

Ezekiel 2:9-3:11—God Must Turn Me Upside Down Before I Can Turn the World Upside Down

Memory Verse

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Revision: The Call to Ministry—The Purpose of our Calling

The following scriptures clearly summarise the calling to ministry for every believer:

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 NLT (paraphrase)

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

¹⁸ And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to Himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. ¹⁹ For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And He gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. ²⁰ So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" ²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin [to be sin for us], so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

As we learned in Ezekiel last week, our audience will be hardened against the gospel and we should expect that at least some of the people we talk to will reject both God's message of salvation from coming judgement, as well as us the messengers, just like happened to Jesus (see John 7:7 and 15:18).

We also learned that like God told Ezekiel to speak only what He told him to speak (Ezekiel 2:7), and like Jesus also only spoke what the Father told Him to speak (see John 4:34, 8:28, 12:49, 14:10), we also must only speak God's words; not our own thoughts, opinions, dreams, or other ideas. ***What we speak on behalf of God must line up with the word of God.***

Finally, we also saw God tell Ezekiel 3 times, "do not be afraid" (Ezekiel 2:6). Remember God's promise in:

Hebrews 13:5b-6 NKJV

"For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ⁶ So we may boldly say:

"The Lord is my helper;

I will not fear.

What can man do to me?"

This week: God Must Turn Me Upside Down Before I Can Turn the World Upside Down

Ezekiel 2:7-3:15 NKJV

7 You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious. 8 But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.”

9 Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. 10 Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe.

3:1 Moreover He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.” 2 So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.

3 And He said to me, “Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.” So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.

4 Then He said to me: “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them. 5 For you are not sent to a people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, but to the house of Israel, 6 not to many people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, had I sent you to them, they would have listened to you. 7 But the house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted. 8 Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. 9 Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.”

10 Moreover He said to me: “Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears. 11 And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord God,’ whether they hear, or whether they refuse.”

The Scroll: A Complete Message from the Beginning of Time

Ezekiel 2:7-9 NKJV

7 You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious. 8 But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.”

9 Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. 10 Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe.

v 9 **Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me:** This hand is either the hand of one of the cherubim in the vision or the hand of the Lord.

v 9 **and behold, a scroll of a book was in it:** The scroll represents the word of God which Ezekiel is to proclaim to the nation of Israel.

“This emphasises that God’s word was not only the spontaneous word spoken to His appointed prophets. God had a plan, a purpose, and authority for His *written* word” (David Guzik).

In other words, the written word of God which we are reading now was already written in heaven before it was spoken by the prophets. God's word will never change. Consider what Jesus said about the Scriptures in:

Matthew 5:18-19 NKJV

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle [the smallest detail] will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. ¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

As we learned last week, we must speak *only* God's words. If we don't, we will lose our reward (*he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven*). Why? Because bad doctrine leads to bad behaviour and the wrong attitudes (e.g. works gospel leads to pride)—we don't want to be responsible for causing others to sin or causing them to stumble by encouraging them to have the wrong ideas about God and salvation. The worst possible scenario is that our false teaching or poor example actually encourages others to reject Christ.

Truly we need to realise that our commission to be God's ambassadors is a very high and responsible calling; there is nothing as important as it in all the world. God has placed in our hands the words of life and death. We must ask ourselves, "Is God pleading through me, "Come back to God?"" (see 2 Corinthians 5:20). The whole theme through the book of Ezekiel so far has been, "the call to ministry". Being a witness for Christ is our primary purpose in life. It should be what we put most of our time and energy into. There is great reward for those who win souls (see Daniel 12:3).

v 10 **Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside:** Usually parchments were only written on one side, the fact that it was written on both sides was "Implying not only a well-defined but also a complete message. Ezekiel may not modify it with his own comments, nor does God allow himself any room for adjustments" (Block).

A Difficult Message

v 10 **and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe:** There wasn't much good news at this stage for the Israelites. Because of their prolonged rebellion, it was pretty much "repent of your sins and change your ways or else you'll die." They were out of chances. God's patience had worn thin. Of course God did show mercy in judgement as He loves to do—God is merciful and gives us all many chances to respond to His grace and mercy. However, the bottom line was that they were continuing in wilful sin, and sin has consequences, deadly consequences.

This message of man's sinfulness and rebellion against God is universal or ubiquitous, being found throughout the Bible, and has often been rejected by the majority, often spitefully. Jesus explains why in:

John 7:7 NKJV

The world ... hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.

Matthew 7:13-14 NLT (paraphrase)

"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. ¹⁴ But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.

Pride is the ultimate enemy of our souls. The refusal to accept our wretchedness, spiritual poverty and sinfulness is what stops the majority of people from accepting God's gift of salvation. Instead of humbling themselves and turning to God, they harden their hearts and rebel against God, choosing the "highway to hell," the wide and easy road.

It's important that we recognise the root cause of people's rejection of us and God's message; they are not rejecting us, but the Father. Jesus put it clearly in:

John 15:18-21 NLT (paraphrase)

"If the world hates you, remember that it hated Me first. ¹⁹ The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. ***I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.*** ²⁰ Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' ***Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you.*** And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. ²¹ ***They will do all this to you because of Me, for they have rejected the One who sent Me.***

This helps us, like Jesus and Ezekiel, not to take people's rejection of us personally. Why? Because ultimately, it's not us that they are rejecting, but the Father. This should cause us to have compassion on them, remembering that they are headed for eternity in the Lake of Fire. We need to ask ourselves some very important questions: How far am I willing to go to reach the lost? How much rejection and ridicule am I willing to take? What am I prepared to lose or give up for the sake of the gospel? How much do I really love those who are perishing?

God Must Turn Me Upside Down Before I Can Turn the World Upside Down (v 1-11)

In Chapter 3 we come to an important concept which God repeats three times. God was making sure Ezekiel didn't miss this message, and so we must not miss it either. I have bolded the command to eat the scroll, and underlined the command to speak to the children of Israel. Notice that the command to **eat** the scroll always comes before the command to **go** and **speak** to the Israelites. This is always the pattern and can be seen in all the great people in the Bible used by God; preparation precedes being used by God, and the preparation always involves "eating" the word of God.

Ezekiel 3:1-4, 10-11 NKJV

Moreover He said to me, "**Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.**" ² **So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.**

³ **And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.**

⁴ **Then He said to me: "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.**

¹⁰ **Moreover He said to me: "Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears. ¹¹ And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord God,' whether they hear, or whether they refuse.**"

The more I digest or eat the word, the more I am changed by God to become like God, and therefore the more effective I am in sharing His word (see 2 Corinthians 3:18)

Acts 17:6b-7 NKJV

“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. ⁷ Jason has harboured them, and these **are all acting** contrary to the decrees of Caesar, **saying** there is another king—Jesus.”

This is the accusation levelled against the apostles and other missionaries in the book of Acts. Notice that the unbelievers could clearly see the difference in the way these believers **acted**, as well as what they **said**. Notice also that God first changed them, and then sent them out to change the world. Especially for Paul, there was a long period of preparation. Finally notice also that the way they behaved and spoke was upside-down or opposite to the ways of the world.

We should all ask ourselves this question, “If I was put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict me?” These early Christians were so salty that they were stinging the consciences of the unbelievers around them. They were so pure and bright to look as they reflected the glory of God that they made the unbelievers uncomfortable in their presence. This is the idea behind these verses in Ezekiel, *the principle that preparation of the heart by ingesting the word of God is required to make us ready and able to be used by God.*

Ezekiel 3:1 NKJV

Moreover He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.” ² So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.

“Here, the Lord says to Ezekiel, **“Before you go out and give to others, chow down yourself.”** Sometimes people who want to minister are not devoted to devouring the Word of God themselves. The result is that we have a lot of messengers with very little message, a lot of ministers with very little to say” (Jon Courson).

v 1 **Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll:** Here God repeats His command to Ezekiel to eat the scroll with the scroll now in front of him. As we spoke about last week, eating the scroll represents eating or digesting the word of God—prioritising our spiritual food as we do our physical food. Meyer does a great job of explaining why it’s so important to eat the word (make it a part of us) before we share it:

“It is specially incumbent on those who have to go forth and speak, to open their mouths and eat the [scroll]. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that, because we are constantly handling God’s Word for the purpose of teaching and exhorting others, we are therefore feeding on it for ourselves. It is possible to acquire an intellectual knowledge of the truth, while the heart is entirely unaffected.”

This is a warning to all of us. In the absence of spending quality time with God in our personal devotions, our study of the word for other reasons doesn’t reach our hearts, only our heads. The other reasons for studying the bible include: academic study, bible college, church, sermon preparation, staff or student devotions, and bible studies with other people, programs to overcome sin—basically any circumstance where you are studying the Bible because you are obligated to, because you have to, or because it’s expected of you. Why? It’s all comes down to motive; *am I doing it to draw near to the Lord? Am I diving into the word of God simply because I want to?* Here are some searching questions that we should ask ourselves?

***Am I studying the word because of my love for God, or because I have to?
Am I reading the Bible because I get to or because I got to?
Is it by grace or works?***

When I neglect my personal devotions it means that I have decided that other things are more important than my relationship with God—e.g., sleep, study, pleasure, work, food, etc. This is why, whenever I neglect my relationship with God by not spending time seeking God through His word, any other Bible study or preparation is for others and not for God—*because I'm doing it for the wrong motive—I've already decided that God is not the highest priority in my life—if He was I would have gotten up early and spent time with Him.* When I neglect my relationship with God, studying the Bible for other reasons is not an act of worship or drawing near to the Lord, but rather a work I do to impress others or just something I do only because I have to.

Studying the word for other reasons other than drawing near to God and seeking a deeper relationship with God is like me being a spiritual chef.

Instead of eating the word for myself, I'm preparing it for others—but the food I prepare for others does me no good.

A chef can be around food all day and all night long and yet still starve to death. He may know everything about food and have access to all kinds of nutritious food, but if he doesn't eat it himself, it does him no good.

The real test of my devotion to God and my love for Him is the time I spend with Him each morning, reading and studying His love letter to me for no other reason than to know God more intimately by hearing His voice through His word. This is the litmus test for our love for God, the reality check that reveals the true condition of our hearts.

Remember, love is a verb, an action word, not just an emotion. We prove our love for God by what we do, not by how we feel.

An important practice or principle that protects us from slipping from grace to works, from our motivation changing from love to grudging obligation, is making sure that what I study for personal devotions has nothing to do with what I am preparing for others. Why? Because if it does, then I will never know my true motive—for God or otherwise. How will I know if I am eating for myself, feeding myself, growing in my relationship with God, or, I am simply a spiritual chef preparing meals for others, but starving my own spirit.

Proverbs 4:23 NLT paraphrase

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

I have found that when I prioritise my personal devotions (my personal study of the word), then what I do for others becomes valuable and life-changing for me as well. But if I skip my personal devotions, my study for church just becomes an academic pursuit to prepare a bible study or sermon for other people. Why? Because my personal devotions are the evidence of a heart that is truly seeking God. Here is a very important biblical principle that we must remember:

My establishing time for God is me preparing my heart to seek God.

Thus if I am not choosing to spend time with God each morning, I am not actively preparing my heart to seek the Lord (see 1 Samuel 7:3, 2 Chronicles 12:14, 19:3, Ezra 7:10).

If I haven't taken the time to prepare my heart in my morning devotions, then my heart will not be submitted to God, nor will I be able to receive or hear from God.

Ezra 7:10 NKJV

For Ezra had **prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach** statutes and ordinances in Israel.

2 Chronicles 12:14 NKJV

And [King Rehoboam] **did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.**

Again, “*Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life*” is such an important concept. ***If I'm not preparing my heart to seek God through His word (see Ezra 7:10), then I won't be seeking God.*** It's that simple. Getting my heart to a place where it is receptive to hear from God requires daily discipline. Jesus Himself had to get away each day in the mornings to spend quality time with the Father.

Mark 1:35 NKJV

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, [Jesus] went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

I therefore make it a point to never mix business and pleasure; my quiet time is always reading a different part of the bible than what I am teaching. I have found that when I prioritise my personal devotions and bible reading, then often my study for church deeply touches my heart as well, because my love for God and His word is genuine—I'm not just studying the word of God as a means to an end, to impress people or to fulfil a duty—I'm doing it because I really want to—even if I didn't have to study for the Sunday service, I would want to do it anyway. It becomes a joy and not a burden. *I get to, not I got to*, and what I share with others becomes a lot more powerful and effective.

v 1 **And go, speak to the house of Israel:** “The eating of the scroll was not just a spiritual experience for Ezekiel. It acted out a spiritual truth: Ezekiel must *receive* and *internalise* and *digest* the word of God before he could a messenger of that word to **the house of Israel,**” (David Guzik).

Ezekiel 3:2-3 NKJV

So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.

³ And He said to me, “Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.” So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.

v 2 **So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll:** This would have seemed very real to Ezekiel, but remember that it was a part of the vision which included the massive chariot, the four huge cherubim and the Glory of the LORD.

v 3 **And He said to me, “Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.” So I ate:** This now describes the degree that we should eat the word of God—until we are full. This will take time and commitment on our part to remain at the table, so to speak, and keep eating what God gives us morning by morning. But who wouldn't want to receive what God gives? Who wouldn't want to eat God's spiritual breakfast every morning, enjoying sweet fellowship with our Father?

v 3 **Son of man, feed your belly:** This clearly shows that it is my responsibility to feed myself. God won't force feed us. God will never force us to take in His word.

If I am to grow, then I must choose to eat.

v 3 **So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness:** Ah, the blessing that comes from eating the words of God and being transformed into the image of God. It was not only sweet and delicious, but as sweet as the sweetest thing he had every tasted before (honey). There will never be anything more desirable or sweet or satisfying than the word of God. Consider what the psalmist said in:

Psalm 119:103 NKJV

How sweet are Your words to my taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Some people say that they don't find the word of God sweet. Spurgeon gives a reason for this:

"If the word of God be not very sweet to me, have I an appetite? Solomon says, 'The full soul [loathes] honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.' Ah, when a soul is full of itself, and of the world, and of the pleasures of sin, I do not wonder that it sees no sweetness in Christ, for it has no appetite!" (Spurgeon on Psalm 119:103)

"The prophet declared that having eaten the scroll, he found it in his mouth 'as honey for sweetness,' and by this declaration reveals that whereas the ministry he was about to exercise would be difficult, yet he himself was in perfect accord with the purpose of God and found delight in His will." (Morgan)

This last quote reminds me of what was said about Jesus in:

Psalm 40:8 NKJV

I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law is within my heart."

Also, Jesus said in:

John 4:34 NKJV

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

In other words, it was was sweet, nourishing, and satisfying for Jesus to walk in obedience to the Father. This is the joy of abiding in Christ, of experiencing the joy of walking with the Lord no matter how dark or difficult the days may be. This is what Jesus wants for us as well. Notice again the connection between God's word remaining in our hearts and the resulting obedience and joy that follows.

John 15:7-11 AMP

If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] **and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts**, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

8 When you bear (produce) much fruit, My Father is honoured and glorified, and you show and prove yourselves to be true followers of Mine.

9 I have loved you, [just] as the Father has loved Me; abide in My love [continue in His love with Me].

10 If you keep My commandments [if you continue to obey My instructions], you will abide in My love and live on in it, just as I have obeyed My Father's commandments and live on in His love.

11 I have told you these things, **that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy and gladness may be of full measure and complete and overflowing.**

God wants to give us so much more than what the world offers. But we must be willing to give up the worldly pleasures to experience the heavenly pleasures that only follow submission and obedience to the word of God. We will never know or experience the heavenly pleasure and satisfaction the God offers until we are willing to, by faith, let go of the worldly pleasures. Will I by faith believe that what God says is true, or will I believe satan's lie that God is nasty and mean and wants to keep the good stuff from me, and that I can find greater satisfaction and contentment in the world?

Notice what Jesus said in John 15:7, "***If ...My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts.***" **Eating** the word of God results in us **obeying** the word of God, which results in us **abiding** with God and remaining in or experiencing God's love, which is the source of **complete and overflowing joy**.

Application: Our Authority to speak God's words comes from how we live, not just what we say.

Luke 4:32 NKJV

And they were astonished at [Jesus] teaching, for His word was with **authority**.

"The **authority** of Jesus was not only evident as He taught, but also in His life" (David Guzik). People will only listen to us, especially our families and our friends, if what we say matches what we do and who we are. Jesus had tremendous authority because everything that He did matched with what He taught. Jesus only said those things that pleased God (see John 14:24), and Jesus only did those things that pleased God (see John 5:19, 8:29). Jesus had a genuine relationship with God. He was real.

If we are seeking satisfaction from the world and are not willing to give up worldly pleasures and sin, then our hearts will grow hard, and we will become like those who we are trying to win to Christ. The result? We become hypocrites. Remember, those around us see the change in us long before we do (both for evil and for good).

Hebrews 3:12-13 NLT (paraphrase)

Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, **turning you away from the living God.** ¹³ You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," **so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.**

You see, we seem to get away with our sin. No-one seems to notice that we aren't reading the word each day, or we are rushing it or just giving lip service to it. Also, no-one sees the sins we do in secret more and more frequently, nor do they know the changing desires of our hearts towards worldly pleasures. We continue to go to church, go to work, pray for our families and friends, attend bible studies etc. On the outside everything seems normal and okay. But what is happening to our hearts?

We may be refusing to give up worldly pleasures that are holding us back from progressing as a believer: TV, movies, gaming, drugs, alcohol, worldly friends, etc. We may be continuing in sin that is harmful to us—addictions that are keeping us under satan's control—we do the things that please satan and not the things that please God. We may also be slow to obey a command that God has given us to obey (sins of omission), like being faithful to give generously, to talk to that person or neighbour that God keeps putting on your mind, or to take up a role in ministry and serve in some capacity. All these things have one thing in common—they are disobedience to the word of God, which is the same thing as refusing to submit to God's authority over our lives.

Again, what happens to our hearts when we resist and rebel against God? We are deceived by sin and our hearts become hardened against God. We think we are getting away with our sin, we think that there are no consequences, but there are, and the worst one is that our hearts become hardened against God. Understand, any sin will harden our hearts against God—our relationship with God will begin to wilt and die—and we will, much quicker and to a much greater extent than we realise, become very much like the world in our attitude and beliefs.

This is why God first asked Ezekiel to eat the scroll, to digest the word of God so that it became a part of Him. Of course, when the word of God becomes a part of us, it changes us to become more like Christ. As someone said:

“The Bible will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from the bible”

Have you noticed just how quickly our desire for the word of God diminishes when we choose sin over God—how difficult it becomes to find the time or motivation to read the Bible? Thankfully, the opposite is also true. Have you ever noticed how quickly our desire to read the word increases when we truly repent of our sin and become genuine about setting our hearts to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (see Matthew 6:33). God asks us to seek Him with our whole heart. Halfhearted obedience won't cut it. You can't expect to keep a little of the world and think that you can draw near to God. As we studied a few weeks ago, we need to serve God with our whole heart otherwise we will be double minded and unstable in all our ways (see James 1:8, 4:8). God will be satisfied with nothing less than all of us—total surrender—and this is our reasonable and logical response to what God has already done for us (see Romans 12:1-2).

Now, you say, “But I'm not perfect and I never will be.” True, but we are all growing, either to be more like Christ or more like the world. We are either, by faith and by the power of the Spirit, swimming upstream against the current of the world or being pushed downstream by it—there is no middle ground. *No-one is expecting perfection from us, but what they are expecting is change; if what I say I believe is true, then I should be growing to be less worldly and more Christlike.* It's only when people around us see this change in us that they will know that our relationship with God is real, and therefore want the same for themselves.

The point here is that the depth my walk with God (how much I choose love God) determines the extent that I can be used by God (see 2 Timothy 2:20-22), and therefore my effectiveness in winning others to Christ. The closer my walk with God, the more of a real or genuine Christian I am, and therefore the greater my impact on the world around me—my light shines brighter bringing more glory to God, and I am more salty (see Matthew 5:13-16).

How can I say I love those around me and want to see them saved if I am not willing to sacrifice worldly pleasures so I can live a holy life and put God first. Again, it all comes back to the condition of my heart; ***if I'm lacking in love for others, it's because I'm lacking in love for God.***

Conclusion

Our motive for feeding on the word must be for our own personal relationship with God, and not for anyone else or anything else. We must be disciplined and ready to count the cost of what it will take to prepare our hearts to seek God with our whole heart, making God the most important part of our lives.

If we choose not to prepare our hearts, if we don't ingest the word of God, then we will be ineffective in whatever ministry God calls us to. Head knowledge isn't good enough. Head knowledge doesn't reach or change the heart. Head knowledge only puffs up. Will we be like Ezekiel and obey God's command to "*eat this scroll... feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you... receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears,*" **and then** "*go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord God,' whether they hear, or whether they refuse*" (taken from Ezekiel 3:1-4, 10-11 NKJV)