



IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

*Program  
Study Guides*

**For  
July 2021**

## The Heart

The place where you think, you feel, and you determine what you will do has a \_\_\_\_\_. It's called the \_\_\_\_\_. Today, we're looking at the heart. We're here to \_\_\_\_\_ the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible is an inspired \_\_\_\_\_ from God's heart to our hearts. The Scriptures have commandments, timeless truths, and promises from God, all of which is designed to \_\_\_\_\_ each of us and all of us. We cheat ourselves of the most \_\_\_\_\_ things when we overlook or ignore the Scriptures. Some think we don't \_\_\_\_\_ religious teaching, but the worst environment of all is the environment without God. We know the \_\_\_\_\_ and the joy, and the love found in knowing God and His word. That's why we focus on the Bible.

Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, \_\_\_\_\_ your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." What you think, what you feel, and what you choose matters, because your heart determines what your \_\_\_\_\_ will be like. When your heart is right, your life will \_\_\_\_\_. When your heart is \_\_\_\_\_, you'll find life harsh and unforgiving. We often think we know how we ought to live, but we \_\_\_\_\_ what God teaches in the Word. Proverbs 21:2 says, "Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD \_\_\_\_\_ the hearts." God not only sees what we do; He sees \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts.

God, speaking through Moses, said, "Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would \_\_\_\_\_ Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29). God wants us to have the kind of heart that takes His teaching seriously and is willing to practice what we've learned. His Word will bless us, if we are willing to live it out in our lives.

**Our reading comes from Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:15-16**, a letter that would be circulated not only there, but in other churches as well. He talks about the need to focus our hearts.

The first time the word "heart" is used in Scripture speaks of the hearts of \_\_\_\_\_ and then the heart of \_\_\_\_\_. Genesis 6:5-6 says, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only \_\_\_\_\_ continually. The LORD was \_\_\_\_\_ that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart." Here the word heart refers to the \_\_\_\_\_ person. You can see here how the heart has the ability to think, to feel, and to \_\_\_\_\_ what it will do. Your heart \_\_\_\_\_ what you are more than any single thing.

This is why God chose David, the youngest son of Jesse. God sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint a \_\_\_\_\_ to replace king Saul. First Samuel 16:6-7 says, "When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him.' But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the \_\_\_\_\_.'" The heart is the true "inner self." Proverbs 23:7 simply says, "For as he \_\_\_\_\_ in his heart, so he is."

The heart is where our \_\_\_\_\_ think, feel, and decide. Jesus knew the hearts of others. John 2:25 says that Jesus "didn't need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself \_\_\_\_\_ what was in man." This is shown in Mark 2:5-11. "And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 'Why does this man speak that way? He's blaspheming; who can \_\_\_\_\_ sins but God alone?'" Immediately Jesus,

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aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way, said to them, ‘Why are you reasoning about these things in your \_\_\_\_\_? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has \_\_\_\_\_ on earth to forgive sins—He said to the paralytic, ‘I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.’”

We must give our hearts and our minds to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord and avoid evil thoughts. Psalm 119:10-11 says, “With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have \_\_\_\_\_ in my heart, That I may not sin against You.” Proverbs 23:12 tells us that we ought to “apply our hearts to discipline, And our ears to \_\_\_\_\_ of knowledge.”

The heart is also where our emotions and feelings begin to take place. Paul expresses \_\_\_\_\_ in his heart in Romans 9:1-3, over his kinsmen rejecting Jesus. He said, “I’m telling the truth in Christ, I’m not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great \_\_\_\_\_ and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the \_\_\_\_\_ of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Paul desperately wanted people to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord and to be saved.

How we feel in our hearts often determines how we \_\_\_\_\_. Proverbs 17:22 says, “A joyful heart is good \_\_\_\_\_, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.” Proverbs 12:25 says, “Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs it \_\_\_\_\_, But a good word makes it \_\_\_\_\_.” Proverbs 13:12 says, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” We can’t always choose how life \_\_\_\_\_ us, but we can choose how we \_\_\_\_\_ to the things that we cannot change. In many cases the experiences of our hearts \_\_\_\_\_ us great lessons. Ecclesiastes 7:2-3 says, “It’s better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, Because that’s the end of every man, And the living takes it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, For when a face is \_\_\_\_\_ a heart may be happy.”

We make our \_\_\_\_\_ in our hearts based on what we know and what we feel. We should make \_\_\_\_\_ choices from our hearts. When God asked Israel to build the tabernacle, Exodus 35:21 says, “Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit \_\_\_\_\_ him came and brought the LORD’S contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments.” They \_\_\_\_\_ freely and willingly. Second Corinthians 9:7 says, “Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a \_\_\_\_\_ giver.”

The priest and scribe Ezra, in later years, also had that motivation. Ezra 7:10 says, “For Ezra had set his heart to \_\_\_\_\_ the law of the LORD and to \_\_\_\_\_ it, and to \_\_\_\_\_ His statutes and ordinances in Israel.” We too should be like the psalmist who said in Psalm 119:112, “I have inclined my heart to \_\_\_\_\_ Your statutes Forever, even to the end.”

Our choices do matter. We’ll either choose to serve the Lord or serve \_\_\_\_\_. Romans 6:16-18 says, “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, that you’re slaves of the one whom you \_\_\_\_\_, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became \_\_\_\_\_ from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” This passage teaches us that even when we are slaves of sin, we can \_\_\_\_\_ and become slaves of righteousness. You can decide to do what is right.

Don’t be like the \_\_\_\_\_ soil that was by the side of the road, and they cast the seed upon it; the Lord Jesus spoke about it in Luke 8:12. They \_\_\_\_\_ the word, but the devil “takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved.” It’s better for us to be the \_\_\_\_\_ soil. Luke 8:15

says, “But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good \_\_\_\_\_, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”

What kind of heart does God want for us to have? First, God wants a heart that wholly \_\_\_\_\_ Him! The Lord Jesus said, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:29). God expects a \_\_\_\_\_ commitment from us: heart, soul, mind, and strength. Half-hearted Christianity that follows Christ when you like Him and then ignores Christ when you don’t like what He says is \_\_\_\_\_ Christianity at all. You can’t hang on to the world with one hand and the Lord with the other.

James 4:4 says to Christians with wrong motives and selfish desires in their hearts, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the \_\_\_\_\_ is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a \_\_\_\_\_ of the world makes himself an \_\_\_\_\_ of God.” Half-hearted, half-converted people presume upon the grace of God and never consider that they have become an enemy of God.

We must recognize the Lord Jesus for who He is! First Peter 3:15 says, “but sanctify Christ as \_\_\_\_\_ in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the \_\_\_\_\_ that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” When Christ is Lord of our hearts and our lives, people notice; and when other things rule our lives, people also notice! We must never let anyone or anything else \_\_\_\_\_ us of the holy place that Christ has in our hearts. If Christ is Lord, then we cannot tolerate a challenger to His place.

Second, God wants a heart that loves \_\_\_\_\_ people! The Lord Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you \_\_\_\_\_ love one another. By this all men will know that you are My \_\_\_\_\_, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). When we love like Jesus loves us, we’ll sacrifice ourselves for the \_\_\_\_\_ of others. When we love some and dislike others, we fail to be like Jesus; He loved everyone.

Sadly, some \_\_\_\_\_ to love others who differ with them and even become hateful and mean; they’re filled with prejudice and malice. First John 4:20-21 says, “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and \_\_\_\_\_ his brother, he’s a liar; for one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother \_\_\_\_\_.” God loves and sends His \_\_\_\_\_ on the righteous and the unrighteous. If we are His sons and daughters, we too should show love even those with whom we differ and disagree.

Colossians 3:12-15 says, “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a \_\_\_\_\_ of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, and whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called one body; and be thankful.”

Third, God wants a heart that loves the \_\_\_\_\_! Proverbs 4:20-23 says, “My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your \_\_\_\_\_. For they are life to those who find them and health to all their body. Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the \_\_\_\_\_ of life.” Some would rather believe a \_\_\_\_\_ than hear the truth. Some would rather put their trust in a \_\_\_\_\_ hope than in what the Scripture says. Second Thessalonians 2:10 helps us understand that we’re saved by “the love of the \_\_\_\_\_.” Those who reject the truth are actually rejecting the truth of the Lord and cannot be saved.

Fourth, God wants a heart that \_\_\_\_\_ over sin and hungers for righteousness. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be \_\_\_\_\_” (Matthew 5:6). We live in a \_\_\_\_\_ seemingly satisfied with sin and hardly hungering for righteousness. They forget that the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin are always temporary; and slavery to sin will deceive them, it will harden their hearts, and cost them their souls. Many today celebrate sin, but no one will be celebrating sin on Judgment Day. We ought to mourn our \_\_\_\_\_ and hunger for righteousness. First Corinthians 13:6 reminds us that love doesn’t rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the \_\_\_\_\_. It’s hard to stand in the shadow of the \_\_\_\_\_ and rejoice over the wickedness of the world. Habakkuk 1:13 reminds us that God’s “eyes are too \_\_\_\_\_ to approve evil, And God cannot look on wickedness with favor.”

James 4:7-10 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the \_\_\_\_\_ and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.” It’s time to hunger for righteousness with our hearts!

David asked God, “Examine me, O LORD, and \_\_\_\_\_ me; Test my mind and my heart” (Psalm 26:2). Would you want your heart and mind examined by the Lord? Let’s remember God knows all about you. Psalm 44:20-21 says, “If we had forgotten the name of our God, Or extended our hands to a strange god, Wouldn’t God find this out? For He knows the \_\_\_\_\_ of the heart.”

Moses said, “Now, Israel, what does the LORD require from you, but to \_\_\_\_\_ the LORD your God, to \_\_\_\_\_ in all His ways and love Him, and to \_\_\_\_\_ the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD’S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13). The Lord is also saying to us today that He does what He does for our \_\_\_\_\_. We find blessing when we follow the Lord’s way! Love means trusting Him enough to \_\_\_\_\_ what He says. We don’t serve God by rewriting His commandments or His teaching. We serve Him by trusting and obeying Him.

Believe in Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you’re crucified with Him in baptism, God raises you up with Him to walk in newness of life. That’s when you’re born again (John 3:5 and Romans 6:4), when the Lord adds you to His church, and when you become a child of God, that’s in baptism.



## Watch Your Heart

Proverbs 4:23 says, “Above all else, \_\_\_\_\_ your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Since your heart is the wellspring of life, guard it \_\_\_\_\_. The Scriptures \_\_\_\_\_ us about the heart of God and how He’s dealt with individuals and with humanity through the \_\_\_\_\_. They reveal His \_\_\_\_\_ and His warnings. They reveal His \_\_\_\_\_ and His wrath. The Scriptures also teach us about our own \_\_\_\_\_, what God desires and what God condemns. In all of this is the nature of the heart, it’s what \_\_\_\_\_ our thoughts, our feelings, our choices, and our destiny. That’s why knowing what God says about the heart is so vital.

As the wellspring of life, the heart is where so many things in our lives \_\_\_\_\_. We’re loved by others, and it \_\_\_\_\_ us to love them back. We’re \_\_\_\_\_ by others, and it may cause us to strike back. The heart is \_\_\_\_\_ with thoughts and emotions. Some are \_\_\_\_\_ emotions like love, joy, compassion, and hope. Other emotions \_\_\_\_\_ to sin and heartache. The Lord Jesus said, “For the mouth speaks out of that which \_\_\_\_\_ the heart. The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out his evil treasure what is evil” (Matthew 12:34-35). We have to ask, what’s coming out of your heart?

The things coming from your heart are the very things that you’re \_\_\_\_\_ into your heart. If you feed on the selfish, the fleshly, the worldly, you’ll \_\_\_\_\_ things that are selfish, fleshly, and worldly. Romans 12:2 urges us, “And do not be conformed to this \_\_\_\_\_, but be transformed by the renewing of your \_\_\_\_\_, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Our reading is from **The Gospel According to Matthew 26:36-41**, in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The battle between good and evil, the battle for your soul and eternal destiny, \_\_\_\_\_ within the heart. God Himself says, “The heart is more deceitful than all else, And is desperately sick; Who can \_\_\_\_\_ it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the \_\_\_\_\_ of his deeds” (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Because this battle between our willingness to serve God and the weakness of our flesh is \_\_\_\_\_ we must watch our hearts and pray that we do not enter into temptation to sin.

Temptations can hit us suddenly without \_\_\_\_\_ or they can lie dormant in our hearts and arise when we’re \_\_\_\_\_. Luke 4:13 says, “When the devil had finished every temptation (that is, on Jesus), he left Him until an opportune time.” The devil knows when to \_\_\_\_\_ to our flesh, our eyes, or our pride. If we’re not alert and ready, we can easily \_\_\_\_\_ into the devil’s schemes. He’s looking for an opportune time! First Peter 5:8-9 says, “Be of sober spirit, be on the \_\_\_\_\_. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring \_\_\_\_\_, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your \_\_\_\_\_, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”

Let’s talk about some of those schemes as they relate to our hearts. First, the devil loves to make our hearts \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord Jesus said, “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ But I say to you that everyone who

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is \_\_\_\_\_ with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell" (Matthew 5:21-22).

James 1:19-20 reminds us, "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to \_\_\_\_\_, slow to \_\_\_\_\_, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God." What do we do when we get angry? Ephesians 4:26-27 explains, "Be angry and do not \_\_\_\_\_; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give \_\_\_\_\_ opportunity to the devil." We must \_\_\_\_\_ our emotions and learn to be patient and to bear with one another.

Second, when anger continually burns in the heart, it \_\_\_\_\_ to hatred, bitterness, and revenge. Bitterness describes the twisted way individuals \_\_\_\_\_ to painful events. Ephesians 4:31-32 says, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be \_\_\_\_\_ from you, along with all malice. Be \_\_\_\_\_ to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." The Lord Jesus faced all kinds of horrible injustices, insults, and cruelty. While suffering, He didn't "threaten, but He continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). Jesus left us this \_\_\_\_\_, so that we might follow in His steps."

Revenge is \_\_\_\_\_ back evil for evil. The Lord Jesus taught, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:38-39). Christians depend on God to \_\_\_\_\_ with evildoers. Romans 12:17-21 says, "Repay no one evil for evil, but give \_\_\_\_\_ to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on \_\_\_\_\_, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but \_\_\_\_\_ it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' To the contrary, 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he's thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with \_\_\_\_\_." A heart that must take revenge only leads to more anger, hatred, and violence. We don't overcome with vengeful violence; we overcome by showing the love of Christ.

Third, Christians are to love and treat everyone with \_\_\_\_\_. God doesn't show favoritism; He is no respecter of persons. The Jewish apostle Peter went to the Gentile home of Cornelius at God's \_\_\_\_\_. He told the people, "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to \_\_\_\_\_ partiality, but in every nation the man who \_\_\_\_\_ Him and does what is right is welcome to Him" (Acts 10:34-35). It doesn't matter to God who you are or where you came from, God will \_\_\_\_\_ you when you fear Him and do what is right.

God doesn't see us like \_\_\_\_\_ sees us. He \_\_\_\_\_ what's in our hearts. He doesn't look at \_\_\_\_\_ appearance; He looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). He knows our hearts determine what we say and how we \_\_\_\_\_. God is fair and He treats everyone alike. He will "render to each person according to his \_\_\_\_\_" (Romans 2:6). Why? Because his deeds reflect his heart.

When Jesus died upon the cross, He died for every person in every nation for \_\_\_\_\_ time. Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for \_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrews 2:9). He himself is the propitiation (that is, the atoning sacrifice) for our \_\_\_\_\_; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world (1 John 2:2). The Father wants everyone to be \_\_\_\_\_ and to know the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4). It's clear from Scripture that God treats every person fairly and wants what is \_\_\_\_\_ for all of us.

Not only that, He wants His children to \_\_\_\_\_ His example. He wants all of His children, every Christian, to want \_\_\_\_\_ others to be saved and to know the truth. The Lord Jesus said, "You have heard

that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and \_\_\_\_\_ for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and He sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:43-45). If you call yourself a child of God, and then act like a child of the devil, then you're doing the \_\_\_\_\_ thing. Why show love to all people? Ephesians 5:1-2 says, "Therefore be \_\_\_\_\_ of God, as beloved children. And \_\_\_\_\_ in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." A heart that loves God and loves others is like a fragrant offering; it's \_\_\_\_\_ to both God and to man.

Sadly, some fail to love and respect people who \_\_\_\_\_ from them. They love those who are \_\_\_\_\_ themselves and dislike everyone else. This failure to love others who are different is not unique to any one group; and it can \_\_\_\_\_ any individual, any class, or any race. It's easy to point your finger at others and \_\_\_\_\_ your own failings. Be careful \_\_\_\_\_ you judge others; because you yourself may be \_\_\_\_\_ of doing the same thing (Romans 2:20-23). Prejudice, bias, and hate can \_\_\_\_\_ anyone. Stereotyping and labeling an entire class—any class—is both unwarranted and unfair and unchristian. No class, no group, and no individual are so \_\_\_\_\_ that they may show partiality to other human beings.

James 2:8-9 says, "If, however, you are fulfilling the \_\_\_\_\_ law according to the Scripture, that 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you're doing well. But if you \_\_\_\_\_ partiality (that is, respect of persons), you're committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors." So, let's examine our own hearts, watch our own mouths and behavior towards others that we may not disrespect anyone, anywhere at any time. Each of us can \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts, and perhaps that will lead others to change.

Prejudice takes place when someone judges another before \_\_\_\_\_ the evidence. This is not fair or kind, but presumptuous. Since we don't know the \_\_\_\_\_ of other people's hearts we've got to be careful not to judge ignorantly. The Lord warns us against \_\_\_\_\_ judging of others, "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the \_\_\_\_\_ you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that's in your brother's eye, but do not \_\_\_\_\_ the log that's in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1-5).

Some, who ignore the behavior of the judgmental Pharisees, think Jesus is here saying that we should \_\_\_\_\_ judge anything; but Jesus is here speaking of unfair judging. He's speaking against how \_\_\_\_\_ in those days were judging others by human standards and not God's. The Lord Jesus also said, "Don't judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24). There is a time to judge righteously, but make sure you know all the \_\_\_\_\_. Some look only at the surface without getting the \_\_\_\_\_ story. They jump to conclusions quickly and assume the \_\_\_\_\_. Proverbs 18:17 says, "The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him."

The apostle John tells of the man who put himself \_\_\_\_\_ and thought he was in charge of the church. John said, "I've written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, doesn't acknowledge our authority. So if I come, I'll bring up what he's doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to \_\_\_\_\_ the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church" (3 John 9-10). The authority that we must acknowledge today is not in man but in God and in His inspired \_\_\_\_\_. Pride led Diotrephes to trust in himself rather

than \_\_\_\_\_ to God. Please see the difference between man-made laws and God's laws. God will \_\_\_\_\_ us according to His inspired teaching found in Scripture, and all the pride and arrogance in the world cannot change what God says.

Fourth, some have \_\_\_\_\_ hearts. I've known some whose heart has hardened against God and against the Word of God. They say, "I don't care what anyone says, and I don't care what the Bible says. I'm going to do what I \_\_\_\_\_." You can't reason with such people. People who oppose what the Lord clearly says in Scripture reveal this stubborn heart and place their \_\_\_\_\_ in jeopardy. Some don't want to admit sin is sin. Some would rather listen to some human myth rather than hear God's teaching; they have no desire to obey. They've removed God from their hearts.

Matthew 13:14-15 describes the hard-hearted Jewish leaders in the days of Jesus, "Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: 'You will indeed \_\_\_\_\_ but you'll never understand, you will indeed \_\_\_\_\_ but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'" Where is your heart? Have you allowed it to be hardened against God, against Christ, against God's morals, or against God's church?

Hebrews 3:12-13 says, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Without realizing it, we can let our hearts become hardened against God. When people fall to temptation, they may grow to love sin more than they love God. This love for sin will deceive them about God and about their souls.

I hear people refer to sinful relationships and sinful behaviors and then use the word "\_\_\_\_\_", and they think that love justifies them, but they're deceiving themselves. Love doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ sin into sinless-ness; it doesn't turn what is immoral into what is moral. Using the word love doesn't change God's Word. Love may explain what one is doing, but it doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ sin. When someone points out sin as sin, people who practice that sin may react one of three ways. They may \_\_\_\_\_ their hearts and give up their sin; they may \_\_\_\_\_ God and His Word; or they may say God's Word doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ what it says, and they get angry at God and strike out against anything that God teaches. We pray that they'll humble their hearts to God and be obedient.

Your heart will determine your choice to obey sin or to obey righteousness. To become a Christian, believe and trust the Lord, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Do it today!

## Sins of the Heart

The Lord said, “The heart is more \_\_\_\_\_ than all else” (Jeremiah 17:9). A deceitful heart can easily lead us into \_\_\_\_\_. We’re examining God’s diagnosis of man’s most serious problem that leads to sin and God’s \_\_\_\_\_ to that problem. God is honest with people about sin, but He’s also gracious to \_\_\_\_\_ us and to give us a new way of life. The Scriptures help us understand the serious \_\_\_\_\_ that sin presents to our souls, our lives, and our destinies. Proverbs 3:5 says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not \_\_\_\_\_ on your own understanding.”

The great \_\_\_\_\_ to our souls is sin, and the great \_\_\_\_\_ of sin is selfishness. When people put themselves \_\_\_\_\_ and forget God and others, they usually find themselves in sin. First John 2:15-17 says, “Do not \_\_\_\_\_ the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the \_\_\_\_\_ and the lust of the \_\_\_\_\_ and the boastful \_\_\_\_\_ of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the \_\_\_\_\_ of God lives forever.” Each of these points to a heart that focuses on self and what I want.

When people neglect God and begin looking for other things to fill their lives, they lead themselves in the \_\_\_\_\_ direction. People who stop worshiping with the church, stop praying, and stop reading Scripture find their hearts spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ and weak to sin. This is why we urge everyone to \_\_\_\_\_ their spiritual lives by worshiping at church, studying Scripture, and praying each day. The best response to temptation is to \_\_\_\_\_ and fill our hearts with God’s Word.

### **Our reading today comes from Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians 5:19-24.**

The first step into sin focuses on our \_\_\_\_\_ and ignores God. When people forget God and what great things God has done for us, they \_\_\_\_\_ to honor Him and to thank Him. Paul described the things that led to paganism and idolatry in ancient times: “For even though they knew God, they didn’t \_\_\_\_\_ Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the \_\_\_\_\_ of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures” (Romans 1:21-23).

One who’s not \_\_\_\_\_ to God for His blessings and kindnesses may turn to cynicism, grumbling, and complaining. Philippians 2:14 says, “Do all things \_\_\_\_\_ grumbling and disputing.” Paul didn’t want them to \_\_\_\_\_ endlessly and fuss about their lives. Complaining means that we’ve forgotten to \_\_\_\_\_ our blessings. I’ve seen poor people who were \_\_\_\_\_ in life because they were thankful to God for what they had, and I’ve seen wealthy people who were never happy because they didn’t have everything they wanted. First Corinthians 10:10, it reminds us that greed can be a problem.

Second, arrogance is the attitude of exalting oneself so that one is \_\_\_\_\_ than others. The Lord God spoke of how offensive an arrogant person is in Isaiah 65:5: They are those “Who say, ‘Keep to yourself, do not come near me, For I am \_\_\_\_\_ than you!’ These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day.” You’ve likely been around a campfire where the \_\_\_\_\_ seems to follow you.

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It gets in your eyes and nostrils! It's offensive; so is the arrogant person who thinks he is holier than others or better than others.

God calls haughty eyes an abomination in Proverbs 6:16-17 because they show an arrogant \_\_\_\_\_ that puts down others and sometimes puts down God himself. Haughty eyes presume they can do evil and get away with it. Haughty people presume and think the \_\_\_\_\_ don't apply to them. Haughty people think they are \_\_\_\_\_ criticism. Proverbs 8:13 says, "The fear of the LORD is to \_\_\_\_\_ evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate."

Proverbs 11:2 says, "When pride comes, then comes \_\_\_\_\_." Insolent pride breeds strife and causes quarrels (Proverbs 13:10). Proverbs 16:5 says, "Everyone who is \_\_\_\_\_ in heart is an abomination to the Lord; And assuredly, he will not be unpunished." Again, Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling." First Peter 5:5 cautions us, "You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with \_\_\_\_\_ toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives \_\_\_\_\_ to the humble."

Third, coveting is an improper desire for \_\_\_\_\_. God's law said, "You shall not \_\_\_\_\_ your neighbor's wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor" (Deuteronomy 5:21). To covet means to desire or crave the \_\_\_\_\_ of another, and then they do it to a fault, they do it detrimentally, they do it to such a situation that they long for it and want to \_\_\_\_\_ it. Ephesians 5:5 says that a covetous person is really an idolater and has no inheritance in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

James 4:1-4 says, "What is the \_\_\_\_\_ of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your \_\_\_\_\_ that wage war in your members? You lust and you don't have; so you commit murder. You're envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You don't have because you don't \_\_\_\_\_. You ask and don't receive, because you ask with wrong \_\_\_\_\_, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." When a person becomes selfish and then hurtful to others, he also becomes a lover of the world and an enemy of God.

Fourth, greed or the love of money can cause \_\_\_\_\_ and heartache. First Timothy 6:10 says, "The love of money is the \_\_\_\_\_ of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered away from the \_\_\_\_\_ and pierced themselves with many griefs." People who love money are never satisfied with what they have. Solomon said, "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. Oh, this too is vanity. When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?" (Ecclesiastes 5:10-11). The Lord Jesus said, "No one can serve \_\_\_\_\_ masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot \_\_\_\_\_ God and money (or mammon)" (Matthew 6:24). In fact, Colossians 3:5 says that covetousness or greed "amounts to \_\_\_\_\_."

Luke 12:13-21 tells of a man who loved his possessions: "Someone in the crowd said to Him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to \_\_\_\_\_ the family inheritance with me.' But He said to him, 'Man, who appointed Me a \_\_\_\_\_ or arbitrator over you?' And then He said to them, 'Beware, and be on your guard against every form of \_\_\_\_\_; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.'" He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 'And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 'Then he said, "This is what I will do: I'll tear down my barns and build \_\_\_\_\_ ones, and there I'll store all my grain and my goods.'" And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to

come; take your \_\_\_\_\_, eat, drink and be merry.” “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will \_\_\_\_\_ what you have prepared?’ “So is the man who stores up \_\_\_\_\_ for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Fifth, envy is the \_\_\_\_\_ of displeasure produced by witnessing the advantage or prosperity of others. Matthew 27:18 says Pilate “knew that because of \_\_\_\_\_, the Jewish leaders handed Him over” to be crucified. Envy can cause violence and desires to \_\_\_\_\_ another of what he possesses. Proverbs 23:17-18 says, “Do not let your heart envy sinners, But live in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD always. Surely there is a future, And your \_\_\_\_\_ will not be cut off.”

Do you remember how Cain killed Abel? Genesis 4:3-5 says, “So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain “and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.” John explains, “For this is the \_\_\_\_\_ which you have heard from the beginning, that we should \_\_\_\_\_ one another; not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother Abel’s were righteous” (1 John 3:11-12).

Jacob favored Joseph over his brothers; and Genesis 37:4 says, “His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; so they \_\_\_\_\_ him and couldn’t speak to him on friendly terms.” Envy that grows in the heart causes the \_\_\_\_\_ to come out in people and leads to heartache. Jacob didn’t fully realize what loving Joseph more than his brothers was doing to Joseph’s brothers.

Sixth, jealousy desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for \_\_\_\_\_. Love is not jealous (1 Corinthians 13:4). Jealousy and envy often \_\_\_\_\_ to selfish ambition. James 3:13-16 says, “Who among you is \_\_\_\_\_ and understanding? Let him show by his \_\_\_\_\_ behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the \_\_\_\_\_. This wisdom is not that which comes down from \_\_\_\_\_, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.” The Scriptures never speak anything good about selfish ambition.

That’s the seventh point, selfish ambition, which is a contentious struggle for personal profit or power, with no redeeming hint of \_\_\_\_\_ to others. Selfish ambition \_\_\_\_\_ others for immediate gains and empty honors, which have no eternal value. A person who is selfishly ambitious will often step on others to make his way to the \_\_\_\_\_. He doesn’t care about anyone but \_\_\_\_\_. Such people are hard to love and often very \_\_\_\_\_. Selfish ambition leads to strife and contentiousness. Romans 2:6-8 says that God “will render to each person according to his \_\_\_\_\_: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not \_\_\_\_\_ the truth, but obey unrighteousness, to them wrath and indignation.”

It’s much better to recognize there are things \_\_\_\_\_ than ourselves. As Christians we are to be servants of our Lord and servants of one another rather than arrogantly \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves better than others. Selfish ambition leads people to think only of themselves and regards everyone else as \_\_\_\_\_. Philippians 2:3-4 says, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as \_\_\_\_\_ important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

We’re to have the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. The Lord Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Himself and took the form of a bond-servant. “He humbled Himself by becoming \_\_\_\_\_ to the point of death, even death on a

cross. And for this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:8-9). God will humble those who exalt themselves and will exalt those who humble themselves. So humble yourselves before the Lord.

Thankfully, God helps us to have good hearts, when we \_\_\_\_\_ on Him and His Word. Psalm 119:1-2 says, “How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart.” Like the psalmist we should say, “Oh that my ways may be established To \_\_\_\_\_ Your statutes!” (Psalm 119:5). Later, in verses 9 to 11 he observes: “How can a young man keep his way \_\_\_\_\_? By keeping it according to Your \_\_\_\_\_. With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word have I treasured in my heart, That I may not \_\_\_\_\_ against You.”

Each day we \_\_\_\_\_ whether we give our hearts to God or spend our time in selfish pursuits. We can allow the passions of our hearts to lead us into selfish pleasure or turn our hearts to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. If you turn to selfish pleasure, in no time you’ll be a \_\_\_\_\_ to your own desires. Galatians 6:7-8 says, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man \_\_\_\_\_, this will he also \_\_\_\_\_. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap \_\_\_\_\_ life.”

God asks us to think within our hearts about our \_\_\_\_\_. “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. If you consent and \_\_\_\_\_, You’ll eat the best of the land; But if you \_\_\_\_\_ and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword.’ Truly, the mouth of the LORD has \_\_\_\_\_” (Isaiah 1:18-20). What we choose to be, to say, and to do \_\_\_\_\_. We’ll either follow the way of the Lord or the ways of the world. If we follow the world, we’ll lose sight of God and end up with hardened hearts against Him.

So, decide today, who you’re going to follow. You don’t have to obey sin; you can have a heart that loves and \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. When we give ourselves to God in obedience, God \_\_\_\_\_ to give us new hearts. The Lord God said in Ezekiel 36:26, “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

When we obey the Lord, we will place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we’ll repent of our sins, we’ll confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and we’ll be baptized (that is, immersed) in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, just as they did in Acts chapter 2. When we’re baptized, God will wash away our sins (Acts 22:16), He’ll unite us with Christ, and give us newness of life (Romans 6:4-7). Won’t you turn to the Lord today?

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there’s probably a church of Christ near you. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll gladly help you find one.



## God Wants Your Heart

God wants your heart, your \_\_\_\_\_ heart, and the hearts of your friends and family. God wants you to \_\_\_\_\_ Him with all your heart. The Bible records God \_\_\_\_\_ to all humanity about the most important things in our lives. God speaks because He wants us to \_\_\_\_\_ Him and to love Him. Our Father in heaven wants to have a close, loving \_\_\_\_\_ with each of us not only in this life but also in the life to come. If we want that relationship, then we must closely and carefully pay \_\_\_\_\_ to the things that He's revealed to us.

Mark 12:28-31 says: "And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, 'Which commandment is the \_\_\_\_\_ important of all?' Jesus answered, 'The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your \_\_\_\_\_ and with all your \_\_\_\_\_ and with all your strength.' The second is this: that 'You shall love your \_\_\_\_\_ as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

God wants your heart, your whole heart, because He wants \_\_\_\_\_. He knows that if He doesn't have your heart, He won't really have you. The Lord knows if He has your heart, He will get the \_\_\_\_\_ of you. God is not content with fair-weather Christians or part-time \_\_\_\_\_ members. Nor is He content with those who listen to the Word of God but never \_\_\_\_\_ or practice what they learn. He asks us to love Him with all our hearts, all our souls, all our minds, and all our strength. Anything \_\_\_\_\_ simply will not do. He expects us to make a \_\_\_\_\_ commitment to serve Him.

### **Our reading today comes from the first letter of John 5:1-3.**

What does it \_\_\_\_\_ to love God with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, and with all our strength? This is love in its fullest \_\_\_\_\_ with the greatest commitment. Such great love is not merely a theory; one must also \_\_\_\_\_ complete dedication to the Lord. Let me suggest these four ways to show that complete commitment.

First, God wants your decision to be a \_\_\_\_\_. A disciple \_\_\_\_\_ to learn from and to imitate his master, his teacher. He seeks in every way to be \_\_\_\_\_ his teacher. The Lord Jesus cautions us, "If anyone would come after me, let him \_\_\_\_\_ himself and take up his cross \_\_\_\_\_ and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my \_\_\_\_\_ will save it" (Luke 9:23-24). When we decide to follow Jesus, we \_\_\_\_\_ putting ourselves first and take up our cross daily to follow Him.

The apostle Paul left his life as a Pharisee and a persecutor of the church to become a Christian who \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. He said, "More than that, I count all things to be \_\_\_\_\_ in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may \_\_\_\_\_ Christ" (Philippians 3:8). In fact, Paul considered himself to be dead to the world, so that he could \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ. He said, "I have been crucified with Christ. And it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives \_\_\_\_\_ me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by \_\_\_\_\_ in the Son of God, who loved me and \_\_\_\_\_ himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Christ wants your heart

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so that you will die with Him to your \_\_\_\_\_ self and be raised with Him as a \_\_\_\_\_ person. He wants to transform your life.

Some believe in Christ but are \_\_\_\_\_ truly converted to Him; they don't want to sacrifice their worldly advantages. Christ is a good thing to them, as long as they don't \_\_\_\_\_ what they have. You remember John 12:42-43 observes, "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for \_\_\_\_\_ that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of \_\_\_\_\_ rather than the approval of \_\_\_\_\_." Such people may see Christ as God's son, but they're unwilling to make it \_\_\_\_\_. Confession is a public act, and they didn't want to lose their place in their society, so they weren't confessing Him.

Some are willing to follow Jesus until He says something they don't like or \_\_\_\_\_ with. They're more committed to their \_\_\_\_\_ thinking than they are to the Lord. When Jesus taught something that His followers didn't like, John 6:66-69 says: "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not \_\_\_\_\_ with Him anymore. So Jesus said to the twelve, 'You don't want to go away also, do you?' And Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of \_\_\_\_\_ life. We have believed and have come to \_\_\_\_\_ that You are the Holy One of God.'"

Trusting the Lord Jesus means trusting what He \_\_\_\_\_. If you deny what He teaches, you're actually denying \_\_\_\_\_. He is Lord, He is the only Lord, and He asked, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not \_\_\_\_\_ what I say?" (Luke 6:46). Wise men hear the Lord and \_\_\_\_\_ upon what He says; foolish men hear the Lord and do \_\_\_\_\_ act on what He says (Matthew 7:24-27).

Second, loving the Lord with all your heart \_\_\_\_\_ changing the direction of your heart and life. What am I talking about? I'm talking about \_\_\_\_\_. Repentance is turning \_\_\_\_\_ from the sinful and hurtful ways of life and turning \_\_\_\_\_ God and His righteousness. Many today emphasize \_\_\_\_\_, and the Lord Jesus was full of grace and truth according to John 1:14. While Jesus was full of grace, He never \_\_\_\_\_ the word "grace" in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Yet, Jesus spoke of repentance repeatedly during His earthly ministry.

Matthew 4:17 reveals what Jesus started \_\_\_\_\_ after His forty-day temptation. What was His message? "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven is at hand.'" In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus said, "If your right eye causes you to sin, then tear it out and throw it away. For it's better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off, throw it away. For it's better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell" (Matthew 5:29-30). The Lord Jesus wasn't interested in our \_\_\_\_\_ an eye or a hand; what He wanted was us to \_\_\_\_\_ of our sins. Repentance is even \_\_\_\_\_ important to us than an eye or a hand.

The Lord Jesus speaks of God's \_\_\_\_\_ over a sinner who repents. The parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:17-20 says of the sinful prodigal: "But when he came to \_\_\_\_\_, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I'll say to him, 'Father, I have \_\_\_\_\_ against heaven and before you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" And he arose and came to his father." This story of repentance has touched the hearts of millions and called them to repent as well.

When the apostle Paul approached the Stoics and Epicureans on Mars Hill about the true God and Jesus Christ, he ended the message with a call to repentance. He said, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He

has fixed a day in which He will \_\_\_\_\_ the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by \_\_\_\_\_ Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31). We’ll \_\_\_\_\_ stand before the judgment seat of Christ and we’ll have to give an account for the things that we’ve believed, for the things that we’ve said, and for the things that we’ve done. You can be sure of it!

Some \_\_\_\_\_ to take in the idea of repentance. They think harshly of a preacher who calls them to repent, thinking that repentance is some kind of a form of \_\_\_\_\_. There is an old practice among the monks called “penance,” where people punished themselves; but this is not of God, it’s of \_\_\_\_\_ origin. The Bible speaks of the opportunity to repent as a \_\_\_\_\_ in Acts 11:18 and 2 Timothy 2:25. Actually, repentance is how our hearts change, and how they change our \_\_\_\_\_ to become what God intended. Repentance heals our \_\_\_\_\_ lives and sets us on the right path to righteousness. Grace relieves the pain and guilt of sin, but repentance \_\_\_\_\_ us and heals our lives.

Third, God wants your heart to be devoted in \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the \_\_\_\_\_ worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him \_\_\_\_\_ worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24). God wants \_\_\_\_\_ worship from our hearts and from our spirits. Worship comes from the heart and \_\_\_\_\_ our praise and thanksgiving to God. Ephesians 5:19-20 says that we’re to speak “to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making \_\_\_\_\_ with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.”

Sadly, many today have confused worship, which is something we \_\_\_\_\_, with entertainment, which is something we \_\_\_\_\_. They think they have worshiped when they’ve only heard or watched someone \_\_\_\_\_ perform. God wants \_\_\_\_\_ Christian to participate in worship, not simply a select \_\_\_\_\_. God expects us \_\_\_\_\_ to sing from our hearts, commune, and give. We should \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts for worship and focus on God as we come together to praise and adore our Creator.

Fourth, God wants your dedication in \_\_\_\_\_. Romans 6:16-18 says, “Don’t you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, that you’re slaves of the one whom you \_\_\_\_\_, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have \_\_\_\_\_ obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, you’ve become slaves of righteousness.” Obedience from the heart is not some mindless \_\_\_\_\_ but an authentic giving of ourselves to the Lord. God doesn’t want half-hearted, half-done obedience, where we choose to do \_\_\_\_\_ what we like or what we agree with. That’s not obedience from the heart.

Obedience from the heart recognizes the form or the \_\_\_\_\_ of the doctrine, the teaching. Just as Noah built the ark according to God’s instructions, and just as Moses built the tabernacle according to God’s instructions, and the Lord Jesus always pleased the Father (John 8:28-29), so we too should \_\_\_\_\_ God from our hearts by doing things like He teaches them. The Lord Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will \_\_\_\_\_ My commandments” (John 14:15). He repeated this thought in John 14:23, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

Obedience is \_\_\_\_\_ we love God. Love \_\_\_\_\_ us to do what God commands. Love moves a person to listen closely and to respond accurately to what God \_\_\_\_\_. Keeping God’s laws carefully as Christ \_\_\_\_\_ it is not Pharisaical or legalism. It’s how we love Christ! Second Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ \_\_\_\_\_ us, because we’ve concluded this: that one

has died for all, and therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” When we love God, we obey because we want to \_\_\_\_\_ Him. We obey even when we don’t understand all the \_\_\_\_\_ why. We obey even when obedience leads us to \_\_\_\_\_ or to do something really difficult.

We might someday have to say what Jesus had to say in the Garden of Gethsemane. Matthew 26:37-39 explains: “And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. And he said to them, ‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.’ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as \_\_\_\_\_ will, but as \_\_\_\_\_ will.’” Loving the Lord with all our hearts means doing the Lord’s will the Lord’s way rather than doing what we desire our own way. So, Christians who are faithful say, “Wherever He sends us we will go, whatever He teaches we will believe, whatever He requires we will gladly do. We love Him. And we’re not here to argue with Him but to obey Him.”

Matthew 27 tells of Pilate’s attempt to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus rather than to punish Him. He proclaimed Jesus’ innocence more than once; but when the Jewish leaders insisted Jesus be crucified, Pilate \_\_\_\_\_ the repercussions and gave in to their demands. He knew the right thing to do was to release Jesus, but he gave in to the \_\_\_\_\_. I can explain a pagan, non-believer’s actions like Pilate easier than I can explain why a person who \_\_\_\_\_ to love Jesus becomes indifferent to Christ. How can people ignore the One who died for our sins and opened for us the door to eternal life?

Does your heart belong to the Lord Jesus? If you love Him, obey Him. Do you believe in Him with all your heart? Have you from the heart repented of sin, and have you turned to the Lord? Will you confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God? Will you be baptized? Baptism into Christ is the immersion of a penitent believer in water to forgive his sins. When the people on Pentecost wanted forgiveness, Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). They gladly received his word and 3,000 were baptized. They simply obeyed from the heart, because they wanted to be right with God.

Are you a brother or a sister in Christ who’s forgotten what God has done for you? Have you become indifferent? Have you stopped worshipping at church? Have you taken up sinful habits? Repent, confessing your sin and ask God to forgive you.