



What's Going On In Your Heart These Days?

MARCH 17, 2014

The Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible that are translated into the English word **heart** are intended by Bible translators to communicate the central activity of a person's reasoning, emotions and will. Since the physical **heart** occupies the most prominent place in the human body, the Hebrew and Greek words, "by easy transition...came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and emotional elements. In other words, the **heart** is used figuratively [in Scripture] for the hidden springs of the personal life." That quote is a good capsulation of the biblical use of the word.

This week I would like to study what Scripture says about your **heart**. There is much to learn from God's Word about this subject that will help you to better manage it and to maintain (if not gain) overall health.

Read on, my friend.

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Weekly Bible Study During Session

Wednesday Mornings 8:00 AM Sharp. Capitol Building Family Room H324

Hot Breakfast Served.



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I. INTRODUCTION

When Solomon mentions the word **heart** he is writing the Hebrew word *Leb* that has subsequently been translated into English as **heart** or **mind**. That should signal to us when we read heart or mind in the book of Proverbs that the word is used both figuratively and more expansively than our English equivalents; God's use and meaning of *Leb* should convey to us not only the idea of intellect, but the emotion and will of a person's inner being. The NT Greek word equivalent is *Nous*. It is translated into the English as **mind**, **understanding** and **reason**, words that help to enlighten us to a more accurate and expansive understanding of its intended meaning.

This week's study will exhaust all of the Proverbs that contain the Hebrew word *Leb*. Notice the systematic, theological, comprehensive breadth of the idea of **heart** as I attempt to unfold and organize it throughout what follows. My prayer is that you will come away with a better understanding and perception of how God intends for you to steward your inner being. Note the benefit of such in Matthew 5:8 and Psalm 73:1. These two passages respectively extol the virtues of a healthy intellect, emotion and will: "Blessed are the pure in heart" and "God is good.... to those who are pure in heart." All that to say, there are great benefits for being diligent to manage your **heart!** Such conscientious oversight of it will facilitate God's blessings in your life!

II. GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER YOUR HEART; HE KNOWS IT AND TESTS IT

A. HE IS SOVEREIGN OVER YOUR HEART

There is a relatively new theology brewing in American Evangelicalism known as "Openness Theology." It asserts that God does not know the future. Instead, supposedly He makes it up as He goes along depending on mankind's choices. Such thinking, however, negates the historical and

biblical doctrine of God's sovereignty explicated throughout the Bible, and no less in Proverbs:

16:1 *The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.*

16:9 *The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.*

19:21 *Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand.*

Even though God created man's **will**, and the economy by which man can make choices He maintains supremacy over it – even as it relates to the political leaders of a nation. Notice the following Proverbs in this regard....

21:1 *The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.*

A study unto its own, this is not the time and place to get into a discussion about God's sovereignty and the free will of man. Suffice to say here God teaches both, so in our finite minds we should not negate the validity of either truth; they are not antinomies to God! Solomon too, speaks to this tension in the book of Proverbs....

The following Proverb is quite difficult to understand at first reading, but it too serves to illustrate God's sovereignty over your **heart**. Metaphorically, what follows means that just as a distant ruler's **heart** cannot be known in total by the proletariat, neither can a finite, created individual fully understand or comprehend the ways (antinomies) of his Creator....

25:3 & 2 *As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, So there is no searching the heart of kings. It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.*



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The first Proverbs I have listed under this outline point serve to indicate that God does know our **hearts** in total, but this aforementioned Proverb indicate we cannot know His **heart** in total. Perhaps more simplistically, Deuteronomy 29:29 states it this way....

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

It follows then that....

B. HE KNOWS YOUR HEART

Even though man in his finiteness cannot fully comprehend the **heart** of God, in His sovereign infinity, God is intimately acquainted with *everything* you're thinking, feeling and deciding – and He cares about those things with intense, loving concern! He therefore expects you to converse with Him about them in prayer: He cares for you!

15:11 Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD, How much more the hearts of men!

C. HE TESTS YOUR HEART

17:3 The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests hearts.

In a parallel but expansive NT passage, James 1:2-4 reflects the same understanding about the method and means by which God intends to refine and grow the believer's **heart** in godliness: it is via His economy of **testing**....

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

God will heat up your life through circumstance for the purpose of **testing** you. The idea is to pass the presenting **test** in order to go to the next level of maturity! Because of the fallen nature of man, no one really knows him or herself until and unless God **tests** (thereby uncovering) the real motives that need be changed in one's **heart**. Ultimately it is only God who can reveal to you the true condition of your **heart**. For fellow believers to begin judging the motives (in contrast to outward actions) of others is to enter into the sin of judgmentalism. God will **test** your **heart** to reveal to you the areas that need attention. It is therefore important that...

IN OUR PRAYER CLOSETS, DURING TIMES OF DEEP INTROSPECTION WE SHOULD NOT ONLY RECOGNIZE, BUT SUCCESSFULLY DETERMINE TO PASS THE TESTS THAT GOD BRINGS OUR WAY

Be cognizant and sensitive to His sovereign means of accomplishing growth. The following Proverb illustrates the futility of personal sanctification apart from the above-described ways of God:

20:9 Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?"

III. THE HEART IS THE SPRING OF LIFE

4:23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

Understanding why God **tests** your **heart** in order to mature you is underscored by the fact that Scripture teaches that your **heart** is the **spring** of your **life**. This is beautiful, picturesque language! Even though God is sovereign, Scripture nonetheless teaches that man remains personally responsible for his or her **heart's** actions, i.e. what you allow yourself to believe, feel and do....

27:19 As in water face reflects face, So the heart of man reflects man.



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Man is personally and ultimately responsible for stewarding what he chooses to believe, feel and do. This stands in contrast to “progressive?” political ideology, (promulgated in part by pop American psychology and sociology), which teaches that it is one’s environment, or “social diseases” that are determinative of man’s destiny: “those things need to be the focus for achieving a better world!” barks the biblically illiterate Legislator. But Solomon solemnly says just the opposite in these passages: It is one’s own stewardship or lack thereof, of their **heart** that primarily governs their future! If the **heart** is declaratively the **spring of life**, in a systematic, logical sense, what follows is this...

IV. THE NECESSITY OF DISCIPLINING THE HEART WITH SCRIPTURAL TRUTH

There is a plethora of passages in Proverbs that pertain to the primacy of permeating your **heart** with scriptural truth....

3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments

4:4 Then he taught me and said to me, “Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live.”

4:21 Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart.

6:21 Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck.

7:3 Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart.

10:8 The wise of heart will receive commands, But a babbling fool will be ruined.

22:17 Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge;

23:12 Apply your heart to discipline And your ears to words of knowledge.

23:17-19 Do not let your heart envy sinners, But live in the fear of the LORD always. Surely there is a future, And your hope will not be cut off. Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way.

Key to **heart** change is the life long discipline of studying, meditating upon, and apply the Word of God to your life! This will increasingly sensitize your conscience; in terms of specific application, be increasingly cognizant via the promptings of the indwelling Holy Spirit to “Affirm and Negate” the following in your heart....

V. SPECIFIC MENTALLY AFFIRMING DISCIPLINES OF YOUR HEART

A. AFFIRM IN YOUR HEART KINDNESS AND TRUTH

3:3 Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.

B. AFFIRM IN YOUR HEART TO BE CAREFUL WITH THE TONGUE

10:20 The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver, The heart of the wicked is worth little.

12:25 Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, But a good word makes it glad.

15:28 The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.



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15:30 Bright eyes gladden the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones.

12:23 A prudent man conceals knowledge, But the heart of fools proclaims folly.

13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

C. AFFIRM IN YOUR HEART TO SPEAK INSIGHTFULLY

12:8 A man will be praised according to his insight, But one of perverse mind will be despised.

D. AFFIRM IN YOUR HEART TO ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

20:5 A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, But a man of understanding draws it out.

E. AFFIRM IN YOUR HEART TO TEACH AND DISCIPLINE YOUR CHILDREN

22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

23:15 My son, if your heart is wise, My own heart also will be glad;

23:26 Give me your heart, my son, And let your eyes delight in my ways.

One of the best ways to insulate yourself from critics is to invest abundant time in order to best assure you have godly children. You (and your allies) can point to them when your personal character is under attack. Why? Your offspring (not always, but generally) bespeak and reflect your own character.

IT IS INHERENTLY INCONGRUOUS AND DIFFICULT TO ATTACK A PERSON'S CHARACTER WHEN HE OR SHE HAS RAISED OUTSTANDING CHILDREN

Ad hominem attacks are much less effective on people who possess good marriages and godly children (cf. Titus 1:6). Notice that this is the point of what Solomon is referring to in the following Proverb:

27:11 Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad, That I may reply to him who reproaches me.

To personally invest in raising godly children is one of the best investments a political leader can make in his or her fishbowl career!

VI. SPECIFIC MENTALLY NEGATING DISCIPLINES OF THE HEART

A. NEGATE RATIONALISM IN YOUR HEART

3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.

28:26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered.

B. NEGATE ADULTERY IN YOUR HEART

5:12 And you say, "How I have hated instruction! And my heart spurned reproof!" (See context)

6:25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her capture you with her eyelids.



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7:10 *And behold, a woman comes to meet him, Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart.*

7:25 *Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths.*

C. NEGATE PERVERSITY IN YOUR HEART

The Hebrew word *tahpukah* translated into the English word **pervert** means: “To divert to a wrong end or purpose.” (I am not sure that the English slang term “puke” stems from the Hebrew word *tahpukah*, but it serves in essence to communicate the point nonetheless). A close synonym of **pervert** is **debasing**, which is self-explanatory: To “de-base” something means “to attempt to replace a commonly-held basis.” “To misuse, misapply or misdirect the basis or purpose of something.” Negate perverse thoughts.

6:12, 14 *A worthless person, a wicked man, Is the one who walks with a perverse mouth...Who with perversity in his heart continually devises evil, who spreads strife.*

12:8 *A man will be praised according to his insight, But one of perverse mind will be despised.*

D. NEGATE WICKEDNESS IN YOUR HEART

6:16, 18 *There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil...*

E. NEGATE DRUNKENNESS IN YOUR HEART

23:31-33 *Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly; At the last it bites like a serpent And stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things And your mind will utter perverse things.*

F. NEGATE REVELING IN YOUR HEART

24:17 *Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;*

This study now segues into the fruits from having mentally affirmed and negated the aforementioned. Proverbs states that those who discipline their **heart** will reap the fruit of such personally responsibility actions – and those who don't, states Solomon, will reap the opposite.

VII. THE FRUITS OF A MENTALLY DISCIPLINED HEART

A. YOU WILL POSSESS A SATISFIED HEART

14:14 *The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways, but a good man will be satisfied with his.*

B. YOU WILL POSSESS A TRANQUIL HEART

The Hebrew word in the following Proverb translated as **tranquil** is *marpe* and can also mean **healthy**. This seems to be a more accurate English contrast to the second stanza word **passion** *qinah* meaning “ardor” or “zeal” in a negative, selfish sense. Herein is a foundational basis for the fact that the wise discipline their minds from becoming selfishly consumed only with personal ambitions (cf. Phil 2:3).



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14:30 *A tranquil heart is life to the body,
But passion is rotteness to the bones.*

C. YOU WILL POSSESS A WISE
HEART

14:33 *Wisdom rests in the heart of one
who has understanding, but in the hearts
of fools it is made known.*

D. YOU WILL POSSESS A JOYFUL
AND CHEERFUL HEART

15:13 *A joyful heart makes a cheerful
face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit
is broken.*

15:15 *All the days of the afflicted are bad,
But a cheerful heart has a continual feast.*

12:20 *Deceit is in the heart of those who
devise evil, But counselors of peace have
joy.*

E. YOU WILL POSSESS PHYSICAL
HEALTH

17:22 *A joyful heart is good medicine, But
a broken spirit dries up the bones.*

F. YOU WILL POSSESS A PERSUASIVE
HEART

16:21 *The wise in heart will be called
understanding, and sweetness of speech
increases persuasiveness.*

16:23 *The heart of the wise instructs his
mouth And adds persuasiveness to his
lips.*

G. YOU WILL POSSESS A POWERFUL
HEART

22:11 *He who loves purity of heart And
whose speech is gracious, the king is his
friend.*

H. YOU WILL POSSESS A CURIOUS
HEART

18:15 *The mind of the prudent acquires
knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks
knowledge.*

I. YOU WILL POSSESS A BLESSED
HEART

28:14 *How blessed is the man who fears
always, But he who hardens his heart will
fall into calamity.*

J. YOU WILL POSSESS A
TRANSCENDENT HEART

28:26 *He who trusts in his own heart is a
fool, But he who walks wisely will be
delivered.*

K. YOU WILL POSSESS A
TRUSTWORTHY HEART

31:11 *The heart of her husband trusts in
her, And he will have no lack of gain.*

To the contrary, those who fail to discipline their
heart will reap in a negative way...

**VIII. THE FRUITS OF A MENTALLY
UNDISCIPLINED HEART**

A. UNDISCIPLINED HEARTS
BECOME PRIDEFUL

16:5 *Everyone who is proud in heart is an
abomination to the LORD; assuredly, he
will not be unpunished.*



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18:12 *Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, but humility goes before honor.*

21:4 *Haughty eyes and a proud heart, The lamp of the wicked, is sin.*

**B. UNDISCIPLINED HEARTS
BECOME CROOKED**

17:20 *He who has a crooked mind finds no good, And he who is perverted in his language falls into evil.*

**C. UNDISCIPLINED HEARTS
BECOME DECEPTIVE**

23:7 *For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you.*

26:23-25 *Like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross are burning lips and a wicked heart. He who hates disguises it with his lips, But he lays up deceit in his heart. When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, For there are seven abominations in his heart.*

**D. UNDISCIPLINED HEARTS
BECOME RATIONALIZERS**

18:2 *A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind.*

28:26 *He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered.*

**E. UNDISCIPLINED HEARTS
BECOME REBELLIOUS**

19:3 *The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages against the LORD.*

**F. UNDISCIPLINED HEARTS
BECOME INSENSITIVE**

25:20 *Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar on soda, is he who sings songs to a troubled heart.*

**G. UNDISCIPLINED HEARTS
BECOME CALAMITOUS**

28:14 *How blessed is the man who fears always, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.*

IX. CONCLUSION

By studying and attempting to outline all that Solomon states about a wisdom subject, one can see by the repetition and spectral breadth, what is the essence of God-like thinking and understanding on complex subjects such as the matter related to one's **heart** or **mind**. Such study, understanding and appropriation, give us confidence that we are becoming more Christ-like. Herein is a good theological overview that should profoundly shape our lives relative to **heart** stewardship over a lifetime! Do you reap the fruit of a disciplined or undisciplined **mind**? How do you know for sure what is right and wrong with your thinking apart from the guiding precepts of Scripture? Have you yet bowed the knee to the authority of the written and living Word of God in your life who can and will empower you to have an increasingly pure **heart**?