



*The **Heart** of the Matter*

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Love UnVeiled
Transforming Women into God's Image of Beauty

The Heart of the Matter

The heart is a matter of life and death. The heart gives life. If the heart stops beating the body is dead.

From the beginning, the Old Testament lays out the conditions required for the heart to keep giving life:

See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to **love** the LORD your God, to **walk** in His ways, and to **keep** His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may **live and multiply**; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. Deuteronomy 30:15-16

But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish... Deut. 30:17-18

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;²⁰ that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them. Deut. 30:19-20

What is life giving? What is death?

The Key to Life - No Other gods

*You shall have no other gods before Me. **Deut. 5:7***

*You shall not make for yourself a carved image, any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; **Deut. 5:8***

*Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! **Deut. 5:29***

*Therefore, you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. **Deut. 5:32***

What Does God Desire?

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. Deut. 6:4-6

And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear [and worship] the LORD your God [with awe filled reverence and profound respect], to walk [that is, to live each and every day] in all His ways and **to love Him**, and to **serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul [your choices, your thoughts, your whole being]**, Deut. 10:12 AMP

Read Psalm 95:10. How successful were the Israelites in showing their love for God? What was the heart of the matter?

It was difficult for the Israelites to obey and love God because their hearts were sinful. God made a way for them to have life, Him by giving a blood offering for their sin.

*For **the life of the flesh is in the blood**, and I have given it to you upon **the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood** that makes atonement for the soul. **Lev 17:11***

Jesus brought the same message in the New Testament as the prophets had shared in the Old Testament.

*Jesus said to him, “You shall **love** the LORD your God with **all your heart**, with **all your soul**, and with **all your mind**. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: “You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” **Matthew 22:37-40***

*Love the Lord your God **with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength**. **Mark 12:31***

*So he answered and said, ““You shall **love** the LORD your God with **all your heart**, with **all your soul**, with **all your strength**, and with **all your mind**,^[a] and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’” And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” **Luke 10:27-28***

*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; **abide in My love**. If you **keep My commandments**, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. **John 15:9-10***

KNOW GOD - LOVE GOD - TRUST GOD - OBEY GOD

To love God with my whole heart is to know Him, to know Him is to love Him, to love Him is to trust Him, to trust Him is to obey Him, to obey Him is freedom and joy.

Jesus said *“These things I have spoken to you, that **My joy** may remain in you, and that **your joy** may be full. John 15:11*

But the enemy has deadened our hearts through sin. Like the Israelites we struggle to love God and to experience freedom and joy.

Jesus came to give us abundant life and joy John 10:10. He came to cleanse our hearts by paying for our sin with His own perfect blood. Receiving His blood by faith as payment for our sin allows the Holy Spirit to come and live in us giving us a new heart to love and obey God with His heart, the way He desires and longs for.

Likewise, He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

Luke 22:20

God doesn't look at our appearance but at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

Does God have your whole heart?

If you have never confessed your sin and received the blood of Jesus by faith to forgive your sins and receive a new heart, you can pray that prayer right now.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Ezekiel 36:26-27

...“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Romans 10:8-10

If you believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is the perfect Son of God who died for your sin, pray a simple prayer to confess your sin, ask God to forgive your sin and by faith in your heart, speak it out of your mouth. You will receive His forgiveness and a new heart. His life-giving Spirit will come to live in you, and you are ‘born again.’

[Read John 1:12, John 3:3-7, John 3:16-18]

We must guard our heart:

The enemy wants to kill, steal and destroy our heart connection with God, knowing it is our life-giving source.
(John 10:10)

- **Our deep heart emotions can take us down a road of deception and death** which “feels” right, but can often be so “wrong.”
- *Guard your heart more than anything else because the source of life flows from it (Proverbs 4:23).*

God Tests and Searches Our Hearts

*Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may **live and multiply**, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to **humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart**, whether you would keep His commandments or not. **Deut. 8:1-2***

*I, the LORD, **search the heart**, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings. **Jeremiah 17:10***

Oh Lord you have searched me and know me. Psalm 139:1

***Search** me O God, and know my heart.
Try me and know my anxieties;
And **see** if there is any wicked way in me,
And **lead me** in the way everlasting. **Psalm 139:23-24***

David's prayer asking God to search and know his heart, to show him his anxieties and sin, is both transparent and courageous.

Reflection:

Are you willing to allow God to search you heart?

What may prevent you from being transparent with God?

Being transparent with God may be frightening if we have things hidden in our heart which cause us to feel shame or fear of condemnation.

What is in your heart that you are afraid of God seeing or revealing?

Perhaps you think your heart is in good condition and pride prevents you from allowing God to search your heart. Are you willing to allow the Holy Spirit to show you any things hidden in your heart which you haven't seen, but which He wants to reveal to you so that you can experience greater freedom to love Him, serve Him, obey Him and enjoy intimacy with Him?

What is the condition of your heart today?

- One way to check the condition of our heart is to check the level of our joy.
- Unlike happiness, joy is not dependent on circumstances.
- Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. It is evidence of intimacy and trust in Jesus in spite of our circumstances.

When the Lord examines your heart, what will He reveal which has drained, stolen or dampened your joy?

Here are some words scripture uses to describe the condition of the heart...

Reflection: Circle any of the following words you feel describe your heart today:

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|----------|
| Broken | Haughty | Uncircumcised | Hard |
| Grieved | Anxious | Scheming | Covetous |
| Discouraged | Heavy | Troubled | Weary |
| Sorrowful | Stubborn | Unsearchable | Foolish |
| Stony | Proud | Unfathomable | Sick |
| Deceitful | Darkened | Wicked | Cunning |
| Jealous | Unrepentant | Trembling | Insolent |
| Envious | Bitter | Arrogant | Sad |
| Double | Perverse | Unbelieving | Subtle |
| Boastful | Evil | Fearful | Faint |
| Adulterous | Wounded | Despairing | Hurting |

Hearts in any of these conditions are either sinful or wounded and need healing.

- To experience healing, we invite Jesus, the light of the world, to stand in the midst of our heart. We allow Him to shine His light and truth to illuminate our hearts (Psalm 43:3).
- He will then speak His healing word to us, which if received and acted on will set our hearts free from all the other dominating voices; the world, the flesh and the devil.

Healed hearts are also named in scripture;

Whole	Perfect	Soft	Pure
Tender	Willing	Upright	Clean
Merry	Meek	Contrite	Lowly
Honest	Good	Single	Compassionate
True	Circumcised	Thankful	Loyal

God promises to heal and transform our hearts if we are willing:

*Create in me a pure heart, Oh God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. **Psalm 51:10 NIV***

*Teach me your way oh Lord, and I will walk in your truth (NKJV); give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name (NIV). **Psalm 86:11 NKJV & NIV***

*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you (NKJV); I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh (NIV). **Ezekiel 36:26 NKJV & NIV***

*...Refresh my heart in Christ. **Philemon 1:20b***

that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, ..you being rooted and grounded in love...

Ephesians 3:17

*...When my heart is overwhelmed lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. **Psalm 61:2***

*He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. **Psalm 147:3***

...Let the Peace of God rule In Your Heart...

Colossians 3:15

How can God's peace rule in my heart?

*If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. **James 1:26** (also read **3:4-17**)*

It is easy for us to become prideful and our hearts to deceive us. Yet, the rudder which will guide our tongue is controlled by whoever is ruling over our hearts.

What comes out of our hearts will produce life or death.

*Death and life are in the power of the tongue... **Prov 18:21a***

According to the following verses what is the connection between our tongue and our heart?

*...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the treasure of his heart brings forth good things. An evil man, out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. **Matthew 12:34-35***

¹¹ Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man. ¹⁸But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. ¹⁹For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, theft, false witness, blasphemies. ²⁰These are the things which defile a man... **Matthew 15:11;18-20**

Reflect: What comes out of your mouth which indicates the condition of your heart?

Read James 3:1-12

The greatest battle we face is who is ruling our hearts in every moment and in every decision. We may think our hearts are right but are we in perfect sync with the Holy Spirit. He is the one who wants to rule our hearts. *Do we allow Him to lead and guide us as the pilot of our hearts?*

Identifying conflict and confusion in our Hearts

But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. **James 3:14-16**

Godly wisdom and a peaceful heart

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

James 3:17

List characteristics of a confused heart and those of a pure, peaceful heart, according to James 3:13-18

Confused Heart

Peaceful Heart

Personal Reflection:

What struggles in your heart make it difficult for you to discern truth and listen to the Holy Spirit's leading?

Is there anything in your heart which is causing confusion and conflict in your life today? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the root. Is it related to wounding, a selfish motive or pride?

REFLECTION

The key to a heart ruled by peace is found in the words
“*willing to yield.*”

- Am I *willing to yield* to the Holy Spirit?
- Am I willing to release my desires by trusting Him with the outcome.
- Am I *willing to yield* my right to be right?
- Am I willing to yield my rights, my position, my power, my identity, my personality, my hopes, my ways, my habits, my family, my relationships, my longings, my sins, to follow the path of obedience and peace with God?

The process to regaining a peaceful heart:

*Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil 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. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. **James 4:7-10***

*Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us **Psalms 62:8***

If you are willing to follow this path to a peaceful heart, will you pray this prayer based on the steps to healing and a renewed heart, laid out for us in **James 4:7-10?**

Dear Lord Jesus,

Search my heart oh God. My heart is heavy from the struggle and confusion of battling with my own heart which deceives me.

With the help of Your Holy Spirit in me, I come to You to submit before my Father and your Father God. In Your name and by Your blood, I resist the devil and believe according to Your word that as I resist, he will flee from me. I draw near to You God believing Your promise that as I do, You will draw near to me.

I cleanse my hands before You and ask You to purify my heart from all unbelief, anger, resentment, doubleminded thinking, ungodly desires and any ungodly thing that has ruled my heart.

I have spoken out of my own pride, I have pursued my own ways and the deceit of my heart which You have revealed to me causes me to mourn and weep before You Lord.

You have convicted me of my sin. My laughter has turned to mourning and my joy to gloom because I sinned against You. I humble myself before you Lord waiting for You to renew my joy knowing that You will lift me up with a renewed heart and a renewed desire to follow You and obey You. I believe all your purposes for me are good.

Thank you Lord Jesus that by your blood You give me power, strength and victory to stand against all the works of the enemy and my flesh when I walk in obedience to You. Thank you that when I confess my sin, You are faithful and just to forgive me my sin. I receive Your forgiveness. Teach me to walk with a heart that yields willingly to You every day,

I pray all this in Your name, Jesus.

