



## **What is in Your Heart?**

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*By Rev. David Koch*

### **Introduction:**

“Heart” is used in Scripture as the most comprehensive term for the authentic person. It is the part of our being where we desire, deliberate, and decide. It has been described as “the place of conscious and decisive spiritual activity, the comprehensive term for a person as a whole; his feelings, desires, passions, thought, understanding and will, and the center of a person. It is the place to which God turns.”

J. Stowell, Fan The Flame, Moody, 1986, p. 13.

I was talking to someone this week about the situation that developed recently in Russia that took the lives of several hundred children and adults and I was praying about that. I know God is able to stop such violence, just like He would have been able to stop the terrorists that flew into the twin towers and the Pentagon on 9/11. But I believe that these things happen to show us the wickedness that is within our own hearts, if left to ourselves without God.

The prophet Jeremiah writes about the heart in book in the Bible named after him.

### **Jeremiah 17:9-10**

**The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? “I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.”**

None of us can truly understand all there is to know about the heart, the authentic person. It is the part of our being that desires, decides, and has spiritual activity.

There is indication here that God Himself searches the heart and examines the mind, and gives rewards for the conduct of each person. Each of us will receive the rewards or punishment for our conduct for ourselves.

The heart is a vulnerable place. It is a place of emotions, decisions, thoughts, and the center of our spiritual being. We read this admonition in **Proverbs 4:23**.

**Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.**

It is important that we guard our heart. We guard our heart in three ways - by prayer, by the Word and by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Lord gave us *prayer* as an avenue of communion with Him. By covering our life with *prayer*, we are able to guard our heart. The *word* of God is a powerful tool that we have been given. We are able to use that tool of the *Word* of God to protect our heart, from sin, from error. David wrote that he would hide God’s *word* in his heart that he might not sin against God. The *Holy Spirit* is able to be a guard to your heart as well.

## I. Words that reflect

Jesus Himself hit the nail on the head when He said this that is recorded in:

### 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.

The words that come out of our mouth are a reflection of what is in our heart. Listen to the words that come out of someone's mouth and it will reflect to you what is in their heart. We talk often about what we are passionate about. Also if there is hurt, disappointment, pain, suffering, frustration, anger, joy, peace, those things also will be reflected in the words that are spoken.

If you listen, people will tell you what is in their heart. I often ask people what they know, or how they are. So often in conversation people will tell on themselves. It is very revealing as to what they are thinking about, or how they are feeling.

If there are good things in our hearts, then the overflow of our words will reflect that. If there are evil things in our heart, than that is what the overflow will be and it will be heard from the words that flow out of our heart.

## II. Forgiveness in your heart

### Matthew 18:35

**“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”**

Forgiveness is a powerful tool that is needed in our heart. Forgiveness is the ability to send forth, to lay aside, forsake, or yield up. This is talking about sin or offenses. It is possible to lay aside an offense and still see that person suffer the consequences of their actions. Were Adam and Eve forgiven by God? Absolutely! Were they restored in relationship with Him? I believe they were, yet still they suffered the consequences of their actions through death, through the man toiling by the sweat of his brow, and through women suffering in bearing children, and the fact that they were put outside the garden.

Forgiveness is something that has to come from the heart. It is a conscious awareness of laying aside the

offense. That does not mean that people are not held accountable. If we don't forgive others the things they do against us, God will not forgive us of the offenses against Him. Nor will He answer the petitions which we bring Him in prayer.

One of the areas where I have struggled is the area of forgiving those who terrorize others. Most recently I have struggled with the terrorist activities in Russia and the school children and adults who were held hostage and killed. I also struggled with the terrorist activities in Israel, in Spain, and here in our own beloved country on September 11, 2001. I just have a hard time not holding onto those sins against humanity.

I realize that forgiveness costs something. To forgive someone costs me the anger or rage or bitterness that I allow to bind me to them through their offense. Forgiveness is never free. For me to be forgiven cost Jesus His life. The death that Jesus suffered for you and me was not fair, but it was His great love that offered us that position of laying aside our offenses and standing before God justified as if we'd never sinned.

Forgiveness is something that all of us should have in our heart, and should be willing to offer. Freely we have received, freely we should give.

## III. Doubt or faith in your heart

### Mark 11:23

**“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.”**

The heart is the place where faith or doubt has the opportunity to grow and flourish. Whatever we allow to be planted in the soil of our heart will grow there and it will bring a harvest of more of the same.

If we allow doubts to grow in our heart, then our hearts will be filled with doubt, and the doubt will crowd out faith.

In establishing a new lawn, I have had to battle dandelions in the new grass. You wonder where they come from. Those weeds have very small seeds but if you don't get at them and deal with the plant before the yellow flowers come out, its not too long before they will go to seed and multiply.

The same thing is true of doubt. James tells us that if we have doubts we don't need to think we will receive any thing from the Lord. That person is like a ship that is tossed. No stability, no mourning, nothing will hold them steadfast in the time of questions.

How do you deal with the doubts that come? Take them to God. Go to His word. His word is the place where faith comes from.

#### **IV. Love for God in your heart**

##### **Mark 12:30**

**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.**

##### **Conclusion:**

Your heart and my heart are a special place where God wants to be enthroned. Our words reflect what is in our heart. Forgiveness comes from the heart. Doubt or faith flourish in the heart, and the heart is the place where the Love for God dwells and impacts our entire being and life journey.

SO WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART? Forgiveness, faith, love for God? If this is in your heart, your words will reflect it.

Love for God is shed abroad in our hearts. Since God so loved the world, He demonstrated that love by giving His only Begotten Son. The Word indicates that we can be partially committed in our love, that it is possible to have a divided heart. But the Word of God also indicates a position of totality that God wants us to seek and love Him with.

To love God in your heart I believe means that we hold nothing back from Him. In your heart, the center of your being, the place of spiritual activity, the place where decisions are pondered, you set God there to have full undivided devotion. You seek to love and respond to Him.