



Attitudes of the Heart

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The Holy Bible, King James Version (KJV)

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Preface

Many churches put an inordinate emphasis on outward conformity and reformation and teach very little on spiritual attitudes of the heart. For this reason, when I became the Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in April of 2010, one of my first priorities was to teach a series on internal attitudes that the Holy Spirit desires to produce in every Christian. This book is the culmination of that series.

How to use this Book

Open the Bible. This book is designed for Bible study. In order to fully benefit from the studies contained here, you must be willing to open your Bible and search the scriptures for answers. These studies are based upon the King James Version of the Bible. If you are accustomed to reading another version you may need to have both opened in order to discover the right answers.

Take your Time. The purpose of any Bible study is not to race to the finish line. If your time spent studying scripture does not produce a better understanding of the word of God then it is in vain. Take your time going through these studies. Stop and think about what you've read and take the time to apply the truths to your life.

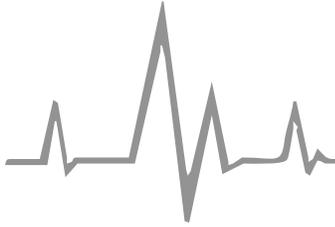
Reflect. Throughout these studies you will see the symbol  followed by a question. There is no room to write an answer because these are designed for meditation. Take a minute and think about how the question applies practically to your life. Apply the study and be willing to change where God prompts you to. You will also see questions prefaced by **Think**. These were originally questions for open discussion in our church. There are no right or wrong answers for these just your own personal opinion.

Pray. Bible truths are only imparted by the Holy Spirit of God. While you study, pray that God would help you to understand and apply His word to your life.

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1



God's Internal Work

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature:
old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

God's work in the life of a believer is an internal work. At the moment of salvation, God sends his Holy Spirit to dwell inside of the unworthy sinner. From that moment, He begins the life-long process of making that man more and more like Jesus Christ. This increasing Christ-likeness begins in the heart and overflows into outward evidences as affections, attitudes and actions are influenced by the Holy Spirit of God. The good works that are produced by the Holy Spirit are not required for salvation, but are evidence that salvation has already occurred on the inside. This sets Christianity apart from all other religions of the world.

The religions of this world offer salvation based upon the external performance or good works of their adherents. The Christian does not inherit Heaven based upon his good works (Titus 3:5, Eph 2:8-9). On the contrary, he obtains salvation by declaring his utter inability to earn it by his own merits. He then expresses faith in Jesus Christ and His righteousness as the only basis from which to enter Heaven (Matt 18:4, Rom 4:4-5, 2 Cor 5:21). Christianity is unique in that its veracity is entirely dependent upon the supernatural, transforming work which God does in the heart of His followers (1 John 2:5, 1 John 3:14).

Man is naturally prone to self-righteousness. He is content to invent religions which smile upon his efforts to earn salvation. Because salvation by grace alone excludes the works of men and exposes man as sinfully unable to save himself, it has always been met with opposition from this self-exalting world. This is true today, just like it was true in Jesus' day.

📖 Matt 23:23-28. **Q.** v23. How did Jesus describe the scribes and Pharisees?

Q. What were the "weightier matters of the law?"

Q. What do you think Jesus meant when he said "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.?"

The Jews in Christ's day were very concerned with the outward ceremony of the law. They paid close attention to every detail of every rule concocted by their own religious class. They would go through the pains of giving precisely ten percent of even their smallest spices, but neglected the matters of the heart like faith and mercy.

Q. In your own words, what do verses 25 and 27 mean?

Q. v26. What did Jesus tell the Jews they *should* have done?

Q. v28. What was the difference between how the Jews appeared externally and how they appeared internally?

During Jesus' earthly ministry he continually rebuked the Jews for their religious hypocrisy. He reserved his harshest words for the religious crowd because they celebrated external legalism above a heart-felt devotion to God (Matt 23:13-33). God's desire and design is that those who worship Him not only appear righteous on the outside, but also possess a genuine, internal righteousness. God hates hypocrisy (Job 13:16; Job 27:8).

 Matt 15:7-9. **Q.** How did the Jews honour God?

Q. What was far from God? _____

Q. How did God describe their worship? _____

Q. What were they teaching as doctrine? _____

The Jews had allowed their religion to become so corrupt that they had begun to value and teach their *tradition* above God's explicitly revealed word. They became so enamored with rules and commandments that they

replaced faith with works and lost the heartfelt motivation that was intended to drive their obedience. Jesus repeatedly confronted this gross corruption of worship, and as a result, incurred the wrath of the self-righteous Jews (Matt 15:12).

Always a Matter of the Heart

Jesus was not teaching anything new. Nevertheless, the Jews of his day had so corrupted their religion, that by the time Christ arrived, they were so steeped in their own tradition and self-righteousness that they rejected the teachings of their messiah. What they missed was that his message was entirely consistent with what God had revealed all throughout the Old Testament concerning worship – a relationship with Him begins in the heart.

In Deuteronomy 6 we find what is commonly called the *Shema*. This portion of scripture is the centerpiece of Jewish morning and evening prayer services. The Shema is often spoken as a Jew's last words and is diligently taught to Jewish children.

 Deut 6:4-6. **Q.** According to the Shema, how were the Jews to love God?

 Joshua 22:5. **Q.** In this chapter Joshua is dismissing the eastern tribes to their homeland after assisting in battle. Joshua gives them a charge before they leave. In it he quotes Deuteronomy 13. He told them to _____ the Lord their God. How did he encourage them to serve God?

God has always sought men and women who would wholeheartedly worship Him in love. This is a consistent theme throughout all of scripture.



Consider your own life. Are there areas of hypocrisy? How might we determine if we are being hypocritical? How can we remedy this?

New Heart Needed

There is a problem however with the command to love God with all of our heart, soul and might.

 Jeremiah 17:9 **Q.** What does this verse say about the heart of man?

 Matt 15:18-20. **Q.** According to Jesus, what comes from the heart?

The fact is, man cannot truly and fully worship God in the sincerity of his heart while his heart is in bondage to sin (Rom 8:7-8). Man’s mind, emotions and will have all been tainted by sin (Rom 8:20-23). Consequently, his sinful heart naturally tends toward sin, self-righteousness and legalism. What is needed to bring men into fellowship with a holy God is not more commandments or stricter rules, it is a *renewed heart*.

What is needed to bring sinful men into fellowship with a holy God is not more commandments or stricter rules; it is a renewed heart.

This is the main truth that the *schoolmaster* of the law was meant to teach us, specifically, that man cannot please God in and of himself (Rom 8:8). He must be given a new heart (John 3:3). Man’s need for a renewed heart is the driving force behind God’s redemptive plan. Jesus Christ lived, died and rose again all so that man could be made new, from the inside out.

📖 Ezekiel 11:19. **Q.** Here Ezekiel speaks of the *new covenant* which God would one day make with His people. What did God say He would take from them? What would he replace it with?

📖 Jer 24:7. **Q.** What would God give Israel? How would they return to Him?

📖 Jer 31:31. **Q.** What did God say he would make with Israel?

Q. What would this covenant *not* be like?

Q. What would God do with His law?

God promised that he would make a covenant with his people unlike the covenant which he made with the patriarchs. This new covenant would involve, not just the giving of the law, but the writing of the law on the heart of man. He would take out the stony (corrupt, sinful) heart and give him a renewed heart.

📖 Heb 9:15, Heb 12:24. **Q.** What is Christ the mediator of? _____

God's new covenant was not simply that he would be a God to his people, but that he would also give his people a new heart. With this new heart, they would have the desire and ability to worship him in the Spirit (John 4:23-24; Php 2:13). When we speak of *the heart* we are really talking about all of the inward characteristics of man; his mind, his will and his emotions. All of these must be salvaged from the curse of sin and experience spiritual renewal (Ro 12:2; 2Co 4:16; Eph 4:23; Col 3:10).

Salvation – The Renewing of the Heart

📖 John 3:3,5. **Q.** What must a man be in order to see the kingdom of God?

📖 2 Cor 5:17. **Q.** If a man is *in Christ*, what is he? What have *all things* become?

When a man receives Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord, the Bible teaches that he is made spiritually alive (Eph 2:1,5). He is actually renewed on the inside (Titus 3:5, Col 3:9,10). This is a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies regarding the *new covenant*.

📖 Titus 3:5-6. **Q.** What is it that renews us at salvation (regeneration)?

The fulfillment of God's new covenant was accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When Christ rose from the dead, having defeated death, sin and Satan, he sent the Holy Spirit of God to dwell inside of God's people (John 14:17, John 16:7, 1 Cor 3:16). It is by the Holy Spirit of God that he *took away our heart of stone and replaced it with a heart of flesh*. It is also the Holy Spirit which *wrote his law on our hearts* and fulfilled every other aspect of the New Covenant (Eze 36:27; Heb 9:14; Titus 3:5-6; Eph 2:5; Eph 3:14-17; Php 2:12)

When a man is saved, there is a real change which happens on the inside. God actually makes a spiritual transformation inside of him. Now, having been made spiritually new, this man has the ability to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to worship God in sincerity and to please Him through obedience.

📖 Eph 2:8-10. **Q.** v10. Whose workmanship are we? _____

Q. v10. What has he created us for? _____

Q. v8,9. What part did we play in this transformation?

“ God is very clear. Salvation is not the result of outward works, but of His divine action on the inside of man. ”

God is very clear. Salvation is not the result of outward works, but of His divine action on the inside of man. He makes us spiritually new and enables us to exercise good works. Our ability to please Him comes only *after* salvation and is the result of *His* renewing work in our hearts. This is profoundly different from those religions which teach we must, by our own ability, earn favour with God.

Attitudes of the Heart – The Spirit’s Fruit

Upon salvation, man is made spiritually new. He has been given a new heart, yet he remains in a sinful body, in a sinful world (Rom 7:24, John 17:15). The Spirit’s work does not stop at salvation, but continues until the day that we enter Heaven (Eph 4:30).

📖 Gal 3:2-3. Q. How did Paul describe the person who thinks they can be “perfected” by works?

Not only is it foolish to think that we can be saved by our own efforts, but it is also foolish to think that we can *maintain* our salvation through good works. The same Spirit that renews us at salvation, continues *his* work in our hearts, making us more and more like Christ (Rom 8:29; Php 2:13). The Spirit’s work remains in the realm of the heart. He continually seeks to bring man’s thoughts, emotions and will under his control.

📖 Gal 4:19. Q. What was Paul labouring to see done in the lives of the Galatians?

The formation of Christ-like character in believers is the chief goal of the church. All the spiritual gifts given to the church are for the purpose of bringing men and women into spiritual maturity, that is, Christ-likeness (Eph 4:11-16). As we have already learned, this work takes place in the heart. Therefore, the focus of the ministry of the church should not be on outward conformity or reformation, but on spiritual transformation. (Rom 12:2)

📖 Eph 3:14-21. In this passage we find Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian church. This offers valuable insight into Paul’s approach to ministry. Answer the questions below to see what Paul’s emphasis and concern was.

Q. v16. Paul wanted the Ephesians to be strengthened by what? Where?

Q. v17. What would the result of this spiritual strength be?

The word “dwell” here means to “settle down.” To be strengthened by the Spirit means to have Christ settled in our hearts. That is, he is comfortable and at home. This happens as our lives line up with his will through obedience to his commands (John 15:7, John 14:21).

Q. v18-19. What else results from being strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man?

Q. v20. God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to what?

Paul desired that the Ephesians be strengthened on the inside by the Spirit. This was the focus of his ministry. We should also seek to promote the work of the Spirit inwardly. How then should our church go about this? Do we use guilt, gimmicks, programs or pressure to help develop the *heart attitudes* of faith, hope, and love? Do we devise rules to help people live disciplined lives of unity, humility, joy and thankfulness? Do we offer incentives and rewards if people exhibit compassion, contentment and self-discipline? Or is there a better way? What is the Biblical way?

Spiritual Fruit by Spiritual Means

📖 John 6:63. **Q.** What are Christ’s words?

📖 Hebrews 4:12. **Q.** What is God’s word a discerner of?

📖 1 Thess 2:13. **Q.** What is at work in believers?

“
*If God’s chief work
is internal, by the
Spirit and through
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”

Since man’s *sanctification* (or increasing Christ-likeness) is an internal work produced by the Spirit of God, it only makes sense to use *God’s* means to encourage that growth. His main method of promoting spiritual growth is the *ministry of the word*. This is why it is absolutely essential that the Christian avail himself to the word of God (Luke 4:4). This also gives the church a mandate to focus on strong, accurate, Biblical teaching and

preaching. If God's chief work is internal, by the Spirit, through the word of God, than it makes no sense to deemphasize Biblical teaching or to seek new means or methods to produce growth (1 Thess 5:20).

God also does His internal work through the *ministry of spiritual gifts*. God has given every believer a spiritual gift (Eph 4:11, Rom 12:5-8) for the purpose of edifying or building up the church (1 Cor 12:7). These gifts produce *spiritual maturity* (Eph 4:13), *doctrinal stability* (Eph 4:14) and, *loving unity* (Eph 4:15-16) in the congregation.



One of God's main methods of producing spiritual maturity in His people is through the influence of His word. Are you spending enough time reading and studying God's word? What negative effects have you noticed when you neglect His word?

Conclusion

God desires men and women to worship Him in *Spirit and in truth* (John 4:24). Man's sinful heart has prohibited him from worshipping God in this way. He continually falls back into sin, self-righteousness, and legalism. But, from the beginning of time God planned on remedying man's sin problem by providing him with a new heart. This is what he called the *new covenant*. He accomplished the new covenant through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Upon Christ's ascension to Heaven he sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within believers. It is through the Holy Spirit that God renews the hearts of men and women, reconciling them to himself and enabling them to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

God's work is an inside job! As the church we must seek to encourage and promote this inner work by using God's means and methods. Emphasizing outward conformity to rules is not God's way. He has not told us to manipulate, threaten or guilt people into obedience, but to preach, teach and practice His word in the power of His Holy Spirit.

The faithful teaching of God's word and the production of *spiritual heart attitudes* is a long process. Paul compared it to labouring in birth! But it is God's way and we dare not deviate from it. This means that, as a church, we will continue to make the teaching and preaching of God's word the centerpiece of our ministry. We will seek to promote inward transformation to Christ-likeness and not outward conformity to rules, preferences or the standards of men. The life of a growing Christian will predominantly be characterized by spiritual heart attitudes. Outward changes will occur in every believer's life, but this is the evidence of an internal work and not a replacement for it.

Review: Introduction

1. Why do you think man tends to create religions which rely on good works?
2. What type of ungodly attitudes do you think a works-based religion might lead to?
3. What type of worship has God always desired?
4. Why can't man worship God in a way that pleases Him?
5. How did God solve that problem?
6. What work is God continually doing in the life of a Christian? Where does He do it?
7. How might we help or hinder the work that God is doing in us?
8. If we lose sight of the fact that God's work happens in the heart of man by his Holy Spirit, how might our church become imbalanced?