

Hardness of Heart
Part 2
Learning How to Keep One's Heart

Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)

²³Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

- *We are to guard, keep and protect our hearts as one guards a prison.*

- *There are two basic words that describe hardness of heart in the New Testament.*

- *πώρωσις pōrōsis has the meaning to cover with a callus and thus make one dull or insensitive.*

- *σκληροκαρδία sklērokardia has the meaning of stubbornness of heart. It means a heart that is unbending, stiff, and rigid and is an idiom in the Greek for an uncircumcised heart.*

- *Therefore we see two thoughts in hardness of heart.*

- *One that means callous and therefore insensitive or not able to understand and thus having eyes that cannot see and having ears that cannot hear.*

- *The other is a heart that refuses to change and is stubborn and stiff-necked.*

- *How does a callus form?*
- *When the skin is subjected to repeated agitation and friction due to rubbing.*

- *Therefore a hardhearted person can refer to someone who either stubbornly resists God or to someone who has grown callous and insensitive to God.*

- *The first produces the second.*
- *We don't start off as callous but as we continue to resist God's correction that produces friction within our hearts which ends up producing a heart that is callous.*

Acts 7:51–54 (NKJV)

⁵¹“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.

⁵²Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who

foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers,

⁵³who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.”

⁵⁴When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

- ⁵¹“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.
- “You always resist the Holy Spirit” – *Resistance that produces a callus on our hearts is not just a one-time event but a long protracted attitude of not paying attention to God.*
- *The more we fail to respond to God the greater and the deeper the callus grows. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and if we resist that conviction then we become desensitized to it so that it will no longer troubles us.*

⁵⁴When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

- “cut to the heart” - *The Greek Word for “cut” means “to cut through” and also “to become angry even to the point of rage.”*
- *God cut deeply through their callused hearts but instead of them repenting they hardened their hearts with stubbornness and reacted by going into a rage even to the point of murdering Stephan.*
- *As God cut through the callousness of their hearts and they experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit they had a choice to make.*
- *They could have repented or they could have reacted in stubbornness and hardened their hearts. They chose the later.*

1 Timothy 2:3–4 (NKJV)

³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- *God desires that no one perishes however each person’s response to Christ will determine his or her eternal destination.*

Romans 9:17–19 (NKJV)

¹⁷For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”

¹⁸Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

¹⁹You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”

- *How can we understand God’s dealings with Pharaoh in the light of 1 Timothy 2:4?*

“For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.” – *God raised up Pharaoh so that His power and glory would be seen through him.*

- *There are two ways in which Pharaoh could have glorified God.*
- *He could have acknowledged the God of Israel and allowed Israel to go free. All the nations of the earth would have heard how even the great king of Egypt humbled himself before God.*
- *He could resist God and then with a mighty outstretched hand God would manifest His judgment against Egypt and deliver Israel from the mighty power of Egypt.*
- *Pharaoh chose to be a vessel of God’s judgment instead of a vessel of God’s mercy and grace.*

¹⁸Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

- *If God hardened Pharaoh then how did Pharaoh have a choice?*
- *God knew how Pharaoh was going to respond to His words to him.*
- *Just as the same Sun that softens the wax hardens the clay so it is with each human heart when they encounter Christ.*
- *God knew that as He would reveal Himself to Pharaoh that Pharaoh would react by hardening his heart to his own destruction and the destruction of his empire.*

¹⁹You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”

- *The person who has hardened his heart to God will then even blame God for his hardened heart by saying, “He is God and He can do whatever He wants, so if He wanted to He could have made my heart soft, repentant and obedient.”*

Acts 7:51(NKJV)

⁵¹“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.

- *There are three part of the body that God uses to give us an understanding of our spiritual heart.*
- *The neck, the heart and the act of circumcision.*

1 John 2:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

- *Stiff-necked – This represent the pride of life. We do not want to be obedient to God and will harden our hearts no matter how destructive the results, even as Pharaoh hardened his heart.*
- *Stiff-necked implies an unwillingness to change the course or direction of our lives to conform to God’s will. A proud person will never want to admit his or her needs or failures.*
- *The physical heart represents the center of life in the body that keeps everything alive.*
- *The heart is the part of the soul that motivates us and contains our deepest desires.*
- *Our heart is always god-ward and always serves our gods.*
- *That god may be the True and Living God or may be false gods.*

Matthew 6:21 (NKJV)

²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- *The heart is the treasure chest of the soul.*
- *The heart is the part of the soul that when impure leads us to seek false treasures – the lust of the eyes.*
- *The heart is the part of the soul that is described as hearing and seeing.*

Matthew 13:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;

¹⁵For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’

- *True understanding goes beyond the intellect to an understanding heart. That is why some people who are very intelligent and educated make foolish decisions that are so destructive to their lives.*
- *A hardened heart always leads to a life that is filled with disappointment and ultimately a dead end spiritually.*

Romans 2:29 (NKJV)

²⁹but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

- *Why would God use the act of circumcision to represent the heart?*

Deuteronomy 30:6 (NKJV)

⁶And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

- *Even in the Old Testament a clear connection is made between circumcision and the spiritual heart.*
- *There are at least major two functions of the spiritual heart that Scripture teaches us:*

Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)

²³Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

- *The heart is the source where life flows out. The male organ is where life flows forth and brings reproduction – new life.*

Romans 10:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹that 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.

¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- *When we make a confession of faith in Christ that originates from the heart, it produces salvation – the new birth.*

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- *It is from our heart that we confess our sin and thus we are not only forgiven but we are cleansed from all unrighteousness.*
- *The male organ is the part of the body that eliminates waste products so that they will not build up and become toxic.*
- *If we are not continually confess our sins and unrighteousness we will soon become spiritually toxic.*

Deuteronomy 10:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.

- *Circumcision is a picture of the heart being freed from the lust of the flesh.*
- *By studying what the Bible teaches about circumcision we can gain insights on how the heart is to be circumcised so that we will not remain hard hearted.*

Romans 4:11 (NKJV)

¹¹And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

- *A circumcised heart is a picture of a heart that is right before God.*
- *For a person to be circumcised he must allow his most private parts to be exposed.*

Ephesians 6:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

- *We are not left naked with the shame of our sins but once the flesh has been removed we are clothed with truth.*
- *The lies of the flesh are replaced by the truth of God.*

Leviticus 12:3 (NKJV)

³And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

- *Our cleansing from sin occurs through our new birth.*
- *A child at eight days old does not experience shame when he is circumcised.*

- *It is also the time when the body is optimized to promote rapid healing.*
- *We come to God with our failures and sins not from the point of view of a condemned sinner but as His son or daughter through our new birth in Christ so that we can be cleansed and set free from all our failures and the pain of our past.*
- *If our hearts are free from sinful habits and influences it will produce the greatest delight in our souls but if our hearts are subject to the lusts of the flesh it will result in us experiencing terrible pain and sorrow.*

Proverbs 2:2 (NKJV)

²So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding;

- *The Hebrew word for “apply” is נָטָה natah, which means, “to stretch out, incline, bend”.*
- *Take your heart and begin to bend and stretch it so that it is no longer stubborn but flexible and humble to learn the ways of the Lord.*

Proverbs 28:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴Happy is the man who is always reverent, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

- *A soft heart produces blessings but a hard heart produces calamity.*

Proverbs 29:1 (NKJV)

¹He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

- *What is the remedy for a hardened heart?*
- *Stop resisting and begin to yield.*
- *Today if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts.*
- *Circumcision – removing the flesh and opening our hearts to God. – A change for the positive.*
- *Circumcision is removing the flesh so we are more and more sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.*
- *Callus – having the flesh grow over our hearts and closing our hearts to God – A change for the negative.*

- *Hardness of heart is our hearts become callus and more and more dull to the voice of the Holy Spirit.*

Hebrews 3:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

- *If you are hearing His voice today begin to say, “Here I am Lord, speak for your servant is listening.”*
- *If you have been failing to respond to God’s voice, today is the day to repent. Confess your sins to God and allow Him to remove those calluses and to circumcise your heart.*
- *If you have been listening and trying to obey the voice of the Holy Spirit then give thanks that He is making your heart soft and ask Him to make your heart even more sensitive and obedient to Him.*
- *If you have never received Christ, today you can respond to the voice of the Holy Spirit.*