

Understanding the Heart

The word, “heart” is used 765 times in the King James Bible. From Scripture, it appears that the heart is comprised of three layers, going from the external to the internal. They are the volition, cognition, and affection.

Volition (choices, commitments, and action)

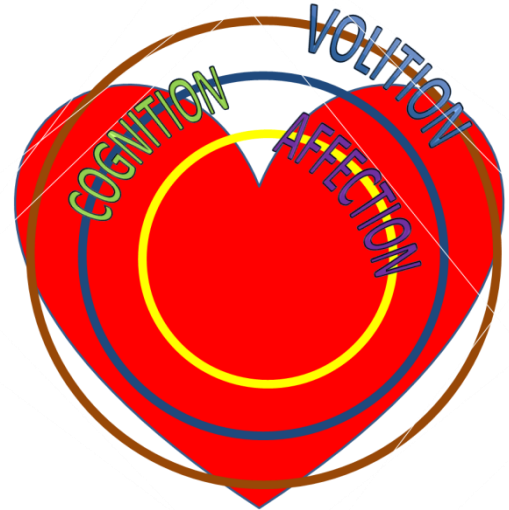
Luke 6:45

Cognition (mind, thoughts, reason, belief, and unbelief)

Genesis 6:5 & Matthew 9:3-4

Affection (desires and emotions)

Matthew 6:21 & Proverbs 15:13



The Complex Heart

We have to harmonize several Scriptures to develop a biblical understanding of the complex human heart. Consider Jeremiah 17:9, Proverbs 28:26, James 1:14-15, Ezekiel 36:26, Psalms 51:10, Ezekiel 18:30-32, James 4:8, Psalms 139:23-24, & 1 Peter 1:22.

In harmonizing these passages, we find that some are written to the lost; some are written to the saved. The lost have both an inner and outer man that are corrupt. Therefore their heart is desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). The saved have a pure inner man and a corrupt outer man (Rom. 7:22-25). We find the heart appears to bridge the gap between the two (see illustration) in that it is affected by both the inner and outer man. Our heart is purified when we are born again (Ezek. 36:26), but we can still become deceived and hardened by sin and our heart needs to be purified again (James 4:8). It is therefore of utmost importance to guard our heart and to cooperate with God in purifying our hearts.



Guarding the Heart

Proverbs 4:20-27 – “... Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life...”

Romans 12:2 - “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

What is our role in this work of heart care? What are we called to do?

Ephesians 4:22-32 –

1 Timothy 4:7-16 –

Spiritual Disciplines –

1) Skillfully Applying the Word of God

Hebrews 4:12 – “For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Heart Journaling is a fantastic way to actually apply this principle.

- What am I doing (or not doing) that is causing a problem?
- What are my sinful thoughts that lead me to this behavior?
- What Scripture applies to my thoughts?
- What is God revealing to me about my true desires (idols)?

2) Cultivating Godly Friendships

Proverbs 27:17 – “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

Consider David and Nathan in 2 Samuel 12:1-7a. What role did Nathan play in David’s heart change? What were David’s sinful desires/idols?

3) Meditating Upon the Person and Work of Jesus Christ

2 Corinthians 3:18 – “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Romans 1:15 – “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.”

4) Mourning over Sin
Ecclesiastes 7:2-6 –

5) Radical Surgery
Romans 13:14 – “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

Matthew 5:29-30 –

6) Purposeful Prayer
Psalms 51:10 – “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

7) Contemplating Eternity
1 John 3:1-3 –

Colossians 3:1-4 –