

The Problem of the Heart Is the Heart of the Problem

“For thy heart is not right in the sight of God.” Acts 8:21

“To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt.” Acts 7:39

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.” Acts 7:51

In 1 Samuel 9 the man of God has a heart to heart talk to a young man named Saul. He told him, “...tomorrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.” (1 Samuel 9:19) Samuel anoints Saul as the captain over his inheritance, the king of Israel. He prophesied, “**And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.**” (1 Samuel 10:6) As Saul walked away, “**God gave him another heart.**” (1 Samuel 10:9) As he was celebrated as the king, “**there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.**” (1 Samuel 10:26)

Three short chapters later Saul develops heart problems. He is found with a big man complex and a loss of his dependency on God. God’s control of his heart got smaller and smaller. This happened in only two years. He offers a burnt offering presumptuously (that means, when it wasn’t his business to do it.) That day Samuel has a different prophecy for the big man. “**But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.**” (1 Samuel 13:14)

In 1 Samuel 15:22-23 we see how Saul rebels again and this time forces God out of his heart. Saul spared Agag and the best of the sheep, offered the oxen and lambs and did not obey in utterly destroying the enemy. This was a manifestation of rebellion; as the sin of witchcraft, and also stubbornness that is iniquity and idolatry. (1 Samuel 15:23) Samuel then left Saul and did not return to him again. The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. (1 Samuel 16:14)

After God’s Own Heart

Saul’s successor was a young man called David who was described as a man “**after God’s own heart.**”

“And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.” (Acts 13:22)

“Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

When Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden, their heart was greatly affected - it became filled with evil. This is why Jeremiah was able to give the testimony in the Scripture above.

Jeremiah’s question was “**Who can know it?**” This is asked concerning the heart. Jesus Christ looks on the heart and is a heart specialist.

Jesus, the Heart Specialist

“And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us. And put no

Christian Living
difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” (Acts 15:8-9)

“And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen.” (Acts 1:24)

“...for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23-24)

Luke 8:4-15 records Jesus’ parable of the sower. Each type of soil represents the different types of hearts of the recipients of the Word.

<i>Type of Soil</i>	<i>Type of Heart</i>
Wayside	Hard Hearts
Stony Soil	Shallow Hearts
Weedy Soil	Cluttered Hearts
Good Soil	Whole hearts

We allow the Word of God to be choked out of our hearts by chasing after:

- ✓ cares of this world
- ✓ deceitfulness of riches
- ✓ desires for other things
- ✓ pleasures of this life

These things take up our time, waste our money, and divide our loyalty. We stop these “weeds” from crowding into our lives by hiding the Word of God in our hearts.

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee.” (Psalm 119:11)

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 36:26)

While visiting a house in a village a missionary noticed that the floor was very dirty. He contemplated asking the owner of the house to clean up the floor. As he sat there pondering the situation it occurred to him that the floor was MUD. The more the floor would be scrubbed the worse that it would become. That is the same way with the hearts of men. The corrupt and sinful nature of man will not allow for improvement. The more you scrub it; the dirtier you realize it is. The only solution is for the heart to be made new. **“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17)**

Heart Writing

The Bible records four times where God writes.

- *Ten Commandments*
(Exodus 31:18)
- *Handwriting on the Wall*
(Daniel 5:5)
- *Wrote On the Ground*
(John 8:8)
- *Writes upon hearts*
(Hebrews 8:10)

We must yield ourselves to Jesus the Heart Specialist; allow Him to give us a new heart; to write His laws on our hearts as we hide His Word there. We must keep our heart clean and tuned into the Spirit and cleave unto the Lord.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)

“...And exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.” (Acts 11:23)

A Prayer From the Heart

**“Create in me a clean heart,
O God: and renew a right
spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10**

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Spirit of the Lord depart from Saul? _____

2. Who was a man “after God’s own heart”? _____

3. How does God look at a person? _____

4. How is this different from the way that we look at a person? _____

5. How is the “heart” described in Jeremiah 17:9? _____

6. What was David’s prayer in Psalm 139:23-24 and Psalm 51:10? _____

7. What does each type of soil represent in the parable of the sower? _____

8. What are we promised according to Ezekiel 36:26? _____

9. When does this take place? _____

10. When are the four times that God wrote as recorded in the Bible? _____

11. In which ways can we allow the Word of God to be choked out of our lives? _____

12. What should we hide in our heart so that we will not sin against the Lord? _____

