

PathLights

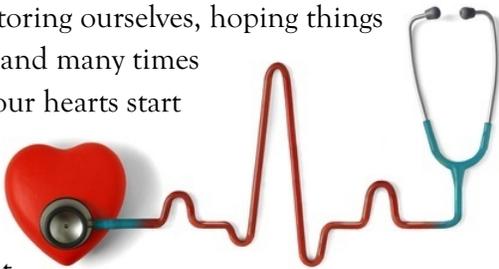
*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

May 29, 2016

Heart Problems

by Frank Himmel

In the physical realm, heart problems are taken seriously. We just put up with a good many aches and pains, often doctoring ourselves, hoping things will get better – and many times they do. When our hearts start acting up, however, it is another matter. We don't let that go long at all without seeking medical help, usually from a specialist. After all, this might be a matter of life or death!



In the spiritual realm, heart problems are just as serious. Actually, they are more so because the consequences are eternal.

Moses understood the importance of right hearts. You can tell that by how often he mentioned it in his sermons that comprise the book of Deuteronomy.

Several times, Moses commanded Israel to love the Lord with all their heart. The classic statement is in 6:5: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." In 10:12, he told them to serve God with all their hearts. In 11:13, he combined love and service. Other

references to whole-hearted love, service, and obedience are 26:16 and 30:6. God and His will must never be relegated to second place, and whatever we do in His service must be done to the best of our ability.

That whole-heartedness also applies to repentance. We must do more than just acknowledge that we have done wrong or be sorry we got caught or mourn over the consequences of our wrongs. If "you return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the Lord your God will restore you..." (30:2-3; cf. 30:10; 4:29).

Moses urged Israel to take God's word to heart: His promises, His threats, and His commandments. "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart" (6:6). "You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul" (11:18). "Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law" (32:46). In other words, whenever you hear God's word, think "this means me"!

Moses knew that the heart is where trouble starts. He cautioned Israel not to fear in their hearts that they could not do what God commanded – in their case, conquering Canaan (7:17-19). And once they defeated Canaan's inhabitants, they must not become arrogant, thinking their righteousness had earned them the land (9:4-5) or their strength and power had gained them its wealth (8:17-18). God's people must keep confidence and humility in balance. ▶

How we treat others begins with our hearts. Moses cautioned Israel not to close their hearts toward needy brethren (15:7) or be greedy (15:9-10).

Our hearts can be influenced by others. Time and again, Moses warned Israel not to intermingle with the Canaanite peoples who would turn their hearts away from God (7:2-4; etc.). This caution applied to all, even kings (17:17).



Speaking of kings, one of God’s requirements of Israel’s kings was that they write for themselves a copy of the law. Why? “That his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left...” (17:22). No one is above God’s law, and no one in any position of leadership must allow himself to think he is.

God tests our hearts. His tests reveal what is in them. He tested Israel both by means of adverse circumstances (8:2) and the presence of false prophets (13:1-4). How do we respond when tough times come? How about when a preacher tells us it is okay to do what the Bible says we cannot? Our responses reveal how committed to God and His word we really are.

Twice in Deuteronomy, Moses referred to circumcising hearts. In 30:6, he said God would do that. In 10:16, however, he called on the people to do it. God performs this operation through His word and perhaps through circumstances that should prompt us to consider it.

The Preacher’s Spirit

by Frank Himmel

Paul reminded Timothy, “For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7). Contextually, this refers especially to preachers.

A preacher needs a spirit of *power* or *boldness*. He must not necessarily be a powerful personality, but he must have the courage to speak God’s word, to authoritatively say what is needed.

A preacher needs a spirit of *love*. Powerful words not spoken in love may do more harm than good.

A preacher needs a spirit of *discipline* or *self-control* (ESV). He cannot effectively teach others without first teaching himself.

Ultimately, though, we control our hearts. It is up to us to cut out what does not belong there and fill them with His will.

When God first spoke His covenant to Israel at Mt. Sinai they answered, “We will hear and do it” (4:27). God responded, “Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!” (4:29). If only they would keep their commitment. If only we would! ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Greg Winget	Josh Baucom	Bruce Williams
SONG LEADER	Bruce Williams	Carlos Garcia	Albert Harrison
OPENING PRAYER	Jason Chandler	Justin Candella	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Clifton Lefort	Clifton Lefort	
CUP	Albert Lee Harrison	Albert Lee Harrison	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	David Gray		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Adam Gibson
CLOSING PRAYER	Albert Harrison	Josh Baucom	David Gray