

# Gyroscopic Hearts

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Today we are in John chapter 14. And man, I'll tell you, this has been a slippery fish for me this week. I have done a lot of reading, a lot of thinking, a lot of writing on John 14.
- And it took me a long time to get some sort of traction in a sense that made me feel like this is what the Lord wants us to think about today. And this is indeed the main idea at work in this passage.
- Which, one of the reasons, I pass this on to you in case you might find yourself in similar conditions. One of the reasons that I found this to be somewhat difficult is because John, in particular sections, here all the way to the end, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, he writes in a spiraling kind of pattern.
- It's a very circular kind of thing where he mentions one theme, introduces a second, introduces a third, goes back to the 1st, and there's this sort of ascending spiral staircase in John.
- And it's not really how the Western mind thinks most naturally. We're very linear in our thinking. And this is more of an Eastern orientation of processing.
- [ 1 : 1 0 ]     And so it's not the most natural atmosphere for our minds. It takes a little bit more work. So if you're reading parts of John, in particular, and you feel like, what's he doing here?
- Well, just remember, really the way I think about it is there's three or four things he's talking about in interrelationship to one another. And he just keeps repeating these, building upward to some kind of point.
- And it took me a while to get my head into that game again, entering into this section. I do think that to understand this particular section of John, you need to understand that it's connected from chapter 13 all the way to chapter 17.
- All of that is covering the same basic stuff. There are three themes I think I see in this section. And the first one is the command to love.
- The second is the gift of internal peace. And the third is the issuing of many promises. Now, if I'm getting all this right, which I hope I am, everything I'm saying is definitely true.
- [ 2 : 1 6 ]     Whether it's here, I don't know. But I think it is. If I'm understanding this correctly, the leading theme of this section is that we should love one another.
- That theme is introduced in John 13. At the end of Jesus washing the disciples' feet in chapter 13, verse 31, it says, When he had gone out, Jesus said, he being Judas, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.
- If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and glory him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me. And just as I said to the Jews, so now I say to you where I'm going, you cannot come.
- Verse 34, A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.
- That theme seems to carry all the way through into 17, where Jesus is praying about giving the disciples the love that he has with the Father.

- [ 3 : 31 ] It certainly is mentioned again explicitly in chapter 15. In John 15, 12, Jesus says again, This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
- Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. So I believe the leading theme of this section has to do with loving one another.
- And then I think the supporting theme beneath that is related to this idea of peace. What is the one thing, what is the one thing that can interrupt our love for one another?
- Well, in the Bible, that answer is fear. Okay, so that relationship is just everywhere in the scriptures. There is an antagonistic oil and water relationship between love and fear.
- Narratively, in this section, that fear is what causes and compromises the disciples' love for one another and for Christ.
- [ 4 : 42 ] Are you tracking with me there? In chapter 13, Peter swears his allegiance to Jesus. And Jesus says what? Dude, you're not even going to make it past the third crow of the rooster.
- Why? Why? Panic, fear, anxiety. Why do they split off from one another, not only from Christ, but from one another? Anxiousness, panic, fear, reactivity.
- And so the main theme, I think, in this section is love one another. And then this secondary theme that pertains to peace, that begins in John 14, 1.
- Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. That theme of peace, of choosing Christ's peace, seems to be in support of this larger command to love one another.
- We see this second tier of peace put forward in John 14, 1. Don't let your hearts be troubled. But also, again, in 14:27, where he says, peace I leave with you.
- [ 5 : 55 ] 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. We see this exact same thing developing in chapter 15.
- I won't get into that here. Some of you would like to see the work to explain this. Some of you just want me to tell you what the thing is. What the thing is, is simply this.
- You are called to a level of sacrificial love as a Christian. The greatest threat to that sacrificial love is your own anxiety and fears.
- Here's another example. Earlier this week, Angela and I have just been super, super full schedules. And earlier this week, it was starting to wear on us.
- Both of us realized, basically at the same time, that a whole chunk of an evening we thought was going to be free was not free at all. The result is a feeling of inadequacy and anxiety.
- [ 7 : 04 ] I don't know how we're going to do this. I'm all the way wrung out. This is a blood from the turnip kind of moment. There's an anxiety that I don't have what it takes to go through another full evening.
- I was feeling that. She was feeling that. Where does that go? Where does that feeling go, married people? Where does it go? It immediately turns.
- Hopefully as you grow, it gets better. But it immediately turns to bicker and blame. So the feeling of anxiety, of being overwhelmed, of being insufficient, often manifests itself in a lack of love, in a failure to love.
- Now, this problem of having our circumstances stir us up, that's what Jesus is talking about in John 14. He's talking about having hearts that are not stirred up in the midst of turbulent circumstances.
- Now, he's offering that to us because that is not something that is naturally true of a human being. Typically, our internal state matches our circumstances.

- [ 8 : 15 ] But Jesus is offering us another way. I want to hit pause just for a second and say, you have to watch out for one particular approach to anxiety that is especially counter to love. And I see this in people's lives. You think that the way to control your fears and your anxiousness is to control your circumstances and to create a smaller context in which you must love?
- Essentially, you think that the solution to your anxiety is to stay in the shallow end of the pool. Keep your head well above water. Stay firmly in control of the situation.
- Shrink your life down to make it less stressful. And this is the world's thinking by and large. The world doesn't have this gift of peace that Jesus has.
- So we really don't have, in the world, the world doesn't really have like an option of having an internal peace with an external turbulence. And so the worldly approach is to like constantly be thinking that you need to change your relationships, your circumstances, so on and so forth, to find peace.
- [ 9 : 33 ] And it's just like, well, that will not make you a very loving person. And not only that, it will not allow you to receive love very often. Angela and I, among the many things we pray about and notice is that people who are often for very good reasons, spooked, hurt, anxious, when they do get into a situation like Providence that is actually safe and full of love, they really have trouble taking advantage of that.
- Because at any level, when you actually choose to love in the deep end of the pool, in the hard ways, the ways that Jesus is expecting us to love, there's just a level of vulnerability there.
- And a hurt, anxious person will often not be able to take advantage of the great love that's ready for them, and they'll shrink back in fear.
- It's this tendency to try to control our circumstances rather than to control our heart. That's not going to help us love well. So if love is the goal, and I think that's true, right?
- I think that's biblical. If love is the goal of this section, then it makes sense that Jesus is saying, let's deal with anxious hearts. Let's teach you how to have stability in your heart in the midst of turbulent circumstances.
- [ 11 : 06 ] Otherwise, you're just going to shrink away from all the incredible opportunities to love that you have. And you're going to miss love. So, in order to talk about that, we need to go to chapter 14, verse 1, and pay careful attention to what John is saying, or what Jesus is saying, when he says, let not your hearts be troubled.
- We really need to dwell on this for a moment. The word for troubled is terrasso. It means shaken up. Terrasso means shaken up.
- Back in John, what was it? Nine, the man who was waiting for the pool of Siloam to be stirred, the Greek word there for the water being stirred is terrasso.
- So, Jesus is saying, don't get stirred up. Don't let your heart get stirred up. And I think he's saying that, and I'll continue to support this thesis, that he's saying this as a means of making sure that they can love.
- Don't let your heart get stirred up. The idea is, well, what would potentially stir up their hearts? Well, the disciples are about to go through tremendously, tremendously turbulent circumstances.
- [ 12 : 22 ] And without some miraculous intervention of the Lord, your heart is going to match your circumstances. If your life is crazy, your heart's going to be crazy.
- If your life is shaky, your heart's going to be shaky. But Jesus says here, let not your hearts be troubled. Some of you responded somewhat mockingly, at least some of you, to my homework assignment before this sermon.

I wanted you to know what a gyroscope was. I wanted you to watch some YouTube videos on gyroscopes. Some of you felt utterly patronized because you're an expert in gyroscopes. I recognize this.

Gyroscopes are devices that have inside them a spinning mass, such as a rotor or a wheel. And it's mounted in such a way that allows it to rotate freely in any direction so that when the mass inside the internal wheel spins, it creates what's called gyroscopic stability.

So you should have watched the video. The stability is coming from motion within the gyroscope. And it allows you to use, let's take, for instance, video cameras.

[ 13 : 36 ] It allows you to mount a camera onto a gyroscopic device and walk with it and not see any motion in the actual film.

Because the gyroscope is oriented to its own action, keeping whatever the gyroscope is holding steady, no matter how shaky the camera man.

Does that make sense? So what Jesus is offering to each person as they place their faith in him is to develop a gyroscopic heart.

A heart that stays steady and calm and at peace no matter how much jolting the world does on you. However turbulent your circumstances, Jesus is offering a kind of peace that will keep you still and non-reactive to all of the hardship going on.

And it's that heart, the gyroscopic heart, that can love people. Because they're not flaky. They're not anxious. They're not angry.

[ 14 : 45 ] They're not reactive. In short, to use elder qualification language, they are sober-minded. They have learned the secret of contentment, as Paul says.

And the secret of contentment is this idea of a gyroscopic heart. It's this unique thing that Jesus offers his people in which your internal health and wellness is actually not any longer connected immediately to your circumstances.

We see this language, for instance, in 2 Corinthians 4, where he talks about, I'm pressed down but not destroyed, and so on and so forth. There's an internal resiliency available to every Christian that allows you to enter into hard things and keep calm and carry on.

Now, this is, in fact, a necessary precondition for love. You will not be able to stay still enough, stay loyal enough, stay calm enough to be a loving person until you get this figured out.

As I said, the Bible's pretty clear on this. Love and fear are antagonistic toward one another. They are oil and water. So how do we get this gyroscopic heart?

[ 15 : 58 ] Jesus says, let not your heart be troubled. How do we get this? Well, the first thing to understand is that this is a gift from God. Look at verse 27 of John 14.

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.

So it's a gift. But what do Christians sometimes do theologically, mentally, when they hear about a various gift that God gives?

Well, think about it this way. We have so many young kids in our church and there's a particular rite of passage that'll take place in probably, gosh, 20 to 30% of your homes.

And that is, is that a bunch of our kids that are now, you know, moving to 10, 11, 12, they're gonna start getting guitars for birthday or Christmas. This is just a thing that middle-class American families do.

[ 17 : 03 ] You know, we buy our kids guitars. That's a thing. And so then, so let's say there's 20% of the kids at Providence that are gonna get a guitar in the next couple years.

Well, then we would say that probably, what, 15% of those will play with it long enough to learn, like, G, the chord. And then their fingers will start to hurt and they're not super interested in it and so it'll just sit there and it'll serve as an ornament to their coolness in their room.

And they might even take it to college thinking, well, here I might learn how to play. But, you know, probably 15% of this subset of kids who get guitars will probably not actually learn how to use the guitar.

And then there'll be a smaller number of people who got guitars who will actually learn how to use guitar. Friends, this is not very far off from the way that the Bible talks about the Christian life.

Ephesians tells us that we've been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. We are not shy of gifts. But you know what's interesting when the Bible talks about gifts? It always emphasizes, like, the freeness of them and how God had to do the initiating work and, like, it's really from God.

[ 18 : 14 ] But at the same time, usually in the same passages, there will be some emphasis on the will, the human will. Think of salvation, for instance. The Bible's unapologetic and clear.

You are but saved by faith, by grace of faith, not of works, lest any man should boast. But the Bible's also constantly telling people to believe. Do something with the gift.

This is emblematic of Jesus' healings. Usually it's, I've healed you, now take up your mat. There's, like, the gift, and then there's, like, the learning how to use the gift.

Spiritual gifts are like this. In Romans 12, 6 through 8, listen to this verse. We're just listening to this pattern, looking for this pattern of, yes, it's a gift, but we have a responsibility.

Romans 12, 6 through 8, having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. If prophecy in proportion to our faith, if service in our serving, the one who teaches in his teaching, the one who exhorts in his exhortation, the one who contributes in his generosity, the one who leads with zeal, the one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness.

[ 19 : 20 ] You see the two levels? God, by his grace, has given you a gift. Therefore, learn how to use the gift in proportion to your faith. So this is a general principle.

When God gives us a gift, he also gives us a responsibility to learn how to use the gift. And I say it that way because some people have fought long and hard to get some kind of traction on their own worry and anxiety, on their own tendency to react to difficult situations, and they're thinking, Jesus says in John 14, 27, that he's given me peace, and like, what am I supposed to do with that?

And the answer is, you've got to see, yes, it's a gift, but also, there's a piece of this where you are responsible for picking it up and using it, and that's what Jesus means when he says, let not your hearts be troubled.

You are responsible for using this gift, just like you're responsible for using spiritual gifts, just like you're responsible for using your salvation, working it out, fear and trembling.

So how do we do that? The goal, just to remind us, is to make us less anxious, not so that you can be less anxious, but so that you can be more loving.

[ 20 : 33 ] Maybe that's another thing to just highlight. Like, what's the purpose? Like, why do you want to be less anxious? Is it so that you can be more sacrificial and more generous?

Because that's why Jesus wants you to be less anxious. So we need to be less anxious to love well. How do we become less anxious? Jesus has given us this gift of a gyroscopic heart.

It is a gift, but it's also something we have to kind of activate and open through the will. So how do we do that? It always involves the mind.

If you want to know how to turn your heart, left or right, the reins are in your brain. You can see this also throughout Scripture.

Here we see in John 14, 1, let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in me, mind. And then he just issues a ton of promises that all come to us through our head.

[ 21 : 38 ] Sometimes we dismiss the role of the brain in our faith and we talk all about like it has to be in our heart. That's true.

And certainly, we know some Christians, or maybe they're not even Christians, who have a lot of stuff up here, but it hasn't gone here. But the truth is, the only way you'll ever get anything here is through here.

You were saved because the good news of Jesus Christ came as a set of propositions, entered your mind, and then went to your heart. So we're talking about how do I steer my heart in general, in particular, how do I become less anxious, how do I obey John 14, 1, let not your hearts be troubled.

It has to do with the mind. R.C. Sproul once said, the word of God can be in the mind without being in the heart, but it cannot be in the heart without first being in the mind.

Now here we get to the third theme that I referenced at the beginning. I said there were three. One is we've got to love each other. Number two, in service of that love we have to let our hearts not be troubled.

[ 22 : 50 ] And there's a third theme, and that was promises. And now we're beginning to see, I think, how the promises come into play. Because if we say that the way that we calm our hearts is by informing our minds, then what do we inform our minds with?

The promises of God. And so that's what Jesus is doing in John 14 and 15 and 16. And that's really how Jesus is praying in John 17.

He wants us to love each other. He knows that a big problem, a big obstacle to us loving each other is that we get anxious, we get angry, we get reactive, we get panicked.

That is resolved when we get our hearts mounted on the gyroscope that is running on an internal momentum of faith. And what makes the gyroscope spin? What makes this internal faith active?

It's the promises of God. So that's why we see all of these promises littered throughout 14, 15, 16, and even 17. The promises are the thing that keep our hearts spinning and thus make it still in the midst of turbulent times.

[ 24 : 00 ] At least that's what I think I see. Jesus says in 14, you know, promise number one will return to this. I go to prepare a place for you and I will return.

The second promise, you will do greater works than these. The third promise, I will answer your prayers. The fourth promise, I will give you the Holy Spirit. Fifth promise, I will give you peace.

Like, there are all these promises promises. And really, most of what's happening in John 13 through 17 is a series of love each other, don't be panicked, and believe the promises.

My understanding of what Jesus is doing here is that these promises are the thing that keeps our hearts still and steadied in the midst of external turbulence.

when Jesus says in John 14, 1, that we're supposed to believe in God and believe also in Him, there's a point I want to make out, I want to make to you that I think is potentially also an issue.

[ 25 : 04 ] If anxiety is a thing for you, it's kind of a consistent thing, I really would think, like, listen to this sermon a few times. I know it's a complicated idea, but listen to this a few times.

It really is aimed to help. One of the things going on when people struggle with anxiety is they tend to have a relationship with God's promises like they're pills. Like, take three promises and then I won't be anxious anymore.

It's like, they're not spiritual Xanax, okay? Really, God's promises aren't like pills, they're more like oxygen. It's not something you're supposed to just apply every once in a while when you're anxious.

you're not going to see success there. The tense, the Greek tense of what Jesus says here is present and active and that conveys when he says, believe in me, believe in God, believe also in me.

Present tense, active, means you have to do this constantly. So there's the kind of trusting in Christ that a lot of us think of, like when we get saved, we trust in Christ.

[ 26 : 08 ] But there's another kind of trusting of Christ and that is minute by minute, day by day, the truth is, I think a lot of people think that they are incapable of resolving these anxious things, these anxious issues, because they keep trying the pill approach and they don't realize, like, no, the way that this works is you have to saturate your mind at all times with the things of God.

And I know that sounds daunting and it is. The payoff is absolutely worth it and also it's just necessary. This is actually just the way we're supposed to live our lives. Let me show you a passage where these three themes are connected.

In Colossians 3, Paul starts with love. Verse 12, put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive.

And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. So there's Paul's emphasis on love. But what is the next thing he says in verse 15? Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you are called in one body.

There's even a little bit hint there that the lack of peace ruins unity. It's proximity, the call to peace is proximity is to the call to love. And then Paul says, don't, you know, be loving, don't be anxious.

[ 27 : 37 ] And then he tells us how to not be anxious. Verse 16, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

What's the pathway here? I'm filling my mind with godly things, thus instructing my heart not to be troubled, which then releases me being able to now love in the deep end of the pool.

So let's just review. We can't love until we learn how to make our hearts non-reactive. Jesus has given us this gift of a gyroscopic heart, but we've got to use the gift.

We use the gift, we learn how to use the gift by reciting God's promises to our mind. And this is an active work. This is actually what your mind was made to do full time.

It will feel absolutely like effort, and you will see many failures. But your brain was actually made to think the deep thoughts of God, to praise God, to thank God, to pray to God, to be filled with God's word.

[ 28 : 53 ] And the key to getting your heart under control is to get your mind under control, and you get your mind under control with the word of God. I mentioned that I would support this idea of love and fear being an antagonistic relationship, and there are a lot of verses that come to mind.

I mean, Romans 8 talks about this. But I thought about 1 John 4.18 first, where he says, there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. What kind of love is John talking about here?

Well, earlier in verses 9 and 10, he says this, in this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only son into the world so that we might live through him.

In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins.

[ 30 : 07 ] Let's wrap up by making one attempt to understand this idea that Jesus says in chapter 14, verse 2, I go to prepare a place for you in my father's house there are many mansions.

I'm convinced after studying that there are multiple layers of interpretation there, one being eschatological and one being kind of just evangelistic. Let me just land on this. When Jesus says, I go, he means, among other things, to the cross.

He goes to the cross to convert us from enemies into sons and daughters of God, thereby securing for us a place in God's family that we do not deserve.

That's one of the things Jesus means here. I go to prepare a place for you. Ultimately, most holistically, that is, I go to prepare a place for you in the family of God, a place you could not have had unless I had gone to the cross.

That's the promise above all the other promises. The gospel promise that he who knew no sin became sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[ 31 : 16 ] That my entry into God's favor is as secure as Christ's superiority and righteousness is, which is pretty secure. That I have ultimate confidence that God actually loves me because I have placed myself in Christ and only because I am found in Christ.

So the number one promise that's meant to calm our anxious hearts is the gospel promise and every other promise in the scriptures whether we talk about the Holy Spirit or provision or so forth, all of it's pinned to that.

You are no longer if you are in Christ, you are no longer under God's wrath but you have been made righteous through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ so that the God of the universe is legitimately your Father.

And that's the promise that we need to recite most of all. That's why every week we do communion. It's the promise above all the other promises.

That in Him we have the propitiation of our sins. So as a reminder if you're a follower of Jesus Christ come here today and taste and see the first promise of God upon which all other promises are built.

[ 32 : 33 ] That you are saved and forgiven and that you will be sanctified that all things work together for the good of those that He loves and that if He gave His precious Son to secure your salvation how will He not also freely give all things in your care?

Come and partake of these elements grab them and go sit down and then I will lead us in a corporate partaking. Father God we praise your holy name for your care for us. Lord Jesus you're so wise you see to the heart of things and you know that if we are going to love like you'd called us to we've got to handle these tendencies to be reactive to hard things to get anxious in difficult circumstances to flake out we know we can't be loving if we can't figure that stuff out so please Lord apply through your Holy Spirit the power so that we can exercise this gift of a gyroscopic heart and find this peace that passes all understanding so that while our boat and our life and our family and our finances might be tossed to and fro there inside of us thanks to the gift of your Holy Spirit our heart is enclosed and still and calm that's a miracle that is indeed a peace that passes all understanding may all of those glories be communicated to us as we participate in this table today in Jesus name we pray amen