

## A Hardened Heart

The word “hardened” means to be insensitive, cold, unyielding, and calloused. Our hearts can be softened or hardened toward the Lord.

A hard heart is not just a person in rebellion against God and authority. There is more. It is one that considers not the things of God and is insensitive to the things of the Spirit as we will see below.

There are laws that will cause the hardened heart to occur, but these are the same laws that will soften our hearts towards the Lord if we positively span them.

1. Mark 6:46-53 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

a) Signs of a hardened heart include:

- i) Being sorely amazed beyond measure
- ii) Wondered

b) What caused the disciples to be **sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wonder was that they had not considered the miracle of the loaves.**

i) This lack of consideration caused their hearts to get hardened.

2. Mark 8:14-22 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread. And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, **Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?** Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand? And he cometh to Bethsaida: and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

a) It causes us not to remember the spiritual lessons from a miracle we experienced.

b) A hardened heart keeps us from:

i) Perceiving spiritual truths.

ii) Understanding spiritual truths

iii) Remembering—not facts but spiritual truths and revelation.

3. Romans 9:12- 18 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 **For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.** 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

- a) According to Romans 9, God did not raise Pharaoh for destruction, but to show His power in him and that he (Pharaoh) might declare His works through the earth, but Pharaoh chose to go a different direction.
  - i) Therefore, because Pharaoh did not want God to show His power **IN** him, God showed His power **TO** him.
  - ii) Pharaoh had a freewill and chose his own destination through his God-given free will.
- b) Those who reject God's mercy which He has afforded to all people, He will honor and permit their choice even if it is self-destruction, and it means that person going to hell. It is not God that sends him there but his own choice.

4. Pharaoh hardened his heart first.

**What happened first? Did God harden Pharaoh's heart against his will, or did He only enforce Pharaoh's heart choices?**

- a) God would never have hardened Pharaoh's heart had he not already chosen to harden his own heart. The Lord only enforced the heart, desire, and decision of Pharaoh and turned it around for the children of Israel.
  - i) Exodus 7:14, 22 <sup>14</sup>And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. <sup>22</sup>And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.
    - o "Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go."
    - o "Pharaoh's heart was hardened"
  - ii) Exodus 8:15, 19, 32 <sup>15</sup>But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. <sup>19</sup>Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the

LORD had said. <sup>32</sup>And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

- he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them
- Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them;
- Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also

iii) Exodus 9:12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

iv) 1 Samuel 6:6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

- Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?

#### 5. The Lord hardened his heart (enforced his choices and desires)

The Lord stopped pleading with Pharaoh and permitted his decision of hardening his own heart (Exodus 7:14, 22; Exodus 8:15, 19, 32; Exodus 9:12; 1 Samuel 6:6) against him.

The Lord was not wrong in hardening (permitting the hardening of) Pharaoh's heart because he (Pharaoh) had chosen to do this route himself.

- a) Exodus 10:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him:
- b) Exodus 10:20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.
- c) Exodus 10:27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.
- d) Exodus 11:10 And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

- e) Exodus 14:8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with a high hand.

The sun will melt butter but harden concrete. The sun cannot be blamed for any of these things that happen to the butter or concrete. The sun is not the variable, but the object.

- 6. Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
  - a) These people chose how they wanted their lives to be after God had revealed to them the right way and because they rejected God and did not want to retain Him in their knowledge or be a part of Him nor anything to do with Him, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things that are not convenient meaning that He enforced their freewill and choices of their hearts.
  - b) God endures with long suffering towards the vessels of wrath that reject Him. He wants all people to make the right decision and therefore does not enforce their decisions right away. It takes time. He wants all to be saved, not get lost.
    - i) Romans 9:22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

### Causes and dangers of a hardened heart

#### A. Lack of consideration

If we do not consider what God has done in our lives, His goodness, we will slowly start to harden our hearts towards God.

- a) Mark 6:52 **"For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened."**

- i) The word "consider" simply means to think upon, ponder, meditate, calculate, roll over and over in the mind.
- ii) Whatever we consider our hearts get softened and sensitive to and whatever we do not our hearts get hardened to. This is the law of focus.

#### B. Forgetfulness (Not remembering)

- a) Mark 8:17-18 "Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?"
  - i) We need to do all we can to remember the goodness of God in our lives. If we do not do so, we will harden our hearts toward the Lord.
  - ii) We need to keep focus and in front of us the goodness of God in our lives.

#### C. Sin

- a) Hebrews 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
  - i) One way we can keep each other from unbelief which causes an evil heart and eventually the departing from the living God is through exhortation.
  - ii) We are to do so daily, not weekly or monthly.
  - iii) "Exhort" means to strengthen. We use words and the promises of God to strengthen one another.
  - iv) Looking at the previous verse with this verse, a hardened heart is an evil heart of unbelief. "Evil heart of unbelief" and "Hardened heart" are used interchangeably.
  - v) Sin hardens our hearts. We need to quit living in sin. Sin will desensitize your heart towards the Lord.

vi) A continual lifestyle of sin will harden our hearts and get us to a place of renouncing, departing or rejecting our faith in the Lord. This cannot happen overnight. We need to be careful and quit sin.

b) Exodus 9:34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

#### D. Unbelief

There is a coalition between not believing and a hardened heart. Every time we do not believe we hardened or desensitize our hearts towards God.

a) 2 Kings 17:14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

i) Those who do not hear and believe in the Lord, in most cases have a hardened heart towards God.

b) John 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

i) If we have our hearts blinded, our hearts will get hardened and we won't be able to understand.

c) Acts 19:9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

i) Were hardened and believed not.

#### E. Pride

Pride causes a hardened heart.

a) The root of Pharaoh's hard-heartedness was his pride and arrogance.

b) King Nebuchadnezzar

- i) Daniel 5:20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

F. Setbacks

- a) Hearts can also become hardened when we suffer setbacks and disappointments in life.
- b) Many people in this state have no desire for the Lord by any measure or stretch.
  - i) They have intentionally hardened their heart to the Lord because they believe He is responsible for any tragedy or hardship, but nothing can be further from the truth.