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Keeping Our Heart Right

By Marc Gibson

The heart is a very important part of the physical body. It is an organ that is made up of four chambers that beat in rhythm to circulate blood throughout your body. You cannot live without your heart. I think about my heart often because of my recurring problem of atrial fibrillation, which causes it to beat out of rhythm. There are many other problems that can afflict our hearts and we have to be careful to keep our hearts healthy and strong to live a long and productive life.

The Bible speaks often of the heart of man, but not the physical one described above. There is a “heart” that is more important. That heart is our spiritual heart. Every person has one and it is central to our spiritual life and eternal destiny. This “heart” is our inner person, which includes the mind, character, emotions, and will of an individual.

Our heart reveals who we truly are. *“As in water face reveals face, so a man’s heart reveals the man”* (Prov. 27:19). Someone will say, “Let’s get to the heart of the matter,” meaning to get to what is really central and true about a matter. To get to the “heart” of a person is to know who he really is, without any outward masking or deception. You might tell your doctor that you are feeling fine, but he will still get his stethoscope and take a listen to your heart to be sure.

God and Our Heart

The Lord God is extremely interested in observing our spiritual hearts. He wants to know if it is healthy and in rhythm with His will. When Samuel was at the house of Jesse to anoint a new king of Israel, as he looked at one of the sons of Jesse, God told him, *“Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart”* (1 Sam. 16:7). Our heart reveals who we truly are, so God looks at what other men cannot see. That is why it is said of Jesus that He *“had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man”* (Jn. 2:25).

Sometimes earthly doctors will run tests on our heart, such as a stress test or an electrocardiogram. The Bible tells us that God tests our spiritual hearts – *“For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds”* (Psa. 7:9). We should welcome this divine examination because it is for our good: *“Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my mind and my heart”* (Psa. 26:2). Of course, it will only do us good if we are serious about taking good care of our spiritual heart.

How God Tests Our Heart

One way that God examines and tests our heart is by His word. The word of God is described as *“living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the **heart**”* (Heb. 4:12). The word of God is a standard of truth by which our thoughts, words, and conduct are measured and weighed. We are able to see where we stand in the eyes of God. If we are doing the will of God, we strive to continue to do so. If we fall short, we seek God’s forgiveness and determine to do better. Such an examination of a sincere heart that seeks *“first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”* (Matt. 6:33) will only result in good to the glory of God. Such a heart will be strengthened by what God provides in His word.

Now we understand why the wise man admonished to *“keep your **heart** with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life”* (Prov. 4:23). We must keep our spiritual heart right and true. Many take great care of their physical heart, yet ignore their spiritual heart, the immortal soul that is worth more than all the things in this world. Solomon was the wisest man of his time yet allowed his wives to turn his heart away from the Lord God to false gods (1 Kgs. 11:3-4). Simon the sorcerer was told that his **heart** *“was not right in the sight of God”* (Acts 8:21).

Danger of an Evil Heart

Satan will try to take control of our heart in a number of ways. Earthly possessions can possess our heart, for *“where your treasure is, there will your **heart** be also”* (Matt. 6:21). We must beware lest doubts arise from Satan’s deceptions to create in us *“an evil **heart** of unbelief in departing from the living God”* (Heb. 3:12). Sinful words and actions begin with evil thoughts. *“For out of the abundance of the **heart** the mouth speaks... For out of the **heart** proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies”* (Matt. 12:34; 15:19). Evil that takes root in our heart will produce a harvest of error in our life. Be careful about the condition of your heart! Your eternity depends on it.

Having a Healthy Heart

The fact remains that as a man *“thinks in his **heart**, so is he”* (Prov. 23:7). How important it is that we think on things above! The more our whole heart is filled with Christ and His word, the better and healthier our heart will be. *“Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole **heart**... Give me understanding and I shall keep your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole **heart**”* (Psa. 119:2, 34). It is with the heart that we believe – *“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 to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation”* (Rom. 10:9-10). It is with the heart that we obey – *“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the **heart** that form of doctrine to which you were delivered”* (Rom. 6:17).

As faithful Christians we are to draw near to God with a “*true heart*” (Heb. 10:22), letting the peace of God “*rule*” and “*guard*” our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Col. 3:15; Phil. 4:7). Indeed, “*blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*” (Matt. 5:8). Our entire life should be characterized by “*doing the will of God from the heart*” (Eph. 6:6). We need to put our whole heart into going to heaven. Hell will be the destiny of anyone whose heart is not right with God.

What Does God See?

As God looks on your heart and mine, what does He see? The great Physician can treat and cure any and all spiritual heart problems we may have. There is no reason to remain dead in sin because your heart is not right with God. Believe with your whole heart that Jesus was risen from the dead and obey from the heart the gospel plan of salvation. Be saved from sin and become a living servant of righteousness. Believe me, having a heart that beats out of rhythm is not good, but having a spiritual heart out of rhythm with God is worse. Make sure your heart is right with God today!

*Is thy heart right with God,
Washed in the crimson flood,
Cleansed and made holy,
Humble and lowly,
Right in the sight of God!*

— *Elisha A. Hoffman*
