

INSIGHT

The muscle known as the heart is considered to be the center of physical life. It is the focus for all the vital functions of the body. However, in the figurative sense, the heart has come to be known as the center of a person's mental and spiritual life. It describes the person as a whole. The heart, in biblical language, is closely connected with a person's intellect (*Matthew 13:15*), thoughts (*Luke 6:45*), attitudes (*Hebrews 4:12*), decisions (*Prov. 16:1; 2 Cor. 9:7*), desires (*Ps. 37:4; Rom. 1:24*), emotions (*Ps. 4:7; John 16:6*) and true character (*1 Sam. 16:7*).

Taking all this into consideration, it is important for us to know the nature of the heart. The Bible clearly teaches that the heart is something that is not to be trusted. Consider what Jeremiah said in *Jer 17:9*, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" Of course, the phrase "who can understand it" is a rhetorical question. The answer is obvious: no one can understand it, except the Lord, who sees its contents. Jesus said that out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony and slander (*Matt 15:19*). What makes us filthy is not what goes into our mouths, but what comes out of the heart (*Matt 15:17-18,20*). The heart is the source of hindrance when we put our trust in it and not in the Lord. That is why *Proverbs 28:26* (NASV) says, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered." How should we walk? Wisely. Where does wisdom come from? The Lord and His word (*Prov. 2:6; James 1:5; 2 Tim 3:15*). It is God who directs our steps (*Prov. 20:24*).

Pray continually for a pure heart and allow the Word of Christ to dwell richly in you. And let your motive be Christ and His love!

Becoming Like Christ

Hindrance: The Heart

Key Text: Matthew 15:18-20a

But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'...

Theme:

The Bible speaks of the heart as what makes us what we are. A man's heart gives rise to all thoughts and actions. It is imperative that as disciples of Christ, we should be taught to guard our heart--to keep it sensitive and open to God's word. Knowing the nature of the heart, we ought to take hold of the Gospel and allow God to purify our hearts through the blood of Christ, through the indwelling of the Spirit and through the rich dwelling of the Word of Christ.

Application:

Here are some practical suggestions:

1. Pray for a pure heart.
2. Confess sin and be humble.
3. Implement the exhortation of *Colossians 3:14-16* in your life:
 - a. **Clothe** yourself with love!
 - b. **Submit** yourself to the peace of God. Seek peace and unity!
 - c. **Be** thankful!
 - d. **Let** God's word dwell richly in your heart! Write them on your heart! Especially verses that pertain to you personally.

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE	SMALL GROUP STUDY
<p>The Hindering Heart</p> <p>I. Jeremiah 17:1-10</p> <p>A. God convicts the Jews concerning sin</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Response from question asked in 16:10 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sin is written with an iron tool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Iron tools were used to engrave permanent inscriptions -- Their sin was very legible and written in unerasable letters 2. Issue: Sin is never erased until forgiven 3. Later on, He would promise restoration (Chapters 30-33) <p>B. The Cause: The Heart</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cursed is he who trusts in the flesh--vs 5 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. They didn't rely on the Spirit of God for their strength and protection b. Outcome: Ruin--vs 6 2. Blessed is he who trusts in the Lord--vs 7 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Those who live by faith even in the worse of times. b. Outcome: Unfailing productivity <p>C. The Nature of the Heart</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. False and Deceitful 2. It is foolish to trust in it (<i>Pr 28:26</i>) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. See Israel's outcome in trusting their hearts, and not God. 3. It's what makes us unclean (<i>Matt 15:19</i>) 4. We cannot know it: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Peter didn't know it b. Only God knows it 5. The result of following it is death (<i>Rom 6:23</i>) <p>II. The Nature of God</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only He can save us--<i>John 3:16</i> 2. Only He can give us a new heart <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. He promised this to Israel (<i>Ez 11:19</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --through Christ, we are spiritually circumcised. (<i>Col 2:11,12</i>) <p>III. Conclusion: Prov 16:3</p>	<p>Warm-up:</p> <p>Apart from communication, what do you consider to be an important element in a relationship?</p> <p>See To It Matthew 15:1-11</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From these verses, list some of the problems the Pharisees had. 2. What seemed to be the root or focal point of their problem? 3. Define the word <i>hypocrite</i>. From verses 8 and 9, describe what a hypocrite does. How do they appear to others? 4. Why is their worship in vain? 5. From verse 11, what two truths does Jesus establish regarding spiritual uncleanness? <p>Seeing It Closer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In what ways can worship be done in vain today? 2. Is worshipping the Lord in vain always obvious? Explain. 3. Read Proverbs 23:26. What does the Lord require of us? 4. How can we give Him our heart? How do we go about doing that? 5. Describe how your worship of the Lord has been since you met Jesus. <p>Getting To It:</p> <p>Pray for one another that our worship of the Lord would be out of a heart near to God.</p>