

## The Heart – Lesson Outline

When we study our heart we also must consider our thoughts and our mouths.

All three of these are interconnected.

Here's why:

- Your thoughts affect what your heart believes.
- Your heart affects what your head believes.
- Your words are a reflection of what's in your heart.

Turn to [Matthew 15](#)-

Some pharisees and teachers came to see Jesus.

- they wanted to know why the disciples were breaking the rules.
- remember by this time the pharisees had made up a bunch of rules, regulations, and traditions they said everyone had to follow to be properly following the law
- they weren't actually God's laws, they were just man's rules.
- they said the disciples were eating without washing their hands
- the Pharisees were pretty offended by this.

[Verse 3](#) - Jesus answers their question with His...

*3 Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 For God said, 'Honor your father and mother'[a] and 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.'[b] 5 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is 'devoted to God,' 6 they are not to 'honor their father or mother' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition."*

Jesus calls them out.

He points out where they are being sinful and manipulates the law.

Look what He says about them in [verse 7](#):

*7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 8 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 9 They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules."*

In other words, their heart wasn't in it, they were just going through the motions.

Not only that but they were twisting and manipulating the truth to suit their needs and desires

Jesus was pointing this out because He wants our hearts to be in it and he wants us to do it his way.

Look at [verse 10](#)...

*10 Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. 11 What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them." NIV*

Some versions say make unclean instead of defile.

So what he was saying is that it's not what goes in that gets you in trouble but what comes out of your mouth that is the problem.

Now skip down to [verse 15](#).

Peter asks Jesus to explain this to them.

Jesus says, [verse 17](#):

*17 "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? 18 But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20 These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them."*

Okay, So, our hearts - they can contain some pretty nasty stuff.

This is not what they are supposed to hold.

The thing is, sometimes we don't even realize it.

We collect up and carry the wrongs the world and other people do to us.

- Sometimes, we wear them like a badge of courage.
- The truth is, holding on to these things pollutes us!

We learn things or assume things according to the world's standards.

- We've chosen these beliefs without consulting God or His word.

We let our flesh dictate what we feel, think, and believe.

- The flesh is very selfish. It wants what it wants.
- When it doesn't get it, it gets angry, mean, ugly.

All these things collect up in our hearts, deceive and poison us.

- They blind us to the truth of who God is and how He would have us be.

[Proverbs 16:2](#) - *All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the Lord.*

[Proverbs 21:2](#) - *A person may think their own ways are right, but the Lord weighs the heart.*

We have to step back and look at what we see as a pure heart and consider whether it truly is.

We are to...

[2 Timothy 2:22](#) - *22 Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

[2 Corinthians 7:1-2](#) - *Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

*These promises are the promises of salvation as a result of faith.*

[1 John 3:3](#) - *3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.*

This hope mentioned is salvation at Christ's return.

Another good one comes from the Beatitudes...

[Matthew 5:8](#) - *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

Ok, so we're supposed to have a clean and a pure heart.

How do you get rid of the junk in your heart? How do you make it pure?

The truth is - we can't-not by ourselves.

-[Psalm 51:10](#) tells us:

*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

We go to God and ask Him to create it, to clean and correct it.

Then, we have a part to play in it.

[Proverbs 4:23](#) says:

*23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*

What you allow into your heart can make or break your faith walk

That's why your thoughts are so important.

What you think and let into your mind directly affects not just your thoughts, but your heart, too.

Guarding your heart means refusing to accept anything into it that doesn't belong there; anything that doesn't agree with God, His Word, and His will.

[James 4:8](#) - *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

You have to reach out to God. Make the effort to get close to Him.

-The great thing is, when you do that, He reaches back to you.

-He honors your efforts and meets you where you are.

-You don't have to get to a certain level of cleanness or progress to have a relationship with Him.

-He'll meet you where you are and walk you forward from there.

Wash your hands - clean up your actions.

-What are you doing that you shouldn't be?

-What are you not doing that you should be?

Purify your hearts - actively work to clean up your heart.

-Just as you can choose not to accept bad thoughts, you can choose not to accept bad feelings, emotions, or attitudes in your heart.

- You may feel hurt, anger, and frustration.
  - These are all normal feelings.
  - It's what you do with them and how you handle them that matters.
- You can choose love instead of hate, forgiveness instead of anger.
- What you are to do is actively choose to apply a Godly attitude to the bad feeling, attitude or habit.

You can choose to be mad at someone for hitting your car in the parking lot and talk about what a bad driver they are, or you can forgive them for not being perfect and seek to resolve the situation in a healthy and helpful way - even if they did it on purpose or out of meanness.

- You can choose to apply love to the situation instead.
  - Choosing love does not mean you're weak. It doesn't mean they got one over on you.
  - It means you choose to do it Christ's way instead of accepting bad things in your heart.

Remember, we are to love each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sin

As [1 Peter 4:8](#) tells us to (*8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.*)

It's a lot easier to be nice, forgiving, etc., if you love them and are acting from love not hate, frustration, anger, disgust, whatever.

Double-minded-

[Matthew 6:24](#) tells us:

*24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."*

In this passage Jesus is talking about money, but I think it applies other ways as well.

So -

You have to make a choice.

Are you going to be committed to Christ and following Him?

Or, are you going to keep doing what your self wants?

You cannot serve 2 masters.

You either serve Christ, or self. You cannot serve both.

It's a lot to think about, and it's a big choice.

- This choice can really make or break our walk.
- It's important we make the right one, not just once, but day by day, moment by moment.

This week's homework:

Take some time to examine yourself and to look deep down.

Ask yourself these 2 questions:

- Is my heart pure or are there things in it I need to prayerfully deal with?
- Am I committed to serving Christ, or am I double-minded?

If there are any doubts or uncomfortable answers, don't be embarrassed.

We all have things we have to deal with daily and sometimes moment- by- moment.

Do take it to God in prayer.

You don't have to say anything fancy - just something like, "I've been thinking about this and the truth is something's not quite right in this area. Please forgive me. Help me to align this and to get it more on track."

If your request is sincere and you really do want help, He WILL help you.

It might not look like you think it will, but it will happen and He will help you realign it and get it on track.

It might be hard, and it will be painful, but once you are on the other side you will see that it was SO worth it!

This week's Memory Verse:

[Psalm 139:23-24](#) - *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and Lead Me in the way Everlasting.*