

The Kind of Heart That Will Lead Us to Heaven

by Bryan Gibson

Most religious people talk frequently about heaven, confident that this is their final destination. But as the old song says, “Everybody talking about heaven ain’t going there.” One thing is for sure—if we’re going to make it to heaven, we’ve got to have the right kind of heart.

We need a humble heart, a teachable heart (Psalms 25:9), a heart that says, “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). It is the humble of heart who will truly seek God and His ways. They are too humble to do it “their way”; God’s way is the only thing that will satisfy them. “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).

We need a thankful heart, a heart like the one leper who returned to say “thank you” to Jesus (Luke 17:11-19); a heart that “gives thanks always for all things” (Ephesians 5:20). Those who possess this kind of heart will “no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:15). Dedicated service is no problem for them, because they want to do all they can to show their gratitude to God (1 Corinthians 15:9-10; Galatians 2:20).

We need a heart that loves God more than anyone or anything else, more than mother and father, brother and sister, wife and children (Luke 14:25-26; Matthew 10:34-37). It is not enough to honor Him with our lips; He must be first in our hearts (Matthew 15:8). “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37).

We need a heart that desperately wants to KNOW what is pleasing to God, a heart that says, “Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths” (Psalms 25:9); a heart that listens to the word with humility (James 1:21); a heart that cries out for knowledge, wisdom, and understanding (Proverbs 2:1-5). One who has this kind of heart does not look to creed books, or church manuals, or even to his preacher for the truth. He only wants to know what the Bible says.

We need a heart that sincerely wants to DO what is pleasing to God—a heart like Jesus, who said, “I always do those things that please Him” (John 8:29). Those who possess this kind of heart know that the day is coming when they will have to give account to the Lord, and so their aim is to be well-pleasing to Him (2 Corinthians 5:9-10).

We need a heart that is easily broken by sin, a heart like King Josiah, who was so distraught when he learned of his sins that he tore his clothes and wept (2 Kings 22:18-19). “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart; these, O God, you will not despise” (Psalms 51:17). This is the “godly sorrow” that “produces repentance leading to salvation” (2 Corinthians 7:10). If sin doesn’t bother us, then we need to quit talking about heaven, because we “ain’t going there.”

Acts 2:37 tells of some whose hearts were broken by sin, so much so that they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The apostle Peter answered them, "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). This is a good time to find out if you have the right kind of heart. Will you obey the Lord?