

Road to Emmaus

Biblical Counseling Center

September, 2019

by Pete Steele

Petesaservant@gmail.com

Biblical Meaning of "Heart"

Adams: The heart is the part of you that only God knows and includes your conscience and reasoning. It is the real you. Not just your emotions or feelings.ⁱ

Ryrie: The center and seat of life, both physical and psychical (referring to thinking and motives).ⁱⁱ

New Bible Dictionary: The heart governing centre of all of man with his attributes, physical, intellectual and psychological which govern his life. Character, personality, will, and mind/thinking are all modern terms which reflect the vastness of the meaning of 'heart' in its biblical usage.ⁱⁱⁱ

Heart is the seat of _____ life.

Deut. 8:5; Ps. 119:11; it is the source of evil thoughts and actions (Matt. 15:19–20); Heb. 4:12; Jer. 17:9.

Heart is the seat of the _____ life.

Our heart loves (Deut. 6:5); Job 27:6; Ps. 104:15; Isa. 30:29; Neh. 2:2; Rom. 9:2; it has desires (Ps. 37:4); it can be bitter (73:21).

Heart is the seat of the volitional life.

Our heart seeks (Deut. 4:29); Exod. 14:5; Exod. 8:15; Heb. 4:7; it is capable of choice (Exod. 7:22–23); Jer. 9:26; Acts 7:51.

Heart is the seat of _____ life.

With the heart man believes resulting in righteousness (Rom. 10:9–10). For the believer, the heart is the abode of the Father (1 Pet. 3:15), the Son (Eph. 3:17), and the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22). The believer's heart should be pure (1 Tim. 1:5; Heb. 10:22) and circumcised (Rom. 2:29).^{iv}

The importance of the heart in the eyes of The Lord can be seen as it is one of the most dominating themes in His Word. Doing an in-depth study of the Bible, we will find the heart of man being referenced between 900 and 1000 times.

God understands our hearts

Look with me at how His word describes our hearts: A heart may throb with joy (Eccl 11:9), flutter with fear (Isa 21:3), or pulse quietly with contentment (Prov 14:30). To "speak to the heart" in Isa 40:2 is to comfort and encourage, while the heart is also the center of memory (Isa 46:8), cognition (Ezek 3:10), wisdom (Prov 2:10), conscience (Job 27:6), and vice (Ps 101:4).^v

God gives us instruction about our hearts

Proverbs 4:23

Matthew 12:34-35; 15:18-19

Mark 7:21

Luke 6:43–45

In the openness of our hearts to good and evil, we can see the significance our hearts play in who we are and what we do.

God warns us about our heart

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Our hearts naturally are selfish, wanting comfort, power, pleasure, control and more. Wanting what it wants, when it wants it and not wanting God to set limits nor provide direction.^{vi} (Jer 6:16, Romans 1:18-21)

Our hearts are open to influences from above and below, therefore, the same heart that can be “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” (Jer 17:9) and can also become a light on a hill and bring God glory as we learn to know Him, love him and love our neighbors.

Why then is it important to get to heart issues?

If we are to help those God gives to us to counsel, we need to intentionally consider why do people do the things they do?

We must help them to see their motivation and then with God’s help begin the process of heart transformation. If “motives don’t change” we won’t change.”^{vii}

Asking intensive and extensive questions will help us reveal the motives of our counselees.

Here are some questions you could give as homework to be completed and discussed:

Will I live independent of God or will I acknowledge Him as Lord?

Why do I do what I do? What do I really want?

Finish this statement; if I don’t have _____, I am miserable.

Common responses:

Pleasure	Power	Freedom/ Autonomy
Peace	Love/Intimacy	Happiness
Significance/Reputation	Comfort	Respect/Admiration
Meaning	Control	Success

We are not left alone as we endeavor to reveal the issues of the heart. God has given us His Word. The Holy Spirit works through His Word to take both the counselor and the counselee further than we can take ourselves. What makes the counsel we are giving different is that we are not alone in what we are attempting to do. We know and look with expectation to God’s Word working in hearts to expose and reveal what needs to be changed.

Knowing the condition of the heart of man, God intentionally intervenes by sending Jesus Christ.

God created us for His Glory. When we begin to live with His glory as our heart's orientation, beginning with repentance and belief and by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ, our hearts begin to desire and hunger to know Him, to love Him and to glorify Him. God's desire is that He would not be on the periphery of lives, as He will settle for nothing short of our hearts being captured and captivated by Him. When this is true, then He will be on the throne of our hearts.^{viii}

Knowing the weakness of our hearts, He is working to transform and renovate our hearts. He gives to us all that we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4) and by this grace working in us we begin to think and act like Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-29).

Moses recorded God's desire this way:

Deuteronomy 6:5

Deuteronomy 10:12

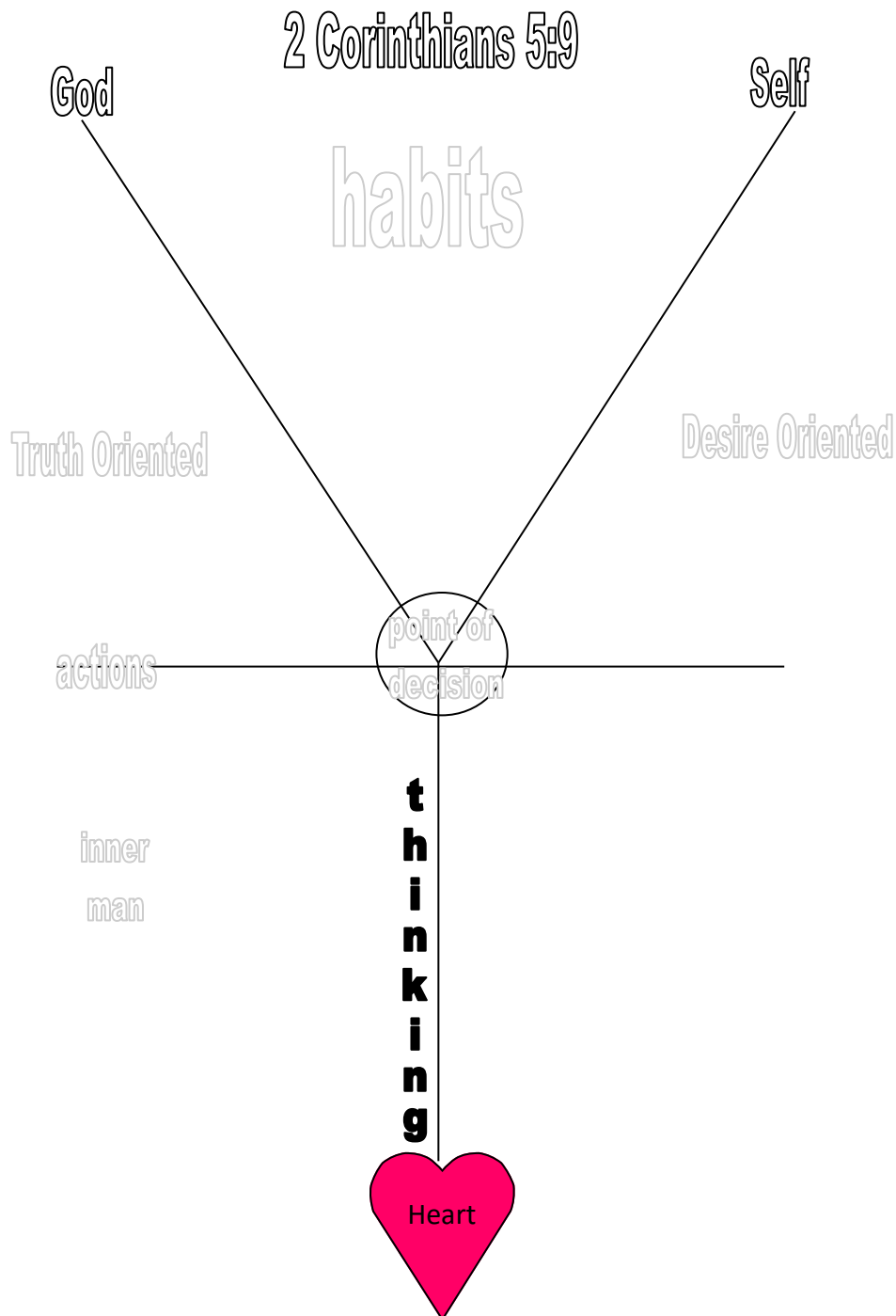
Paul understood God's desire and placed his faith in Jesus Christ, and wrote this to the church in Corinth:

2 Corinthians 5:9-10,

1 Corinthians 10:31

Heidelberg Catechism, *"That he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him, and live with him in eternal happiness, to glorify and praise him."*^{ix}

We can know Him, love Him, live with Him and glorify Him when He himself transforms and renovates our hearts. The selfish and ungodly motives of our hearts will be gradually replaced by a new heart's desire to love Him more intentionally and live for Him alone.



Three Key Statements:

1. My goal in life is to _____.

- 2 Cor. 5:9; 1 Cor. 10:31; Isa. 43:7.
- Glorify God = give the _____ (Matt. 5:16, 17).

2. I please God by being like _____.

- Matthew 3:17
- Romans 8:28, 29

3. God knows I will not be _____, therefore, He expects me to be _____.

- Ephesians 4:22-24
- II Peter 3:18

ⁱ Jay Adams, *Critical Stages of Biblical Counseling*, Timeless Texts, page 136-139

ⁱⁱ Ryrie, C. C. (1999). *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (pp. 226–227). Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

ⁱⁱⁱ Banwell, B. O. (1996). Heart. In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman (Eds.), *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed., p. 456). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

^{iv} Ryrie, C. C. (1999). *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (p. 227). Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

^v Kennedy, B. (2012, 2013, 2014). Heart. In J. D. Barry, L. Wentz, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair-Wolcott, R. Klippenstein, D. Bomar, ... D. R. Brown (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

^{vi} Welch, Edward T, *Motives, Why I Do the Things I Do?* P&R Publishing pages 6-7

^{vii} Welch, Edward T., *Motives, Why Do I Do the Things I Do?*, P&R Publishing

^{viii} Lane, Timothy S, & Tripp, Paul David, *How People Change*, New Growth Press, pages 172-173

^{ix} Ursinus, Z., & Williard, G. W. (1888). *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* (p. 28). Cincinnati, OH: Elm Street Printing Company.