

☞ A Heart After God

Uses of “heart” in everyday language

- someone is good at heart
- we learn things by heart
- “aw, come on, have a heart”
- for goals, we set our hearts on it
- when serious, we take it to heart
- when committed, we put our whole heart into it

The heart symbolizes the center of our being

Some scripture verses about the heart...

☞ **1 Samuel 16:7** man looks at the outward appearance, but **the Lord looks at the heart.**

☞ **Matthew 6:21** for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- **Your heart follows your money.** Where is your treasure?

☞ **Matthew 12:34** out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.

- **Words reveal your heart.** What does this reveal about you?

Acts 13:22 (*God speaking*)

I have found David... a man after my own heart

David had a heart after God

- he ran to the battle with Goliath, who had ridiculed God
- when confronted with his sin, he repented immediately and vigorously
- he wrote many songs of praise to God

Swindoll – David was paradox personified:

He slew Goliath with the fling of a stone, but he was wounded by the lust of his own wandering eyes. He soothed Saul’s spirit with soft strains on the harp, but he exploded in anger at Nabal. He gave Jonathan’s crippled son Mephibosheth grace – a seat at his royal table – but he ignored the needs of his own children. He hid from God after his affair with Bathsheba... but, oh, he knew how to draw near. How can such an inconsistent man be considered someone after God’s own heart? David’s heart beat with God’s not because he was perfect, but because he was devoted. One passion was greater than all others: his desire to know and obey God.

☞ **Psalm 42:1–5**

Characteristics of a Heart after God...

☞ 1. Craves God's Presence v. 1–2

Sometimes I crave Mountain Dew. I gotta have it! Or at the end of a hard work day around the yard, I can feel like I'm starving...

Imagine a deer running from the hunter... an insatiable thirst develops after a long chase. How about you? Ever have an intense thirst, especially on a hot day? Not only do you want a drink, you might want to jump into the water.

Do you desire God like this?

The hunter is like the devil or simply troubles we face. Do we run to God or look for some other way to find relief?

The streams of water are symbolic of God's presence... we should desire to be in it, like being powerfully thirsty on a hot summer day!

If we are not craving him, perhaps we need to start with a realization of how dried out we really are! Or, perhaps you are drinking in other things trying to satisfy your thirst, but they will never fully satisfy!

Some scripture verses about hunger and thirst...

Psalm 107:9 he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

☞ **Proverbs 27:7** He who is full loathes honey, but to the **hungry**, even what is bitter tastes sweet.

- How does your attitude compare to this verse?

Scripture identifies a number of things we might be filled with:

- Ecclesiastes 8:11... filled with schemes to do wrong.
- Isaiah 41:23... filled with fear.
- Daniel 11:12... filled with pride.
- Habakkuk 2:16... filled with shame.
- Matthew 17:23... filled with grief.

Acts 6

Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit

Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power

Ephesians 5:18

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

We need a craving for the things of God. If you're full of other junk, you won't be very hungry for the things of God. Put it upside down... **if you're not very hungry for the things of God, perhaps it's because you're too full of other junk.**

☞ **Matthew 5:6**

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.

A Heart After God Craves His Presence.

☞ **2. Considers the Past** v. 4

The psalmist remembers how things used to be...

He used to go with others to the House of God. Not only that, but he was at the head of the line, leading others in. And, apparently, he had been very expressive and festive in the old days. These things are inspiring him for a fresh experience today.

We also ought to remember positive past experiences with God...

- Salvation; healings; holy spirit outpourings; bible camps

As the Psalmist considers the past, it prompts his action in the present.

☞ **Revelation 2:4-5**

You have forsaken your first love. **5** Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and **do the things you did at first.**

You can't live on the past, but maybe you need to do some of the things you used to do when you experienced God's presence in a powerful way. These things should cause a stirring in our hearts. The psalmist pours out his soul, seeking God.

☞ **Jeremiah 29:13** You will seek me and find me when you **seek me with all your heart.**

Kids played Hide and Seek

- They would search without end if we didn't set a time limit. Our attitude in seeking God should be the same!

Proverbs 8:17 ... those who seek me find me.

Psalms 34:10 ... those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

Psalms 24 talks about who may ascend the hill of the Lord... those with clean hands and pure hearts... those who seek God.

☞ **Psalm 14:2 God looks** down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, **any who seek God.** (*God seeks God seekers*)

A Heart After God Considers the Past.

☞ **3. Chooses to Pursue and Praise** v. 5

Even though he has been discouraged, the writer here preaches himself happy. He knew what it was to be discouraged, downcast and disturbed, but he decides to lift himself up and go after God.

1 Samuel 30:6

Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. NKJV

☞ The Psalmist tells himself, “**Put your hope in God...**” What kind of hope do we have?

- Colossians 1:27 speaks of our hope of glory.
- 1 Thessalonians 1:3 mentions our hope in Christ.
- Titus 1:2 highlights the hope of eternal life.
- Hebrew 7:19 speaks of a better hope.
- 1 Peter 1:3 says it is a living hope.

In other words, we have a hope that is absolutely sure. It's not a childish hope of fantasy ☞ or wishful thinking; it's **something to look forward to with certainty.** We will see Christ in glory; we will experience eternal life! So, we give God our thanks and praise.

“For I will yet praise him...”

Psalm 63:1–5...The psalmist is feeling dry and weary, but decides to praise God anyway.

When you're feeling dry or perhaps even frustrated and angry, you have a choice to make. You can feed the emotion by dwelling on it, or you can feed your soul what it really needs: more of God's presence...

Psalm 100:4... Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise.

Psalm 68:4... Sing to God, sing praise to his name, prepare the way for him who rides through the deserts.

☞ **Praise invites God's presence!**

Personal experience with praising and worshiping God... How it can settle my spirit or renew me when I am down. It is because God comes near!

The psalmist has been downcast, but he puts his hope in God and chooses to praise him.

God is always good. His plans for you are good. Your future with God is excellent! He deserves our highest praise! Praise soothes the soul and stirs the spirit.

A Heart After God Chooses to Pursue and Praise!

We need to have hearts after God!

“When you’ve been away from God, don’t spend too much time feeling guilty; instead feel hungry!”

Psalms 27:4

One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

☞ David had **one passion above all others: to seek the Lord** – so should we.

☞ **A Heart After God Craves His Presence**

A Heart After God Considers the Past

A Heart After God Chooses to Pursue and Praise

Song: The Heart of Worship