

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. - 1 Peter 2:2

THE SINCERE MILK OF GOD'S WORD

The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword... - Hebrews 4:12

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“The LORD Looks at the Heart”

In **1 Samuel 16**, God instructed Samuel to visit the house of Jesse, where Samuel would find the one who God had chosen to be the next king of Israel. When Samuel looked at David's older brother Eliab, he assumed that Eliab was the one God had chosen to be king because of his *appearance*. God responded to this assumption by saying, *“Don't look on his face, or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for I don't see as man sees. For man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (verse 7).*

God knows the hearts of *all* (**Acts 1:24**). He sees each of us as we *truly* are. As **Hebrews 4:13** says, *“There is no creature that is hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.”*

God not only knows every word ever spoken and every action ever taken; he knows every *thought* of our hearts.

This is seen in the example of Simon the (former) sorcerer. Simon became a Christian in **Acts 8**, and sinned shortly after becoming a Christian. In **verse 22** of the chapter, Simon was told, *“Repent therefore of this, your wickedness, and ask God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.”*

Notice what it was that Simon needed to be forgiven of. While we can sin through actions and words, **Acts 8:22** shows that we can also sin in the *heart*.

Matthew 5:27-28 is another passage that demonstrates this principle. There our Lord

says, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery;’ but I tell you that everyone who looks at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.”* Sins such as that condemned by Jesus in this passage may be “hidden” from *others*, but *God* is fully aware every time such sin is committed.

God is also aware of our *motives* when doing things in service to Him. He knows whether we are doing the right things for the right *reasons*.

God saw right through the scribes and Pharisees who did all their religious works *“to be seen by men”* (**Matt. 23:5**). He sees through the show of righteousness put on by all those whose service to Him is not sincere.

More generally, God knows whether our affection is truly set on things above or set on things on the earth (**Col. 3:2**). He knows when one has an *“honest and good heart”* (**Luke 8:15**) that is truly committed to pleasing Him no matter the cost, or if one's heart is such that a certain comfort or pleasure is valued more highly than Him.

While God's perfect knowledge of our hearts is frightening to the hypocrite, it is a comfort to the faithful. Such comfort is contingent, though, on each of us doing our part to purify our hearts.

What David said in **1 Chronicles 28:9** expresses principles that are true in the Christian dispensation, just as they were in the Mosaic dispensation. There David told Solomon to *“serve [God] with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts...”*

The Repentant Heart

Romans 2:5: *But according to your hardness and unrepentant heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath...*

The word for “*unrepentant*” describes someone whose heart prevents him or her from changing in a way God desires.

Repentance is part of what God requires for us to initially have sins forgiven and get into Christ (**Acts 2:38**), and it is required for sin one has committed *since* becoming a Christian to be forgiven (**Acts 8:22**).

It is thus key for us to have a repentant heart. This demands persistent, sincere reflection of our lives in light of God’s Word. It involves application of His Word, as we allow Him to constantly mold us into the people He wants.

To have a repentant heart, we must have the *humility* to recognize our sins.

During Jesus’ earthly ministry, He dealt with some who were too proud to admit they were wrong (cf. **John 7:47-49**). We can fall into this same deceptive trap today. It requires humility to acknowledge that we’re wrong, especially if it is something we’ve been wrong about for a long time.

Those with repentant hearts recognize that there is nothing shameful about changing in the ways God requires. What *is* a shame is refusing to change out of foolish pride.

To have a humble, repentant heart, we must examine ourselves (**2 Cor. 13:5**). Many of the proud, self-righteous individuals of Jesus’ time had no idea they were so sinful (cf. *Jesus’ parable in Luke 18:9-14*). A surefire way to be deceived is to lack sincere examination of our lives.

To be doers of the Word and not hearers

only, we should study God’s Word with an attitude that is looking to improve, and not merely to justify oneself.

This is the thought process of those who persistently grow as the Holy Spirit commands (**2 Pet. 3:18**). Instead of being afraid to admit and pursue needed correction...instead of justifying oneself by making excuses...instead of brushing problems under the rug...those with repentant hearts hit their sins “head on.” They study God’s Word with an intent to grow and make corrections as needed.

When things are found that indicate guilt of sin, the thought process of the repentant is godly sorrow (**2 Cor. 7:9-10**) and repentance. Those with repentant hearts do not allow themselves to fall deeper into the hole they are already in, but instead allow Jesus to get them out of the hole.

If we have repentant hearts, we will feel a *need* to do whatever is necessary to be right with God, because such will be what we *treasure*. We will “*hunger and thirst after righteousness*” (**Matt. 5:6**), prioritizing being right with God above earthly treasure, “winning” arguments, or staying in our comfort zone.

This is the heart that should be inside all of us. The repentance Jesus commanded (**Matt. 4:17**) means to correct things that are contrary to God’s will. We must desire so earnestly to please God that we are willing to do whatever is needed to please Him.

May we all have this type of heart, instead of being among those who “*according to your hardness and unrepentant heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath...*”

-Michael Hickox (both articles)

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