

Heart Health: (Soul Care) - Workshop (1,5hrs) @ 4pm

(also see Heart Health Handout)

We are going to have an **interactive workshop**. I will ask some **questions**. There will be moments of **personal prayer** on your own and there will be little **activities**.

Pls **take part**, you will **get the most out of this workshop** if you **give yourself fully to it**, relax, enjoy.

When I say Heart Health... **What do you think of?**

♥ The word 'Heart' in Proverbs is often used to refer to the ***centre of one's inner life, the place from which a person does all thinking (intellect), feeling (emotions) and choosing (desires / your will)***. (Now that you are aware, just see how many times heart is used in scripture!)

**Scripture teaches** that our hearts health is **severely important!**

Prov 4v23: (different versions)

NIV - Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

NLT- **Guard** your heart above all else, for **it determines the course of your life.**

ESV - Keep your heart with all **vigilance**, for **from it flow the springs of life.**

NKJV - Keep your heart with all **diligence**, For out of it **spring the issues of life.**

Our heart is like the “**motivational headquarters**” of our lives. And so the health of our hearts **should be our primary focus!**

**How is that going for you? (rhetorical question)**

When we read Scripture and it **commands** us to guard our hearts, **action and initiative** are implied and **results are anticipated**. Just listen to..

Prov 4 v 20-23.

My son, pay attention to what I say;

turn your ear to my words.

21 Do not let them out of your sight,

keep them within your heart;

22 for they are life to those who find them

and health to one's whole body.

23 Above all else, guard your heart,

for everything you do flows from it.

Why is this a **command** and why do we need to be so **vigilant**?

**Sin** is deceitful and our hearts quickly go astray **from the worship of God to the worship of other things and of self.**

**We sit here today**, each of us have **past experiences, life circumstances, consequences of our own sin and of others sin** etc. Our lives can be beautiful and complex. These experiences and circumstances leave **deposits in our heart which damage, obscure and harden our hearts.**

***As Christ-followers we desperately need to learn how to deal with this accumulation in our hearts.***

**Think about the big events in your life that may have damaged, obscured or hardened your heart? (5min)**

**So let's think about this quickly.** If we **don't deal** with these heart deposits that we accumulate, our **hearts become sick** and we are **in danger of 'poor heart health'** which then, inevitably **leads to a whole variety of sins.**

**SINS like anger, resentment, bitterness.**

**Doubt & unbelief tend to grow in the soil of unprocessed hurt, frustration and unforgiveness.**

Good habits of Heart Health are essential..but what does this look like?

How do we do this?

(Hand out, hand out :)

We are going to have a look at a simple 4 step pattern/approach to Heart Health:

- 1) Processing Life's Experiences (through Lamenting)**
- 2) Dealing with Emotions (through Repenting & Forgiving)**
- 3) Taking on Truth (through Receiving)**
- 4) Refreshing the Heart (through Reviving)**

In a nutshell - **Fostering good heart health** by Lamenting, Repenting & Forgiving, Receiving and Reviving.

## Step 1 - Pour out your HEART to God:

**Lament definition:** *a passionate expression of grief, sorrow, regret, disappointment or complaint.*


Who is familiar with lamenting / laments often?


**If you are anything like me**, I only heard about lamenting a couple of years ago and quite frankly did not think I needed it. I was fine and had been fine up until then, or so I thought! Then I learned the following:

- Lamenting is a tool to be used when we **grieve over the loss of someone or something** dear to us.
- Lamenting is a tool to be used when we **feel helpless in our situations, when we are fearful or anxious.**
- The Bible instructs us to lament **over our sin.** *When we see our sin the way God does, we lament over it. We grieve at the evil arising in our own hearts and cry out to God to change us. Those who never lament over their own sin have not understood its power to destroy them, nor can they fully appreciate a Savior (2 Corinthians 5:21).*
- The Bible records that **God also laments over the sin and disobedience of His people** (Ezekiel 33:11).

Yikes! Ok, but there is good news...

A **third of the Psalms** in the Bible are considered Psalms of lament, and there is a whole book entitled **Lamentations!**

 Scripture shows us a **strong pattern** of people **identifying feelings, acknowledging pain, confusion, hurt & frustrations** and pouring them out to God in lament.

 We also see that **God is the appropriate audience** for our lament, and not actually people or these days social media or the like. **We are to Process with God, in His presence, through praying Psalms of lament.** Lament directed towards God is healthy.

**A.FROW:**

**LAMENT IS NOT A DESTINATION, BUT IT IS A LAYOVER TO THE DESTINATION OF JOY. IF WE DON'T LAMENT, WE CAN GET LOCKED IN THE PAST. -**

**Ok so let's write our own personal psalm of lament right now... (10min)**

Take a moment and think of something you would like to lament about..  
Then follow these few steps..

(see the hand out)

**Keep turning to the Lord - Our natural reaction to grief/sin may be to deny it, to ignore it, or to seek to numb it. (Psalm 4:1)**

**Bring your complaints - Godly complaint identifies conditions or events in the world or in our lives and brings them to God, saying, "Lord, look at what we are experiencing!" (Psalm 94:3)**

**Ask boldly - Healthy lament always moves to intercession instead of getting stuck in complaint.  
(Hebrews 4:16)**

**Choose to trust - After we complain and ask God to intervene, we turn to hope. If we know the promises of God, and if we know that He always keeps His promises, we can trust Him. (Psalm 31:14)**

**Here are twelve Psalms of lament to get you started:  
3, 10, 13, 17, 31, 42, 43, 60, 79, 80, 94, and 102.**

**Step 2 - Listen to your HEART emotions, & repent or forgive:**

**A.FROW - "EMOTIONS ARE A WICKED MASTER BUT A WONDERFUL SERVANT"**

Pouring out your heart to God in step 1, **helps you in identifying your heart's emotions** which is step 2. **Listening** to your heart emotions and **letting them lead you** to the root issue behind the feelings. **"THE THING BEHIND THE THING"**

**The Holy Spirit** is your helper and so he will help you to **search your heart & emotions** to see if there is anything you need to **repent** of or if there is anything you need to **forgive** others for.

**(Psalm 139:23-24)**

**Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.  
See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.**

**The Psalmist in Psalm 42 asks;**

**Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?**

**Ok, now we are going to do a little activity:**

- You have **just written** your own psalm of lament. Read it and **ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you why you are feeling this way..Name/label your emotions** - what are they and then ask **why** are you feeling these emotions, what is **triggering** them, what is the **root cause for these emotions**. **Often** our emotions will **lead us to reveal hurt** caused by others or some sin in us or lies we are believing.  
**So ask, what root hurt or sin or lie has caused these emotions?**  
**Wait on the Holy Spirit to answer you, to reveal to you.**
- **Take time to repent & to forgive**, open yourself to what your heart's emotions & the Holy Spirit has led you to see.
- **Often** we are harbouring **unseen emotions like doubt, envy, pride, arrogance, hypocrisy, a judgmental spirit etc.** Use the gifts of repentance & forgiveness to defuse any bitterness. The soil of unforgiveness grows many negative emotions, bitterness and resentment being very nasty ones.

**Ok take 5 min, Open your heart and ears to His voice and trust him with what comes to mind. (write it down if need be). Look at your lament psalm, pray, label your emotions, let them lead you to the root hurt, sin or lies, then repent or forgive .. (5min)**

**Often our own hearts are deceptive or rebellious while doing this** - process these emotions with God also, work them through **until repentance and forgiveness is sweet & what the heart yearns for..landing in a place of surrender and submission, humbled before your King.**

Then you would work through step 2 again with a humble heart.

The more you **practise** the quicker the process becomes. There may still be times when a root is **deep** and needs more time but in general, this practice can be fairly quick and painless. Remember, **God wants your repentance so that He can restore your freedom in Him and your relationship with Him. Gal 5v1: It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

**Close eyes and let this psalm wash over you - let his love wash over you**

**Psalm 139:**

**You have searched me, Lord,  
and you know me.**

**2 You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.**

**3 You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.**

4 Before a word is on my tongue  
you, Lord, know it completely.

5 You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.

7 Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?

8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
10 even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,"  
12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

13 For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
all the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.

17 How precious to me are your thoughts,[a] God!  
How vast is the sum of them!

18 Were I to count them,  
they would outnumber the grains of sand—  
when I awake, I am still with you.

**Step 3 - Speak to your HEART the truths of Scripture:**

**MARTIN LLOYD JONES - MOST UNHAPPINESS IN LIFE IS DUE TO THE FACT  
THAT YOU ARE LISTENING TO YOURSELF INSTEAD OF SPEAKING TO  
YOURSELF..**

We must bring the **unshakeable truths** of the Gospel to the **fickle temporary nature** of our hearts, thoughts & emotions.

Remember that the most accurate thing about you is **not what has been done to you but what Christ has done for you!**

John 1 v 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

The most authentic thing about you is **not what you feel, or what you have done, or what has been done to you - but what has been done for you by Jesus!**

John 3 v 16 & 17 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

**Consider what truth the Scriptures speak, to the feelings & circumstances you are dealing with..eg:**

**Disappointed or troubled** - John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

**Frustration or anger** - Ecclesiastes 7:9 Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.

**Guilt** - Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

**Lack of purpose** - Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Believe the truth, take on the truth in prayer.**

**Truth not lived, is Truth not believed - Do You Believe? By Paul Tripp**

This is a great time to also reach out to fellow brothers/sisters, **sharing what you have been processing and getting their help to discover & believe, help to take on for yourself, the truth of Scripture.** (for accountability and encouragement)  
Process with God first!

(Hebrews 3:13) But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

**Scripture is full of truths**, search them out as if you were **searching for gold** because when the time comes & it will, these **truths will be that precious to you, priceless.**

This is also a good time to talk about **guarding your heart** against wrong **motives** - Are you building God's Kingdom or your own? - the only difference is your heart.

It is the state of our hearts that determine whether our actions are **acts of worship** or **acts of warfare against God!** Within our heart there is a **continual war waging** between the kingdom of self and the kingdom of God. It's a war & the fight is for our heart, the 'motivation headquarters' of our lives.

**This war for the heart is super dangerous** because it is possible to build both kingdoms through the same activity! It's the same activity but with a different heart or a different motivation, and therefore a different result in eternity.

**Check your motives with God often.** Repent and ask Him to restore your motives to His original intent. Pray and ask Him to help you keep your motives pure.

**Thank God and Praise God often-** this will help your heart to stay humble and guard it from pride - if you are not building God's kingdom, then you are busy building your own & so will become proud. Pray prayers of Thanks and Praise,

**Take 5 min now and Pray through these 2 things..(5min)**

**What truth are you not believing? A Truth not lived is a truth not believed.**

**Ask Him to speak Truth over you now.**

**Check your motives with Him, ask him to redirect your motivation so that you are building His kingdom, and not your own.**

**Psalm 139 v 23 -24**

**Search me, God, and know my heart;**

**test me and know my anxious thoughts.**

**24 See if there is any offensive way in me,**

**and lead me in the way everlasting.**

**Prov 16v2 - All a person's ways seem pure to them,**

**but motives are weighed by the Lord.**

**Step 4 - Refresh your HEART in God:**

**Philemon 20 says: I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.** This kind of refreshment **cannot be controlled or manipulated by man.** To have your heart refreshed in Christ, **God must do it.** But

God does often do this through Godly community. There is a wonderful and mysterious refreshing that occurs when we commune with our fellow believers at church, life group or other times.

**A time of resting in God and resting from work** - a **Sabbath** is a beautiful way to refresh your heart in God. John Mark Comer with Practicing The Way - excellent for teaching on Sabbath and other disciplines. I always thought I knew what taking a Sabbath meant, until I did his course.

**A time of prayer, reading scripture, solitude, worship** - all these can refresh your heart in God. (even a good long prayerful sleep)

**Let God fill you!**

Rom 15v13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Be refreshed in God.** You have a shepherd who will bring you to sweetwaters to refresh your soul

(Ps 23)

A psalm of David.

The Lord is my shepherd;

I have all that I need.

He lets me rest in green meadows;

he leads me beside peaceful streams.

He renews my strength.

He guides me along right paths,

bringing honor to his name.

Even when I walk

through the darkest valley,[a]

I will not be afraid,

for you are close beside me.

Your rod and your staff

protect and comfort me.

You prepare a feast for me

in the presence of my enemies.

You honor me by anointing my head with oil.

My cup overflows with blessings.

Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me

all the days of my life,

and I will live in the house of the Lord

Forever.

**Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you** afresh until rivers of living water flow from within you (John 7:37) On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! 38 Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" Worship God again, lift your eyes to your Father seated on the throne, to Jesus, your great High Priest & Mediator & to the Holy Spirit, your Helper.

**Listen to 2 Songs now**

**Draw me Closer - shane and shane (6min)**

**Great are you Lord - All sons & daughters (5min)**

While you listen - Give over any other deposits that are lingering, any other negative emotions, and other roots that you are holding onto, empty out your bucket and fill it with freedom, forgiveness, peace, joy

**FINISH**

*If you got stuck along the way, or are feeling heavy, please come speak to me afterwards.*

*This exercise is to leave you feeling as if it is well with your soul. A bit tired, cause it was hard work, but lighter, freer and wholesome, loved, full.*