

The Heart

The place where you think, you feel, and you determine what you will do has a _____. It's called the _____. Today, we're looking at the heart. We're here to _____ the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible is an inspired _____ from God's heart to our hearts. The Scriptures have commandments, timeless truths, and promises from God, all of which is designed to _____ each of us and all of us. We cheat ourselves of the most _____ things when we overlook or ignore the Scriptures. Some think we don't _____ religious teaching, but the worst environment of all is the environment without God. We know the _____ and the joy, and the love found in knowing God and His word. That's why we focus on the Bible.

Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, _____ your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." What you think, what you feel, and what you choose matters, because your heart determines what your _____ will be like. When your heart is right, your life will _____. When your heart is _____, you'll find life harsh and unforgiving. We often think we know how we ought to live, but we _____ what God teaches in the Word. Proverbs 21:2 says, "Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD _____ the hearts." God not only sees what we do; He sees _____ our hearts.

God, speaking through Moses, said, "Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would _____ Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29). God wants us to have the kind of heart that takes His teaching seriously and is willing to practice what we've learned. His Word will bless us, if we are willing to live it out in our lives.

Our reading comes from Paul's Letter to the **Colossians 3:15-16**, a letter that would be circulated not only there, but in other churches as well. He talks about the need to focus our hearts.

The first time the word "heart" is used in Scripture speaks of the hearts of _____ and then the heart of _____. Genesis 6:5-6 says, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only _____ continually. The LORD was _____ that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart." Here the word heart refers to the _____ person. You can see here how the heart has the ability to think, to feel, and to _____ what it will do. Your heart _____ what you are more than any single thing.

This is why God chose David, the youngest son of Jesse. God sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint a _____ to replace king Saul. First Samuel 16:6-7 says, "When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him.' But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the _____.'" The heart is the true "inner self." Proverbs 23:7 simply says, "For as he _____ in his heart, so he is."

The heart is where our _____ think, feel, and decide. Jesus knew the hearts of others. John 2:25 says that Jesus "didn't need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself _____ what was in man." This is shown in Mark 2:5-11. "And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 'Why does this man speak that way? He's blaspheming; who can _____ sins but God alone?'" Immediately Jesus,

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aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way, said to them, ‘Why are you reasoning about these things in your _____? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has _____ on earth to forgive sins—He said to the paralytic, ‘I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.’”

We must give our hearts and our minds to _____ the Lord and avoid evil thoughts. Psalm 119:10-11 says, “With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have _____ in my heart, That I may not sin against You.” Proverbs 23:12 tells us that we ought to “apply our hearts to discipline, And our ears to _____ of knowledge.”

The heart is also where our emotions and feelings begin to take place. Paul expresses _____ in his heart in Romans 9:1-3, over his kinsmen rejecting Jesus. He said, “I’m telling the truth in Christ, I’m not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great _____ and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the _____ of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Paul desperately wanted people to _____ the Lord and to be saved.

How we feel in our hearts often determines how we _____. Proverbs 17:22 says, “A joyful heart is good _____, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.” Proverbs 12:25 says, “Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs it _____, But a good word makes it _____.” Proverbs 13:12 says, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” We can’t always choose how life _____ us, but we can choose how we _____ to the things that we cannot change. In many cases the experiences of our hearts _____ us great lessons. Ecclesiastes 7:2-3 says, “It’s better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, Because that’s the end of every man, And the living takes it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, For when a face is _____ a heart may be happy.”

We make our _____ in our hearts based on what we know and what we feel. We should make _____ choices from our hearts. When God asked Israel to build the tabernacle, Exodus 35:21 says, “Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit _____ him came and brought the LORD’S contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments.” They _____ freely and willingly. Second Corinthians 9:7 says, “Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a _____ giver.”

The priest and scribe Ezra, in later years, also had that motivation. Ezra 7:10 says, “For Ezra had set his heart to _____ the law of the LORD and to _____ it, and to _____ His statutes and ordinances in Israel.” We too should be like the psalmist who said in Psalm 119:112, “I have inclined my heart to _____ Your statutes Forever, even to the end.”

Our choices do matter. We’ll either choose to serve the Lord or serve _____. Romans 6:16-18 says, “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, that you’re slaves of the one whom you _____, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became _____ from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” This passage teaches us that even when we are slaves of sin, we can _____ and become slaves of righteousness. You can decide to do what is right.

Don’t be like the _____ soil that was by the side of the road, and they cast the seed upon it; the Lord Jesus spoke about it in Luke 8:12. They _____ the word, but the devil “takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved.” It’s better for us to be the _____ soil. Luke 8:15

says, “But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good _____, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”

What kind of heart does God want for us to have? First, God wants a heart that wholly _____ Him! The Lord Jesus said, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:29). God expects a _____ commitment from us: heart, soul, mind, and strength. Half-hearted Christianity that follows Christ when you like Him and then ignores Christ when you don’t like what He says is _____ Christianity at all. You can’t hang on to the world with one hand and the Lord with the other.

James 4:4 says to Christians with wrong motives and selfish desires in their hearts, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the _____ is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a _____ of the world makes himself an _____ of God.” Half-hearted, half-converted people presume upon the grace of God and never consider that they have become an enemy of God.

We must recognize the Lord Jesus for who He is! First Peter 3:15 says, “but sanctify Christ as _____ in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the _____ that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” When Christ is Lord of our hearts and our lives, people notice; and when other things rule our lives, people also notice! We must never let anyone or anything else _____ us of the holy place that Christ has in our hearts. If Christ is Lord, then we cannot tolerate a challenger to His place.

Second, God wants a heart that loves _____ people! The Lord Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you _____ love one another. By this all men will know that you are My _____, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). When we love like Jesus loves us, we’ll sacrifice ourselves for the _____ of others. When we love some and dislike others, we fail to be like Jesus; He loved everyone.

Sadly, some _____ to love others who differ with them and even become hateful and mean; they’re filled with prejudice and malice. First John 4:20-21 says, “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and _____ his brother, he’s a liar; for one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother _____.” God loves and sends His _____ on the righteous and the unrighteous. If we are His sons and daughters, we too should show love even those with whom we differ and disagree.

Colossians 3:12-15 says, “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a _____ of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, and whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord _____ you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called one body; and be thankful.”

Third, God wants a heart that loves the _____! Proverbs 4:20-23 says, “My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your _____. For they are life to those who find them and health to all their body. Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the _____ of life.” Some would rather believe a _____ than hear the truth. Some would rather put their trust in a _____ hope than in what the Scripture says. Second Thessalonians 2:10 helps us understand that we’re saved by “the love of the _____.” Those who reject the truth are actually rejecting the truth of the Lord and cannot be saved.

Fourth, God wants a heart that _____ over sin and hungers for righteousness. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be _____” (Matthew 5:6). We live in a _____ seemingly satisfied with sin and hardly hungering for righteousness. They forget that the _____ of sin are always temporary; and slavery to sin will deceive them, it will harden their hearts, and cost them their souls. Many today celebrate sin, but no one will be celebrating sin on Judgment Day. We ought to mourn our _____ and hunger for righteousness. First Corinthians 13:6 reminds us that love doesn’t rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the _____. It’s hard to stand in the shadow of the _____ and rejoice over the wickedness of the world. Habakkuk 1:13 reminds us that God’s “eyes are too _____ to approve evil, And God cannot look on wickedness with favor.”

James 4:7-10 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the _____ and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.” It’s time to hunger for righteousness with our hearts!

David asked God, “Examine me, O LORD, and _____ me; Test my mind and my heart” (Psalm 26:2). Would you want your heart and mind examined by the Lord? Let’s remember God knows all about you. Psalm 44:20-21 says, “If we had forgotten the name of our God, Or extended our hands to a strange god, Wouldn’t God find this out? For He knows the _____ of the heart.”

Moses said, “Now, Israel, what does the LORD require from you, but to _____ the LORD your God, to _____ in all His ways and love Him, and to _____ the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD’S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13). The Lord is also saying to us today that He does what He does for our _____. We find blessing when we follow the Lord’s way! Love means trusting Him enough to _____ what He says. We don’t serve God by rewriting His commandments or His teaching. We serve Him by trusting and obeying Him.

Believe in Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you’re crucified with Him in baptism, God raises you up with Him to walk in newness of life. That’s when you’re born again (John 3:5 and Romans 6:4), when the Lord adds you to His church, and when you become a child of God, that’s in baptism.