

The Heart of a Servant

Introduction:

1. In our every day conversation with others, the names of certain people are often mentioned. It might be said of someone that “he has a big heart,” or “he has a good heart,” or “he has a benevolent heart,” or “he has a shepherd’s heart,” or “he has a pure heart,” etc., etc.
2. Conversely, of others, it might be said “he has a hard heart,” “he has a selfish heart,” “he has a shattered heart,” “he has a broken heart,” “he has a hurting heart,” “he has a crooked heart,” etc., etc.
3. The Bible has a lot to say about the heart; in fact, I’m told that there are over 1,000 references to the “heart” in the Old and New Testaments, so obviously a study of the “heart” is a biblical subject.

Discussion:

I. “Heart” is used primarily in two senses.

Note: In view of the dual nature of man, this should be expected, 2 Cor 4:16.

A. As it relates to physical anatomy.

1. In this sensed, heart refers to “a hollow muscular organ that pumps blood through the circulatory system by rhythmic contractions and dilation. In vertebrates (as in humans), there are “four chambers with two atria and two ventricles,” (**Dictionary.com**).
 - a. The physical heart has been called “the seat of physical life.”

B. As it relates to the inner man. The “heart” includes:

1. The mind or the intellect, Heb. 4:12; Matt. 13:15.
2. The intent or the will, 2 Cor. 9:7; Col. 3:15; Rom. 10:1.
3. The emotions, Acts 2:46; Matt. 22:37.
4. The Conscience, I John 3:20-21; Romans 2:15.

Note: In view of these facts, someone has said “the heart embodies the womb of character.”

II. In view of the Relationship of the “heart” to the “inward man,” it is imperative that:

A. We seek God with the “whole heart,” Psalm 119:10.

1. All acceptable obedience is “from the heart,” Romans 6:17.
 - a. This means that the mind, the will, the emotions, and the conscience must be in tune with the will of God. David understood that fact, as is evidenced in Psalm 119:9-11.
 - (1) Perhaps this is one reason why God described David as “a man after mine own heart,” Acts 13:22.
2. This is why correct understanding is essential to correct obedience.

B. The heart must be protected.

Note: from the standpoint of creation, and where it is located, the physical heart has layers of protection; it is not located on the surface of the skin!

1. Solomon instructed, saying, “Keep (guard) the heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life,” Prov. 4:23
2. The heart is the seat of all obedience, Rom. 6:17.
3. The heart is also the seat of all sin, Prov. 23:7; Matt. 12:34-35; Matt. 15:18-19.
 - a. This is why it is so important that we exercise caution as to what we: think about, what we listen to, what we watch, and what we do!

III. God Wants us to Have the Heart of a Servant.

Note: As it relates to the “heart,” there are several approaches that could appropriately be taken, but as it relates to this study, we are now talking about the heart of a servant.

A. Jesus came to serve!

1. “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (“serve,” NKJV), and to give His life a ransom for many,” Matt. 20:28.
 - a. He made this statement after the mother of Zebedee’s children requested that her sons be permitted to “sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left hand,” in the Lord’s kingdom, Matt. 20:21.
 - b. The many miracles of healing Jesus performed were demonstrations of the fact that He came to serve!
2. One of the clearest examples illustrating the fact that Jesus had the heart of a servant is recorded in John 13:1-5.

- a. This occurred *“when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world,”* v. 1. Apparently on the night before He was crucified for our sins!
- b. Time-wise, by comparing references, it seems to have occurred after there was *“strife”* among the disciples concerning who *“should be accounted the greatest,”* Luke 22:24.
 - (1) They, still ignorant of the nature of the kingdom Jesus was going to set up, were still jockeying for position and influence!
- c. It was common, as an act of hospitality for people to provide water for guests to wash their own feet, Gen. 18:4; 19:2, Luke 7:44.
 - (1) But to actually wash the feet of another was generally the work of a servant, or a slave!
- 3. The application: Jesus said *“I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you,”* John 13:15.
- B. The Apostle Paul cited Jesus as an example of Servant hood, whose example we are to follow, Phil. 2:5-8.
 - 1. This was in a context in which saints had been admonished:
 - a. To be *“one accord, of one mind,”* v. 2.
 - b. To *“Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory...,”* v. 3.
 - c. To *“look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others”* v. 4.
 - 2. In view of these facts, one who has the heart of a servant is not:
 - a. Politically motivated.
 - b. One who has to have his own way in the kingdom of God; to the contrary, he works well with others, he encourages others, he puts the best interest of others before his own interests; he follows the example of Jesus!
- C. The Apostles, and others, got the message of servant hood.
 - 1. *“Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ...,”* Phil. 1:1.
 - 2. *“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...,”* Jas. 1:1.
 - 3. *“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ...,”* 2 Pet. 1:1.
 - 4. *“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James...,”* Jude 1.
 - 5. *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John,”* Rev. 1:1.
 - 6. *“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness,”* Rom. 6:18.

IV. If We Truly Develop the Heart of a servant, it will:

- A. Positively affect our marriage and our home life.
 - 1. Each person will have the attitude of *“what can I do for you,”* not *“what can you do for me.”*
 - 2. Each person will have the best interests of the other in mind. In view of this, can you imagine:
 - a. A husband or a wife *“cheating”* on the other?
 - b. A husband or a wife *“running up the credit card”* on frivolous items, completely disregarding how it is going to affect the family?
 - c. A son or a daughter having to be repeatedly told to *“make up your bed,”* or *“take out the garbage?”*
- B. Make you a good neighbor, Matt. 22:39.
 - 1. If you know your neighbor is sick, you will be willing to take him some food, clean his house, mow his yard, etc.
- C. Make you a better employer/employee.
 - 1. You will treat others on the job the way you want to be treated, Matt. 7:12.
 - 2. You will do your job the best you can.
 - 3. You will show up on time, and be available to do what you can for others.
- D. Benefit the local church.
 - 1. All the *“members should have the same care one for another,”* I Cor. 12:25. Cf. v. 27; Rom. 12:5
 - 2. *“Members”* of that *“one body,”* if they have the heart of a servant, will:
 - a. Try to attend all the services, Heb. 10:25.
 - b. Endeavor to show up on time.
 - c. Participate, to the best of their opportunity and ability, in the work of the church, Eph. 4:16.

Conclusion:

- 1. To go to heaven, we must follow Jesus, I Peter 2:21. Jesus was a servant. He served God, and man
--Bobby Witherington, April 12, 2015

