

A Theology of the Heart Teacher's Guide

- I. Definition of the heart
 - A. Physical organ: an organ that is responsible for pumping blood throughout the human body; it is vitally necessary for sustaining life
 - B. Spiritual meaning: it is the seat of emotions and affections (New Nave's Topical Bible)
 - C. Application for our study: the spiritual heart will be examined in detail

- II. Two kinds of spiritual hearts: what kind of heart do you have?
 - A. A heart that rejects God's precepts, or
 - B. A heart that seeks after God's precepts

- III. The spiritual heart that rejects God's precepts
 - A. Characteristics
 1. Full of iniquity (also defined as sin: evildoing that is not only against humanity, society, others, or oneself, but against God.) Proverbs 6:14, 18; 11:20
 2. Loves evil Ps. 95:10; Jer. 17:5
 3. Is a fountain of evil Matt. 12:34, 35
 4. Is depraved and wayward Prov. 12:8; 17:20
 5. Is blinded
 - a. New Testament applications Rom. 1:21; Eph. 4:18
 - b. Applications from Proverbs
 - 1) 1:7 – Despise wisdom and instruction
 - 2) 1:22 – Love of simplicity and thirst for scorn
 - 3) 1:29 – Hated knowledge and rejected the fear of the Lord
 - 4) 1:30 – Rejected God's counsel and despised His rebuke
 - 5) 4:19 – Blind people do not know what makes them stumble
 - 6) 7:7-23 – Deceived by a prostitute because of a lack of understanding
 - 7) 14:12 – Ways that seems right to a man can lead to destruction
 6. Is proud Prov. 18:12; 28:25
 - a. Defined: attributing to self the honor due to Him; it is the very root and essence of sin (New Bible Dictionary, 3rd edition)
 - b. Exemplified
 - 1) Lucifer Isa. 14:12-14
 - 2) Adam and Eve Gen. 3:5
 - 3) Haman Esther 3:5; 5:11-13; 6:6; 7:10
 - 4) Nebuchadnezzar Dan. 4:30-34; 5:20
 7. Is hypocritical 21:27; Prov. 23:6-8; 26:23-26
 8. Is greedy Prov. 1:19; 11:24; 15:27; 21:25, 26; 23:4, 5
 9. Is foolish Prov. 12:23; 22:15
 - B. Application from the foxes that spoil the vine Song 2:15

1. Pride: the heart that rejects God's precepts knows more than God does. God hates pride so much that Lucifer was removed from Heaven. God will not allow pride to be in Heaven, so a heart that is filled with only pride cannot know God as He is intended to be known.
2. Exaggeration: this is related to pride very closely; it is going beyond truth so much that it becomes a lie
3. Selfishness and covetousness: living for self and wanting for oneself what I cannot have. This characterizes the heart that lives for itself and does not care about others.
4. Carnal lust: because the heart that rejects God's precepts is not subject to follow God's law, this trap may occur and entrap the unsuspecting person. Ungodly affections and lusts become a way of life and lead to a life without restraint.
5. Resentment and retaliation: when one feels wronged, retaliation may set in by seeking for a way to get back and "straighten the matter out" in unimaginable ways.

C. The question for you: does this describe your heart, and your way of life right now?

1. Knowing what to do
 - a. Seek after God and what He already knows about your heart Prov. 21:2; 24:12
 - b. Desire to have a clean heart Prov. 20:9; 22:11
 - c. Know that God will judge what is in your heart if you choose to reject His precepts right now Prov. 17:3
2. Knowing when to seek God's forgiveness: now 2 Cor. 6:2

IV. The heart that seeks after God's precepts

A. Characteristics

1. Graciously affected of God Prov. 21:1
2. Regenerated John 3:3-7
3. Enlightened 2 Cor. 4:6
4. Trusts in the Lord Prov. 3:5, 6
5. Clean and pure Prov. 22:11
6. Repentant Ps. 34:18; 51:17
7. Devout Ps. 119:10
8. Wise Prov. 8:10; 10:8; 11:29; 14:33; 23:15
9. Holy Ps. 66:18
10. Full of faith Ps. 112:7; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9, 10
11. Full of joy Ps. 9:7; 97:11
12. Upright Ps. 97:11; 125:4

B. Application

1. What is the current attitude of my heart that seeks after God's precepts?
 - a. Does it seek material things? Matt. 6:19-21
 - b. Is it devoted to spiritual things?
2. Am I seeking God's wisdom?
 - a. Wisdom defined: the art of being success, of forming the correct plan to gain the desired results. Its seat is the heart, the center of moral and intellectual design.

- b. Wisdom attributed: wisdom in the fullest sense belongs to God alone (Jn. 12:13; Isa. 31:2; Dan. 2:20-23). His wisdom is not only completeness of knowledge pervading every realm of life, but also consists in His irresistible fulfillment of what he has in mind. (The New Bible Dictionary)
 - c. Wisdom applied: Biblical wisdom is both religious and practical. Stemming from the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7; 9:10), it branches out to touch all of life, as the extended commentary on wisdom in Proverbs indicates. Wisdom takes gleaned insights from the knowledge of God's ways and applies them in the daily life.
 - 3. How do I seek God's wisdom?
 - a. Study God's Word Prov. 3:3; 4:4, 21
 - b. Crave deeply God's Word Prov. 6:21
 - c. Be diligent to protect your heart Prov. 4:23
 - d. Apply your heart to wisdom Prov. 22:17; 23:19
 - e. Give God control of your heart Prov. 21:2; 24:12
 - f. Let God try your heart of evil motives and intents Prov. 17:3
 - g. Desire to maintain a pure heart Prov. 22:11
 - h. Keep God's commandments Prov. 3:1; 4:4, 21
 - 4. Attitudes to keep out of our heart
 - a. Discouragement Prov. 13:12
 - b. Deceit Prov. 12:20
 - c. Wickedness/wicked thoughts Prov. 6:18; 10:20; 11:20; 17:20; 26:23
 - d. Worldly compromise Rom. 12:1, 2
 - e. Impatience I Tim. 6:11
 - f. Murmuring and complaining Numbers 11; Ph. 2:14
 - 5. Attitudes to cultivate in our heart
 - a. Rejoicing Prov. 15:13, 15, 30; 17:22
 - b. Spirit of diligence Prov. 4:23
 - c. Mercy and truth Prov. 3:3
 - d. Purity Prov. 22:11
 - e. Surrender to the Lord Prov. 23:26
 - f. Trust in the Lord Prov. 3:5, 6
- C. Guarding our hearts Prov. 4:23; Eph. 6:10-18
 - 1. Preparation for the battle: putting on the armor
 - a. The belt of truth: this truth is what Christians live by and keeps every part of our life all together and functioning smoothly as a unit. Lies make our life fall apart; truth keeps it together.
 - b. The breastplate of righteousness: this piece protects the heart, and is one of the most important parts of the armor. Since we are measured by what's in our heart, these intentions must be kept righteous and holy. If our heart is shielded to protect against unrighteousness, then our hearts will stay pure even when an unrighteous desire or temptation comes our way.

- c. The feet covered with the Gospel of peace: if a person cannot stand, then he cannot fight, and therefore becomes totally helpless against the onslaughts of the enemy. Our feet light up the well-defined pathway as we journey to God's Kingdom and enable us to walk down the pathway of life without stumbling or faltering.
 - d. The shield of faith: this protects against all that Satan hurls toward us. The shield is used to block out desires and temptations to commit sin. It is essential that our faith in God and His Son be trusted to overcome the enemy.
 - e. The helmet of salvation: worn to protect the head from mortal danger, this pictures our mind or consciousness. The helmet protects our minds from spiritual destruction and keeps it safely in God's presence.
 - f. The sword of the Spirit: the Word of God, our only offensive weapon. We use this actively in battle against Satan; it also gets to the root of our own wrong desires, when it is properly applied.
 - g. The act of prayer: our direct communication with God, at any time, for any reason.
2. Plans for a heart aflame: preparing for a spiritual revolution (A.W. Tozer's *Formula for a Burning Heart*)
- a. Get thoroughly dissatisfied with yourself. Complacency is the deadly enemy of spiritual progress. The contented soul is the stagnant soul. When speaking of earthly goods, Paul could say, "I have learned ... to be content"; but when referring to his spiritual life, he testified, "I press toward the mark."
 - b. Set your face like a flint toward a sweeping transformation of your life. Timid experimenters are tagged for failure before they start. We must throw our whole soul into our desire for God. "The Kingdom of God suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."
 - c. Put yourself in the way of the blessing. It is a mistake to expect God's help to come as a windfall apart from conditions known and met. There are plainly marked paths which lead straight to the green pastures; let us walk in them. To desire revival, for instance, and at the same time to neglect prayer and devotion is to wish one way and walk another.
 - d. Do a thorough job of repenting. Do not hurry to get it over with. Hasty repentance means shallow spiritual experience and lack of certainty in the whole life. Let godly sorrow do her healing work. Until we allow the consciousness of sin to wound us, we will never develop a fear of evil. It is our wretched habit of tolerating sin that keeps us in our half-dead condition.
 - e. Make restitution wherever possible. If you owe a debt, pay it, or at least have a frank understanding with your creditor about your intentions to pay, so that your honesty will be above question. If you have quarreled with anyone, go as far as you can in an effort to achieve reconciliation. As fully as possible make the crooked things straight.

- f. Bring your life into accord with the Sermon on the Mount and such other New Testament Scriptures as are designed to instruct us in the way of righteousness. An honest man with an open Bible and a pad and pencil is sure to find out what is wrong with him very quickly. I recommend that the self-examination be made on our knees, rising to obey God's commandments as they are revealed to us from the Word. There is nothing romantic or colorful about this plain downright way of dealing with ourselves, but it gets the work done.
 - g. Be serious – minded. You can well afford to see fewer comedy shows on TV. Unless you break away from the funny boys, every spiritual impression will continue to be lost to your heart, and that right in your own living room. The devil's ideals, moral standards, and mental attitudes are being accepted by you without you knowing it. You wonder why you can make no progress in your Christian life. Your interior climate is not favorable to the growth of spiritual graces. There must be a radical change in your habits or there will not be any permanent improvement in your interior life.
 - h. Deliberately narrow your interests. The Jack-of-all-trades is the master of none. The Christian life requires that we be specialists. Too many projects use up time and energy without bringing us nearer to God. If you will narrow your interests, God will enlarge your heart. "Jesus only" seems to the unconverted man to be the motto of death. But a great company of happy men and women can testify that it became to them a way into a world infinitely wider and richer than anything they had ever known before. Christ is the essence of all wisdom, beauty and virtue. To know Him in growing intimacy is to increase in appreciation of all things good and beautiful. The mansions of the heart will become larger when their doors are thrown open to Christ and closed against the world and sin. Try it.
 - i. Begin to witness. Find something to do for God and your fellow men. Refuse to rust out. Make yourself available to your pastor and do anything you are asked to do. Do not insist upon a place of leadership. Learn to obey. Take the low place until such time as God sees fit to set you in a higher one. Back your new intentions with your money and your gifts, such as they are.
 - j. Have faith in God. Begin to expect. Look up toward the throne where your Advocate sits at the right hand of God. All heaven is on your side. God will not disappoint you.
 - k. Closing thoughts: If you will follow these suggestions, you will most surely experience revival in your own heart. And who can tell how far it may spread? God knows how desperately the church needs a spiritual resurrection. And it can only come through the revived individual.
3. Jesus' place in your heart: the invited Guest or the Master of your heart?
(Robert Boyd Munger's *My Heart, Christ's Home*)