

Hardness of Heart
Part 4
Hardness of Heart in Respect to Affections

- *There are different types of hardness of heart and each one must be dealt with in the appropriate way to result in freedom.*
- *Many times people have used hardness of heart to mean exclusively bitterness but Jesus uses the term hardness of heart to mean much more than that.*
- *Hardness of Heart results in the inability of our hearts to sense or perceive things.*
- *Hardness of Heart results in becoming insensitive to the Holy Spirit.*
- *Just as we have five physical senses to perceive the world around us we have five soul senses to perceive the internal condition of our soul and five spirit senses to perceive God.*

<i>Body</i>	<i>Soul</i>	<i>Spirit</i>
<i>Hearing</i>	<i>Conscience</i>	<i>Faith</i>
<i>Sight</i>	<i>Imagination</i>	<i>Hope</i>
<i>Touch</i>	<i>Affections (phileo)</i>	<i>Love (agape)</i>
<i>Smell</i>	<i>Memory</i>	<i>The Fear of God</i>
<i>Taste</i>	<i>Reason</i>	<i>Revelation Knowledge</i>

- *There are five times that hardness of heart is recorded in the gospel of Mark and it appears that each one deals with one of these soul senses.*
- *Last time we looked at hardness of heart in respect to memory found in Mark 8.*
- *Today we are going to look at hardness of heart in terms of affection and this is the one that most people associate with hardness of heart.*
- *This type of hardness of heart is characterized by bitterness, anger, rage and can even open us up to demonic influence.*
- *In some ways it maybe the worst form of hardness of heart.*

Mark 3:1–6 (NKJV)

¹And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand.

²So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

³And He said to the man who had the withered hand, “Step forward.”

⁴Then He said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they kept silent.

⁵And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

⁶Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

- *The Greek word used in Mark 3:5 for hardness is πώρωσις (pōrōsis) and means “to cover with a callus.”*
- *A callous forms because of repeated rubbing or friction and thus it makes that area of the skin insensitive to touch.*
- *One reason we develop a callous on our hearts is because we have been hurt and are attempting to protect ourselves from future pain.*
- *The other reason is that God is trying to get our attention and we do not want to listen or obey and we form a callous on our hearts.*

¹And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand.

- *Jesus entered the synagogue and He saw a man with a withered hand.*
- *The man presumably was in the synagogue frequently like any of the other Jews.*
- *The interesting thing is that Jesus immediately observed him and saw his need.*
- *Many of the other people in the synagogue may have hardened their hearts to the man’s afflictions in various ways and to various degrees.*
- *Some may have hardened their hearts to the man because they felt helpless to help him and instead of sharing in some of his pain they may have simply either ignored his ailment or ignore him entirely.*
- *Sometimes when we see others sufferings and we feel helpless to help them we develop a callus on our hearts so that we will not be overwhelmed with the great needs in the sea of humanity.*
- *Others may have hardened their hearts to the man because they were so selfish that they just didn’t care about the needs and suffers of others.*

- *Sometimes we ignore the needs and suffers of others simply because we are so selfish that the pain of others is of no interest to us.*
- *Therefore we can harden our hearts in the area of affection because we do not know how to face the pain of others or because we don't care.*
- *However when we harden our hearts to the needs of others it hinders the love of God from developing in our hearts.*
- *Jesus gives us an example of how to deal with people who are suffering.*
- *If we try to help everyone or deal with everyone's pain or needs we will be overwhelmed.*
- *Jesus didn't allow all the needs of those around Him to distract Him or overwhelm Him but He focused on the one that the Father directed Him to.*

John 5:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

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John 12:49 (NKJV)

⁴⁹For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

John 8:38 (NKJV)

³⁸I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

- *The principle seen in this verse is, if we harden our hearts to God then our hearts are tuned to the father of darkness but if our hearts are open to God then our hearts are closed to the father of darkness.*
- *What can we do to be open to the Holy Spirit's leading to reach out and touch others?*
- *Greet and acknowledge one another.*
- *Speak words of kindness.*
- *Pray when you sense the person is carrying a burden or needs a physical touch of healing from the Lord.*

²So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

- So they watched Him closely – *What was the thing that the Pharisees were so intent on observing?*
- *One of two things the Pharisees wanted to see happen:*
- *Either Jesus failing to heal the man and thus showing He was a fake*
- *Or Jesus healing on the Sabbath so that they may have a reason to condemn Him.*
- *Even though the Pharisees were so intently and diligently watching Jesus there was one thing that they totally failed to see.*
- *They failed to see a man who had suffered for many years with a withered hand.*
- *There were other things that the Pharisees were also not able to see or hear.*
- *They were blinded to the compassion that Christ had for the man.*
- *They were also blind to the power of God through Christ.*

³And He said to the man who had the withered hand, “Step forward.”

- *The Greek word translated as “step” is ἐγείρω (egeirō), and means “to stand up, get up; wake up; to rise up and make war against.”*
- *The Greek word translated as “forward” is μέσος (mesos), and means “among, in the midst, between.”*
- *Therefore we could translate Jesus’ words to the man as, “wake up, stand up, step forward in the midst of this hostility and stand against the opposition that is coming against you so that you can be made whole.*
- *“the man who had the withered hand” – The man’s affliction was much more than just a physical one but it affected how he was perceived and how he perceived himself.*
- *Jesus’ words, “step forward”, was the key for the man to receiving wholeness.*
- *For the man to be made whole he needed to push past all the opposition both internally and externally and to put his trust in Christ.*

- *If the man had not acted upon the words of Jesus and stepped forward then the man would have stayed in the same state and the Pharisees would have mocked Jesus.*
- *This illustrates God's part and man's part.*
- *God's part is huge and man's part is small but not unimportant.*
- *Christ would have been shamed and mocked if the man had failed to respond but Jesus was willing to expose Himself to that so that the man had the opportunity to be made whole.*

Romans 2:23–24 (NKJV)

²³You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

²⁴For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” as it is written.

- *Many times we as followers of Christ bring shame to Him because we choose not to respond to the grace of God and put our trust in Him and instead we remain in the same state of bondage or sin.*
- *Our hand remains withered and our lives remain crippled and we are not able to be fruitful but God continues to call out to us and say, “step forward and I will bring you to wholeness and freedom.”*

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- *The man with the withered hand was willing to press past his own failures, the pain of the past, the hostility of the Pharisees and put his faith in Jesus' words.*

⁴Then He said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they kept silent.

- *Why did Jesus choose to heal on the Sabbath?*
- *Jesus could have either healed the man privately or He could have healed him another day but Jesus chose to heal him openly in the synagogue on the Sabbath.*
- *Jesus' act of healing on the Sabbath shows that He not only cared for the afflicted man but He also cared for the Pharisees and all those in the synagogue because each one needed deliverance and salvation.*
- *Jesus healed on the Sabbath so that the crowd of people in the synagogue could understand the true character of God.*

- *Jesus cleared showed that God was not a legalist but One who was filled with love and compassion and the purpose of the Law was not to afflict the people but that mankind could be blessed and protected.*
- *Jesus wanted the people to know that behind the Law was not meanness but kindness.*
- *Jesus also healed on the Sabbath because He was concerned for the state of the Pharisees and He wanted to see them saved and set free.*
- *The Pharisees were hard hearted in one of the worst ways possible – they were bitter.*
- *When we are bitter we see God as a bitter angry God.*
- *The Pharisees were as much crippled and suffering as much as the man with the withered hand but in some ways much worse because they failed to even recognize the true state of their misery.*
- *The Pharisees didn't recognize that their lives were devoid of any true joy but instead they were driven by bitterness and selfish ambition.*
- *The greatest tragedy was that they thought they were serving God and in fact they were not even saved and without Christ their lives would end in eternal damnation.*
- *After Jesus addresses the man with the withered hand he now addresses the Pharisees who were also asleep and unable to have lives that benefited anyone.*
- *The Pharisees' great need was to recognize the true condition of their hearts that was hindering them from a relationship with God.*
- *“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” - Jesus' question really gets to the heart of the matter. Is God good or evil?*
- *“But they kept silent.” – Why did they keep silent? Because they realized that there was an inconsistency between their application of the Law and what the Bible teaches about the character of God.*
- *The answer to Jesus question is so obvious it is almost rhetorical.*
- *What was the obstruction that had brought a schism between their view of God and what the Bible teaches? It was their bitterness and hardness of heart.*

- *One of the characteristics of a hardened heart is that it hinders a person from perceive the true condition of their hearts.*
- *The Pharisees were blinded to the condition of their own hearts and failed to recognize the depth of their own bitterness and hatred.*
- *Jesus had given the Pharisees an opportunity to be in agreement with Him as He healed the man and in a way they could have participated with Jesus.*
- *Bitterness that produces a hardened heart in the area of affection can have a number of causes.*
- *Bitterness can be caused by being deeply hurt by other.*
- *But the source of the Pharisees' bitterness and hardness of heart was rooted in their total self-centeredness and envy. They were just mean.*

Mark 15:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹But Pilate answered them, saying, “Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”

¹⁰For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

⁵And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

- *“He had looked around” – Jesus took notice of each one of them because each one of the Pharisees were important to Him and He was dealing with them personally.*
- *“He had looked around at them with anger” – The Greek does not specify the object of Jesus' anger and from the context it appears that it is not directed at the individuals but at their actions.*
- *Bitterness causes us to always direct anger toward individuals instead of toward the actions of the individuals.*
- *When our anger is directed toward the individual our motivation is revenge while if it is directed at their actions there is a redemptive purpose for the anger.*
- *Christ's purpose was not to bring condemnation to the Pharisees but to bring them to repentance.*
- *“being grieved by the hardness of their hearts” – The Greek word “being grieved” is συλλυπέω (sullypeō) and it means, “to feel sympathy, be deeply*

distressed for someone, to feel sorry for someone, to be moved with grief”.

- *While Christ’s anger was not directed toward the Pharisees but their actions, His deep sorrow and pity was direct toward them.*
- *The Pharisees were acting more like wild beasts than humans created in the image of God. They were totally unfeeling toward the afflictions of another human being.*
- *Christ’s sympathy toward the Pharisees indicates not only that there was still a possibility for them to repent and be saved but also that Christ had not given up on them.*
- *Christ was going to die for the Pharisees so that they could repent and have their hardened hearts changed.*
- *We can see from Acts 6:7 and Acts 15:5 that many priests and Pharisees became followers of Christ.*
- *He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” – Jesus had asked the man with the withered hand to do two things.*
- *The first was to step forward and resist and overcome the flesh and the opinions of men and obey the word of Christ.*
- *The second step was “stretch out your hand.” Jesus asked him to do something he was not able to do before.*
- *“And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.” - As the man simply obeyed and did something in the natural he was unable to do, he received healing and wholeness.*

⁶Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

- *The story ends with the Pharisees leaving with callused hearts that failed to respond to Christ’s love and compassion and instead were driven by hardened hearts of bitterness that sought to destroy the One who brought healing.*
- *However, not everyone who started off with a hard heart left that way.*
- *There was one whose heart was changed - the man with the wither hand.*
- *Maybe the man’s heart was embittered towards the people around him because they had failed to respond to his needs or maybe his heart was embittered*

toward God because such a terrible thing had befallen him while others around him appeared healthy.

- *But Jesus spoke two things to him that were key for him not only to be healed physically but to have a healing of his heart.*
- *Step forward – “Arise and leave your past disappointments, resentments and hurts and come toward Me.”*
- *Stretch out your hand – “Trust Me that I will not disappoint you and know that I am good.”*
- *A hardened heart in the area of “touch, affections, and love” stops the heart from accepting love and stops the heart from giving love.*

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- *The difference between the man with the withered hand and the Pharisees is that even though both heard the words of Jesus one chose to respond and the others chose to maintain a hardened heart.*

Hebrews 3:15 (NKJV)

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

- *Let us keep our ears open to the voice of the Holy Spirit and obey Him instantly.*
- *Let us give thanks to God for His great love, compassion and patience with us even in the midst of our struggles and failures.*
- *Let us embrace His love for us and be thankful for those times He has touched our hearts and brought healing and freedom to us.*
- *Ask God to show us areas where we still have a hardened heart and ask Him to help us to yield fully to Him.*