

Experiencing God's Heart for Others - Part 1 of 2

Cheryl Roth
July 5, 2016



How do you connect to God's heart? How do you tap into that source of unconditional love that is the creator and ruler of the universe? The cosmic heart.

We talk about this, we believe in it theoretically, but do we act in unity with such grandiose ideas? Maybe we think we do, or at least try to, but do you believe it's possible to actually live centered on God's heart all the time? Can you be the embodiment of God's love?

The Lifestyle of Love

We admire great people like Mother Teresa, Ghandi, the Dalai Lama, and Rev. and Mrs. Moon because their lifestyles exemplified love. They all accomplished great things because of the way they thought and lived. Jesus guidance to his followers was that they should adopt three lifestyles in order to live in God's kingdom:

1. "Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect"
2. "Judge not lest you be judged.... remove the mote from your own eye first...the measure you meet will be the measure you receive..."
3. "Love one another, as I have loved you"

Let's look at Jesus guidance more closely so we can understand how to live it.

1. We need to redefine the word perfect. Our Western concept of perfect has to do with dotting all the "i's" and crossing all the "t's". This is not what Jesus meant. In this reference "perfect" is defined by "as your Heavenly Father is".

How is God perfect? God is the origin of love, never ending love, unconditional love. A balanced yin/yang love (masculine & feminine); compassion, nurturing, understanding and encouraging balanced with structure, order, logic and a driving force that seeks to achieve and strives to fulfill... and so much more.

2. What does it mean to not judge and examine yourself first? Does it mean that you can never think that something is wrong? No, not at all.

You can be shocked and surprised and even upset and unhappy about wrongdoing. The important thing here is to be sure that your concern has the other person's best interest in mind. But this is tricky, because we have to be aware of our own motivation. We also need to learn how to express our concern for the other person's wellbeing rather than criticizing.

Whatever we see in other people is also in our self, so we can use the wrong we see to check ourselves. Self-reflection and honesty take a lot of effort. If it's necessary to point out someone else's problems it should be done with the intention to help them, to teach in support of their original mind. But Jesus goes on to say that, if you judge someone you will likewise come under judgment. I have always found this to be true in my life.

3. How has Jesus loved us? He was a teacher, a friend, a healer, and he exemplified living and dying for the sake of others.

When we look at the Messiah and say, "*I can't be like that, he's the son of God, I'm just human.*" or "*I'm a sinful person.*" Not only are we judging ourselves with our own viewpoint, but we are judging God with our viewpoint as well.

We're saying, "*God, your plan is just too farfetched if you expect everyone to become like Jesus.*" – How do you think God feels about that? Perhaps you have experienced how it feels to be judged or criticized by your children.

However, even though we lack faith, we lack confidence, we doubt and are skeptical, God is patient. That's called Grace.

Story of My Awakening to Grace

When I was 16 I had a bad accident in my parent's' car. At the time the accident happened they were on an airplane flying to my grandfather's funeral. I was devastated, overwhelmed and clueless about how to handle the situation. Fortunately, the police and others involved were sympathetic.



My real fear though was telling my parents. I thought I would be grounded forever, my freedom imprisoned. I thought they would be so angry and upset. I didn't want to compound their grief while at my grandfather's funeral so I decided to wait until they came home to tell them.

A week later they saw the smashed up car in the carport as they arrived home. I sat cowering in the living room feeling like my life was about to end. They walked in and said with deep concern in their tone, "*Are you okay? What happened?*" They

listened to my tearful story and then said, "*That must have been so difficult for you, we're sorry we weren't here to help you.*"

That doesn't mean they didn't care about the car, the damage or my poor driving skills; but those things were details that could be handled without emotion or judgment. They were results that they knew I would have to learn from and deal with in my own life.

I could receive a lot of grace from this mistake because I was still young and learning. I was covered by their insurance, but eventually my own insurance would be higher when I got my own car. This accident, as unfortunate as it was, helped me to become a better driver and to feel my parents love in a way I never had before.

That's how **God looks at our mistakes; without judgment**. Mistakes are a source of learning and growth. However, we will still have to deal with the results of our actions one way or another, not in an imposed way, but in a natural way. And I'm sure God is sad and concerned about us when we mess up, but that's not the same as judgment.

I never imagined that my parents would not explode with anger. Their heartfelt concern for my wellbeing was a something that I could **only experience** in such a **dramatic situation**. It was my first taste of true grace and forgiveness.

Important Questions to Consider

There are some deeper lessons to be learned from this story. I want to ask you to think about these 3 questions:

- Can we forgive in advance?
- Can we console before suffering?
- Can we refrain from judgment, and negative expectation, and offer love while maintaining a higher standard?

About Forgiveness

You cannot forgive when there is nothing to forgive. My parents could not have told me before leaving on their trip, "*Oh, by the way, we forgive you for any mistakes you're going to make while we're gone*". That would be like giving me an unlimited expense account; freedom without responsibility.

Standards, rules and education can be given in advance, as well as trust, faith and respect in that the person can understand and learn. Forgiveness can only be experienced and appreciated when we make mistakes. Forgiveness is an important part of love because it involves understanding and compassion.

Consider Consolation

Imagine if your child was joyfully playing with their new puppy and you went up to them and said, "*I just*

want to console you in advance because someday your puppy's going to die and you will be very sad." It doesn't work that way.

Our compassion and empathy can't come out without a reason, but developing a heart of compassion is a really important part of being a true human. You cannot fully live for the sake of others if you don't have compassion. My parents felt that I must have suffered because of the accident and they consoled me. They regretted not having been there to help. I could have never experienced their compassion without having struggled with a big problem.

Refraining from Judgment

We have the ability to discern right from wrong and that ability is meant to be used so that we can strive toward and maintain our standard of goodness. Just because I wasn't judged for my poor driving skills doesn't mean that I didn't learn. I have never made this same mistake again; I am so cautious when I drive because I'm more conscience of the damage that accidents can cause.



Teaching is different from judgment because of the heart behind it. A teacher instructs and guides with the heart of wanting the student to fulfill their potential. How we, as a teacher, parent or friend, deliver our message is also important, but no one can be all things to all people. In the end, it's the individual's responsibility to learn.

Parent' Struggle While Children Grow

However, because we are still immature, we can sometimes interpret truth and love as judgment, even when it is given with a godly heart. We can

feel judged by scripture or a pastor's or parent's words even though the motivation is pure and good. This is because we are not yet spiritually and emotionally dwelling in the realm of God's heart.

We are like children who don't like to be disciplined by their parents. Children can become angry and critical of their parent's because they don't really understand their parent's heart. In Jesus lifetime he was ridiculed and persecuted because people didn't understand God's heart; they couldn't feel the love and opportunity that they were being given.

Our tendency to judge others without empathy is an immature application of our ability to discern right from wrong. The teacher with empathy offers a way to progress, a way to learn and grow. That's why Jesus instructed us with his words and actions in how to live in unity with God's heart. He loved, taught and healed the prostitutes, taxpayers and sick people without becoming one of them.

Loving the world as God loves us

It may be easy enough to apply this principle among your family and friends, but how do you apply it to everyone else? What about the people whose morality and ethics are different from your? What about your political enemies? What about the drug addicts, alcoholics, homeless people, and others who struggle with problems that we often consider 'bad choices'?