**RE-ROUTING OUR PASSIONS**

**Mark 7:14-23**

* **Jesus recognized that people need to be “re-routed” at times in regards to their passions, priorities, perspectives, etc.**
* **The “route” we travel in life is very important because our direction determines our destination.**
* **Jesus was telling them, and us, that our internal “character” is more important than our outward “appearance” if we are going to have the right direction and destination in life (Mark 7:1-23).**
* **Many people live by the “dictates of their heart” rather than the directions given to us by God’s Word and God’s Spirit.**
* *“Guard your heart above all else,   for it determines the course of your life.”* (Proverbs 4:23 NLT)
* *“The heart of man plans his way . . .”* (Proverbs 16:9 ESV)
* **“Following our heart” will cause us to engage in sinful and self-serving activities and relationships.**
* Jesus - *“It’s not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart.”* (Mark 7:15 NLT)
* **To “re-route our passions” we must learn to re-direct our “heart” to desire and comply with God’s Word and way for us.**

***“RE-ROUTING OUR PASSIONS” REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING:***

**THE CONDITION OF THE HUMAN HEART**

* Jesus - *“Nothing that goes into a person from outside can defile him but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.’”* (Mark 7:15)
* Jesus - *“‘What comes out of a person is what defiles him.”* (Mark 7:20)

***The Bible Teaches Us That:***

* **THE HUMAN HEART IS DECEITFUL**
  + *“The human heart is the most deceitful of all things . . .”* (Jeremiah 17:9 NLT)
  + It’s bad to be deceived by others, but even worse to be deceived by ourselves.
  + **We deceive ourselves when we make commitments to God and yet have no plan to keep those commitments.**
* **THE HUMAN HEART IS DISEASED**
  + *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”* (Jeremiah 17:9 ESV)
  + **Jesus came to help people with “sin-sick hearts.”**
  + Jesus - *“Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”* (Mark 2:17 NLT)
* **THE HUMAN HEART IS DEVILISH**
  + *“People’s hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong.”* (Ecclesiastes. 8:11 NIV)
  + **Ungodly hearts lead to ungodly activities and relationships.**

***“RE-ROUTING OUR PASSIONS” REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING:***

**THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE HUMAN HEART**

* *“Guard your heart above all else,   for it determines the course of your life.”* (Proverbs 4:23 NLT)

***Giving In To Our “Heart” Leads To:***

* **DYSFUNCTION IN OUR LIVES**
  + Jesus - *“For from within, out of people’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, 22 adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, self-indulgence, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness.”* (Mark 7:21-22)
  + **Following the “desires of our heart” leads to all kinds of dysfunction and destructive behavior in our lives.**
  + **Following the “desires of our heart” never brings joy, peace or fulfillment, while following God’s way and will does.**
  + Jesus - *“A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.”* (John 10:10)
* **DISTANCE FROM GOD IN OUR LIVES**
  + The Lord - *“These people approach me with their speeches to honor me with lip-service, yet their hearts are far from me…”* (Isaiah 29:13)

***“RE-ROUTING OUR PASSIONS” REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING:***

**THE CURE FOR THE HUMAN HEART**

* *“Guard your heart above all else,   for it determines the course of your life.”* (Proverbs 4:23 NLT)

***Guarding and Changing Our Heart Involves:***

* **CRUCIFYING OUR “FLESH”**
  + *“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to His cross and crucified them there.”* (Galatians 5:24 NLT)
  + **To “crucify our flesh” means to “die” to our sinful desires.**
  + **“Crucifying our flesh” needs to become a daily activity.**
* **GIVING OURSELVES TO GOD**
  + *“Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires.  . . . Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life.”* (Romans 6:12-13 NLT)
  + **When we “give ourselves to the Lord” we are declaring that He is in charge of 100% of our life.**
* **RENEWING OUR MIND**
  + *“Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.”* (Romans 12:1-2)
  + **We renew our mind by: 1) learning the Word of God (Psalm 119:111), and 2) focusing our mind on godly thoughts and emphases (Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:2).**
* **FOLLOWING GOD’S SPIRIT**
  + *“Let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves.”* (Galatians 5:16 NLT)
* **CHANGING OUR FRIENDS**
  + *“Oh, the joys of those who do not  follow the advice of the wicked,  or stand around with sinners,  or join in with mockers.”* (Psalm 1:1 NLT)
  + **The “ungodly hearts” of friends will lead them and us astray.**
  + *“Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’”* (1 Corinthians 15:33)
* **We all need a “heart transplant” at some time in our lives.**
* The Lord - *“I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow My decrees and be careful to obey My regulations.”* (Ezekiel 36:26-27 NLT)

**Question – *“What kind(s) of ‘heart surgery’ does the Lord need to perform on me today?”***

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**UNDERSTANDING**

1. What does Mark 7:14-23 say about God/Jesus?
2. What does Mark 7:14-23 say about the human heart?
3. What was Jesus “combatting” in his explanation to the disciples about food not defiling us, but what defiles us is in the heart? Look back at the previous verses in chapter 7 for more context.

**DIGGING DEEPER**

* What is the difference between “legalism” and “obedience” to the Lord?

1. Why do so many Christians attempt to look “holy” on the outside while ignoring internal issues? Why is this counterproductive as a Christian?
2. Why is the “follow your heart” message so prevalent in culture? How can you combat this in your own life?
3. Jesus does expect obedience to His teachings, but how can you truly overcome the sinful passions of your heart, knowing you don’t have the ability to in and of yourself?
4. Spend some time praying and asking the Lord to show you areas of your heart that you have not surrendered to Him. Ask the Lord to do “heart surgery” to eradicate those sinful areas.

**Loving Outward:**

* Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
* Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
* Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?