

Proverbs 4:23

“Above all else: Guard your heart, it is the wellspring of life.”

- Guard: Watch over or protect
- Heart: Source, well, fountain head, river starts - where everything begins

The heart is the center of our lives

- The heart is the center of our intellect
- People know things in their heart, they pray, meditate, hide God’s Word, devise plans, keep words within, think, doubt, ponder, believe and sing in their heart
- These are all actions that include the mind

The heart is the center of our emotions

- The Bible speaks about the: Glad, loving, fearful, courageous, repentant, anxious, angry, revived, anguished, delighted, grieving, humble, excited, burning and troubled
- All of these actions involve our emotions

The heart is the center of the human will

- We read in scripture about the:
 - The hardened heart that refuses to do what God commands (Exodus 4:21)
 - The heart that is yielded to God (Joshua 24:23)
 - The heart that intends/decides to do something (2 Chronicles 6:7)
 - The heart that is devoted to seeking the Lord (1 Chronicles 22:19)
 - The heart that desire to receive from the Lord (Psalm 21:1-2)
 - The heart that is turned towards God’s statutes (Psalm 119:36)
 - The heart that wants to do something (Romans 10:1)
- All these activities take place in the human will

How is your heart?

Take a minute and think about it

- When Adam and 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 filled with evil
- Therefore Jeremiah wrote the following:

Jeremiah 17:9

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”

- Jesus confirmed Jeremiah’s statement in Mark

Mark 7:20-21

“He went on: What comes out of a man is what makes him unclean. For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean.”

- It is not what we eat or do that makes us unclean but what comes from within, what comes out of our heart
- Unclean – means being separated from life, salvation and fellowship with Christ

An impure heart will corrupt our thoughts, feelings, words and actions

- Jesus often spoke about the seriousness of sin in the heart:

Matthew 5:21-22

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister, will be subject to judgment.

Matthew 5:27-28

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

- Jesus is saying that it is the same whether you do it in your heart or physically

Hearts that are committed to doing evil, run the grave risk of becoming hardened.

- Those who persistently refuse to listen to God’s Word and to obey what He commands and instead follow the wicked desires of their hearts, will find that God will eventually harden their hearts so that they will lose all sensitivity to His Word and to the desire of the Holy Spirit
- A primary example of this in the Bible is Pharaoh’s heart at the time of exodus

Paul saw the same general principle operating in the Roman empire

Romans 1:24

“Therefore God gave them over to the sinful desires of their hearts, to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised – Amen.

Paul predicted that it would also occur during the days of the antichrist

2 Thessalonians 2:5-12

Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

The writer of Hebrews filled his letters with warnings to believers not to harden their hearts

Hebrews 3:8-12

“Today, if you hear his voice, Do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation and I said, Their hearts are always going astray and they have not known my ways. So I declared on oath in my anger, they shall never enter my rest. See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

- God emphasise that we should seek and love him from the heart (Deuteronomy 4:29)

- Jesus teaches that God's entire law is summarised in that we should love God and love our neighbours (Matthew 22:37-40)
- God's people many times substitute obedience from the heart – to just outward religious activities (Isaiah 1:10 – 17, Amos 5:21 – 26, Micah 6:6-8 and Deuteronomy 10:12)
- Outward actions without an inner desire to serve God is hypocrisy and is severely condemned by our Lord (Matthew 23:13-28)
- We can put on a nice mask and act all friendly but in our hearts, we curse the person

Luke 6:45

“The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.”

What is needed?

- We need to get a new heart
- God's answer to the sinfulness of the human heart is regeneration
- Regeneration is a matter of the heart. (Surgery)
- Regeneration means: Formed, created again, spiritually reborn or converted and restored to a better, higher or more worthy state

How does this happen?

- It comes to all who repent of their sins, turn to God and place a personal faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour

Romans 10:9-10

If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

- Those who repent from their heart of all sin and confess in their heart that Jesus is Lord are born again and receive a new heart from God that loves Him and desires to obey Him

Psalms 51:10

Create in me a pure heart, O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Ezekiel 11:19

I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them, I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people and I will be their God.”