loss coach, speaker and author of *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor; Sweet Freedom: Losing Weight and Keeping It Off with God's Help* and *Sweet*

Change:True Stories of Transformation. *Get a free chapter of all her books, plus many other free resources on her blog at Teresa Shields . Connect with her there or on her Facebook page, Twitter, Pinterest or Instagram.*