

The Heart

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Mother of God Prayer Meeting
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What is the heart?

Greek: kardia (kardiva):

- seat of feeling, impulse, affection, desire - [Mt 6:21](#), [22:37](#), [Phil 1:7](#)
- seat of intellect - [Mt 13:15](#), [Rom 1:21](#)
- inner and mental frame - [Mt 5:8](#), [Lk 16:15](#), [1 Pet 3:4](#)
- the conscience - [1 Jn 3:21](#)

What "heart" is and isn't.

From the *Catechism* (par. 2563): "The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully. The heart is the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives. It is the place of truth, where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant."

Why is it important to look at our hearts?

1. Jesus was constantly drawing attention to a deeper level, to the level of the heart. He was always calling us to look at the interior source of our thoughts and actions which we often ignore.

"Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and so passes on? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man" ([Mt 15:17-18](#)).

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil" ([Mt 12:34-35](#)).

"The LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" ([1 Sam 16:7](#)).

2. What is really the interior source (motive, reason) for our actions and thoughts which we often ignore or won't look at (e.g., someone I "can't stand").
3. Without realizing it we can rationalize, make excuses, gloss over truth, tolerate sin, think we have a "right," etc. We strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.
4. The human heart can be impure, deceptive, hard, unrepentant, manipulative. [Jer 17:9](#), [Heb 3:12](#), [Mk 3:5](#); [6:52](#); [8:17](#); [Rom 2:5](#). These things grieve God's heart! [Gen 6:5-6](#).
Grieve = to cause or feel distress; suffering of body or mind, anguish, extreme pain..
5. Looking at the heart isn't just seeing sin, but seeing a deep desire to love and serve the Lord.

What does God want with our hearts?

- A. He wants us to let him root out those deep sinful drives - set us free to live in the Spirit - to live as we were meant to! Often what we think is our "worst" fault isn't what God thinks needs work! We don't usually want to look at our real worst!
1. This means being willing to see and acknowledge what we don't want to in ourselves!
 2. We need to examine: Why don't I see and acknowledge certain things? Old wounds? Shame? Feeling that it would make me horrible? I want to be "better"?

All these have our "identity focus" in the wrong place - earth and humanity!

- B. He wants the Holy Spirit to be the inner motivation or source for all our thoughts and decisions.
1. How often do we trace a thought/action all the way back to see its source? Even if we manage to do this, do we give it to God? Often we hold onto it! Why?
 2. God wants a Church patterned after Jesus. God wants to pour out divine life in us and have this transform our nature.
- C. God wants us to ALIGN our hearts with HIS heart!
1. Align = to bring into line, array on the side of; arrange in order.
 2. Jesus always did this. In Gethsemane he sought out and surrendered to God's heart.
 3. GOD'S HEART is motivated by most pure love. Love him to the point of folly! "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" ([Rom 5:5](#)). "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" ([Eph 3:17-19](#)).
 4. Skip's prophecy last spring: The deep is the heart of God. PUT OUT INTO THE DEEP! into God's heart! We can't do that while maintaining our own list of what we will or won't look at or let go of!

How?

1. Let Jesus be the treasure - REALLY! "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:20-21). This happens as we gaze on Jesus, spend time with him in prayer. We begin to see how small our concerns are relative to God's concerns. We begin to understand and share in God's desires.
2. Let God search our hearts - cast down every idol he shows us! LET HIM HAVE HIS WAY! Let go of fear and of needing to be or not be a certain person in your own eyes. "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" ([Ps 139:23](#)). "The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" ([Heb 4:12](#)).
3. Grieve over sin! We tolerate it too much in ourselves! "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" ([Ps](#)

- [51:17](#)). If we are grieving over our own sin, we will have solidarity with other sinners and be able to intercede for them with power - e.g., against abortion. [Rom 8:26-27](#).
4. Guard our hearts! "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" ([Mt 5:8](#)). Even if we're not externally acting, are we harboring, inviting, or nursing the thoughts - thoughts of anger, vengeance, lust, jealousy, self-righteousness, etc.!? "Keep your heart with all vigilance; for from it flow the springs of life" ([Pr 4:23](#)).

Conclusion

God wants US - YOU! ME! to be witnesses to the world! He wants everyone in heaven - even that person you have a hard time with! Think about the fact that there are people who have a hard time with me!

We give too much power and authority to our feelings, especially fear! Just because we "feel" it doesn't mean it comes TRULY from our heart!

LET GOD HAVE HIS WAY! What have we got to lose except what we will lose someday ANYWAY?!

Questions for Prayer, Study and Fellowship Groups

1. What sorts of things do you find weighing down your heart? What sorts of things upbuild your heart in the Lord? Which do you spend more time, energy, money, etc., on? Where is your treasure?
2. Where do you want your treasure to be? What things can you add or subtract from your life to help you keep moving in that direction?
3. Find and pray about four or five of your favorite scriptures that speak of the heart. What is God teaching you about how you can align your heart with his?
4. What is in your heart of hearts? Go there with the Lord and let him "show you around."
5. Spend some time praying about the state of our nation, the events of Sept. 11 and the ensuing war and climate of fear. What is God showing you about HIS heart regarding these things?
6. Is there something in your heart that you are afraid to or unwilling to let go of or look at? Can you trace that fear or resistance to see what is behind it? Perhaps you can begin by turning that over to the Lord.