

The Heart

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Readings: Mark 7:14-23, Proverb 4:23 , Luke 6:45

Contemporary people generally consider the head with its brain to be the centre & director of human activity, but the Bible speaks of the heart as the centre. When the Bible speaks of the heart as the centre, it is not referring to our physical organ that pumps blood throughout our body. It speaks in spiritual language that encompasses the totality of one's intellect, emotion and volition (power to choose). The three aspects of the human heart based on the intellectual, emotional and volitional activities are as follows:

1. Human heart as the Knowledge Faculty.

- (i) People know things in their heart (Deuteronomy 8:5)
- (ii) People pray in their heart (1-Samuel 1:12-13)
- (iii) People meditate in their heart (Psalm 19:14)
- (iv) People Hide God's Word in their heart (Psalm 119:11)
- (v) People devise plans in their heart (Psalm 140:2)
- (vi) People keep words in their heart (Proverbs 4:21)
- (vii) People think in their heart (Mark 2:8)
- (viii) People doubt in their heart (Mark 11:23)
- (ix) People ponder in their heart (Luke 2:19)
- (x) People believe in their heart (Romans 10:9)
- (xi) People sing in their heart (Ephesians 5:19)

2. Human heart as the Centre of Feelings.

The Bible speaks about:

- (i) The glad heart (Exodus 4:14)
- (ii) The loving heart (Deuteronomy 6:5)
- (iii) The fearful heart (Joshua 5:1)
- (iv) The courageous heart (Psalm 27:14)
- (v) The repentant heart (Psalm 51:17)
- (vi) The anxious heart (Proverbs 12:25)
- (vii) The angry heart (Proverbs 19:3)
- (viii) The revived heart (Isaiah 57:15)
- (ix) The anguished heart (Jeremiah 4:19 & Ro 9:2)
- (x) The delighted heart (Jeremiah 15:16)
- (xi) The grieving heart (Lamentations 2:18)
- (xii) The humble heart (Matthew 11:29)
- (xiii) The excited or burning heart (Luke 24:32)
- (xiv) The troubled heart (John 14:1)

All of these actions of the heart primarily involve inner feelings.

3. Human heart as the Centre of Volitional activities.

We read in the Scripture about the:

- (i) Heart that is hardened--refuses to do what God commands (Exodus 4:21)
- (ii) Heart that is yielded to God (Joshua 24:23)
- (iii) Heart that intends to do something (2-Chronicles 6:7)
- (iv) Heart that is devoted to seeking the Lord (1-Chronicles 22:19)
- (v) Heart that decides (2-Chronicles 6:7)
- (vi) Heart that desires to receive from the Lord (Psalm 21:1-2)
- (vii) Heart that tuned toward God's statutes (Psalm 119:36)

All of these activities make the human will.

When Adam & Eve chose to follow the serpent's temptation to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, their decision drastically affected the human heart—it became tainted with evil (impure, contaminated, foul and rotten). At present therefore, according to Jeremiah “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure—who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). Jesus confirmed Prophet Jeremiah's diagnosis when He said what he said in Mark 7:21-22.

Our willingness to listen to wicked inclinations makes us unclean, rather than any failure to follow some ceremonial law. Hearts that are committed to do evil/wrong, run the grave risk of becoming hardened. Primary examples are Pharaoh's heart (Exodus Chapters 7-11 & 14) and the Roman empire behavior (Romans 1:24-28). Same thing will happen during the days of Antichrist (2-Thessolians 2:11-12).

There is a warning in Hebrews, not to harden their hearts (Hebrews 3:8-12). Anyone who continues to reject God's word will eventually have a hardened heart.

Solution.

God's answer to the sinfulness of the human heart is REGENERATION. This comes to all who sincerely repent of all their sins, turn to God and place a Personal Faith in Jesus as Lord & Savior. Regeneration is a matter of the heart. Those who repent from their heart (of all sin) and confess with their mouth that Jesus is their Lord (Ro 10:9) become BORN AGAIN and receive a new heart from God (Ps 51:10 & Ezk 11:19).

Those who go through the Spiritual Birth, God creates a desire to love and obey Him. Such love/devotion for God and His Son CAN NOT be separated from obedience to His Word/Scriptures (Ps 119:34, 69, 112)

Jesus taught us that love for God with the whole heart and love for one's neighbor summarize God's entire law (Matthew 22:37-40). Love from the heart is the essential ingredient in obedience. Too often believers try to substitute the obedience to mere outward religious forms, outward observance without inner desire, love and obedience to the Word of God is Hypocritical Religion and is severely condemned by our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 23:13-28 & Luke 21:1-4).

May the God Almighty help us all to have a regenerated heart filled with His love and obedience, at all times.....Amen.