

Making Life Work: Understanding the Heart

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20 My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. 21 Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. 22 For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. 23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. 24 Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. 25 Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. 26 Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. 27 Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil. Proverbs 4:20-27^{ESV}

The Big Idea: As believers we must see the place of the heart within the text of proverbs, its place within the Old Testament, and scripture as a whole.

P: See the Description of the Heart.

The Proverbs state that the heart is the seat of:

Understanding, learning, faith, memory, obedience, rebellion, planning, imagination, lust, the will, perversity, deceit, folly, anxiety, hope, joy, hurt, grief, peace, wisdom, happiness, discernment, rage, motives, purity, folly, friendship, gladness, envy, cheerfulness, contemplation, pride, speech, violence, reasoning, sadness, evil, sin, hardness toward God.

The heart is the center, essence, and nature of our being.

“The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the Lord tests hearts.” Proverbs 17: 3

“As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.” Proverbs 27:19

“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” Proverbs 4:23

P: See the Comparison of the Heart.

“The Lord said in his heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth.’” Genesis 8:23

“But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.” 1 Samuel 13:14

“Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.” Psalms 24:3-4

Later in the Old Testament the prophets again describe the heart:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” Jeremiah 17:9

“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:26

Jesus speaks of the heart on multiple occasions:

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Matthew 12:34

“And he said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”’” Mark 7:6-8

What is it your heart is after? _____

P: See the Redemption of the Heart.

*“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning **the thoughts and intentions of the heart**. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:12-13*

TAKEAWAY:

Though my heart is more wicked than I could have ever believed, I am more loved than I could ever imagine, and am being progressively changed into the likeness of Christ through His work in my life.

Works Consulted: Notes on Proverbs by H.A. Ironsides, Hebrews by John MacArthur, Matthew Henry Commentary, Word Study of the Old Testament by Spiros Zodhiates, and sermons by Timothy Keller, Mark Driscoll, and Steve Hart..