

# **Hardness of Heart**

## Hebrews 13:5

<sup>5</sup> Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

- If that is true—and it is—who moved? As born-again believers, we are all capable of living in the fullness of God every day of our lives. God is continually pouring out His love, joy, peace, revelation knowledge, and every other blessing. But **we can get to a point where we're not receiving and "feel" like He has drifted away.**

## Romans 1:21

<sup>21</sup> Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

- This scripture contains four separate elements, or keys, that can lead us into and keep us operating in the fullness of God. Expressed positively, they are ***glorify God, be thankful, recognize the power of imagination, and have a good heart.*** We have the power to control each of these in our lives.

## Glorify God

### Mark 9:23

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

- In many places throughout the Bible, the word *magnify* is the same word translated *glorify*. Therefore, *magnify* and *glorify* can be used interchangeably. And *magnify* means "to make bigger."

- **Matthew 18:19-20**

<sup>19</sup> Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

- As the scripture states in Hebrews: 13: 5, God never leaves us or forsakes us Individually. So, this scripture in Matthew is telling us that when we come together as the body of Christ in his name, bringing the presence of God with us, his presence is magnified, glorified and what we have agreed upon and touched together here on earth shall be done for us! We do this with our imagination, with our hearts!

- **Most of us have become masters at enlarging the problem and minimizing God and His Word.**
- What do you value? What's big to you? **You can magnify the Lord and make Him and His Word bigger than any problem.** Do it by glorifying, praising, and thanking Him. Find someone in the Word who overcame a situation like yours. Meditate on the Word and make it more real to you than the

problem. You need to get to a place where God's Word is true and where He is greater than any situation.

## Thankfulness

### 2 Timothy 3:1-5

<sup>3</sup> This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

<sup>2</sup> For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

<sup>3</sup> Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

<sup>4</sup> Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

<sup>5</sup> Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

- **Paul listed un-thankfulness as one of the signs of the end times** and put it in the same verse as covetousness, pride, blasphemy, and unholiness (2 Tim. 3:1-2). Not many would argue that we live in a society full of unthankful people, although we have more prosperity and opportunity than any people who have ever lived.

# Psalm 103:2

<sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

- The second key to staying full of God is a thankful heart. Glorifying, magnifying, and thanking Him are all interrelated, but to glorify God, you must be thankful. As you are thanking Him, you're reminding yourself of what He has said and done, which magnifies Him.
- **Being thankful involves both humility and memory.** Humility is the understanding that you didn't accomplish these things on your own. Then, humbly remembering the good things He has done for you always brings thankfulness. So, it's important to look back and rehearse your victories and remember whose power brought them to pass.
- **Notice here that King David is encouraging his own heart! He is preparing his heart in prayer. We must remind ourselves as we begin to pray, of the moment of our salvation!**

# Psalm 100:4-5

<sup>4</sup> Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and bless his name.

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

- **Every time you are tempted to complain about a problem, don't.** Instead, enter into God's presence and spend ten minutes thanking Him for His goodness. If you will, you'll find that the natural desire to complain will cease, and the problem will shrink as you begin to see it in the proper perspective.

- This goes back to the building of the altar before God, of blessing stones. Each stone represents one blessing that God has given us in our lives. We are to place our living sacrifice upon this altar each day!

## Imagination

### 1 Chronicles 29:18

18. O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of your people, and prepare their heart to you:

### 2 Chronicles 12:14

<sup>14</sup> And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.

- Rehoboam did evil because he **prepared not his heart** to seek the Lord. Here, David was praying that the Lord would prepare the people's hearts, or it could be said, keep them from doing evil by preparing their hearts. How did he pray that this would happen? It would be by keeping these thoughts forever in the imagination of the thoughts of their hearts. This is speaking about keeping this in their memories. This links imagination with memory and shows its importance in keeping our hearts prepared before the Lord.
- Imagination is much more important than most people realize. The Hebrew word that was translated "imagination" in the Old Testament literally means "conception." Imagination is how new ideas are conceived. Without it, people become spiritually and creatively sterile.
- **The Word of God comes alive when you can picture what it's talking about.** Let the Word of God control your imagination as you think about scriptures, and you will see things in Scripture

that you can't see with your physical eyes. You see it on the inside...in your imagination.

- When the Bible says you're healed, you've got to meditate on that truth **until you see yourself** healed. Most people allow their imaginations to become vain, and they agree with the image the doctors and the world have painted rather than with the Word of God. They're told what is going to happen, and they imagine it as the truth.
- When we fail to be thankful and glorify God, our imaginations automatically become vain, reverting back to our logical minds. That doesn't mean they aren't working; it just means they begin to work *against* us. Those of us with vain imaginations are pessimists, imagining failure instead of success. **We need to use our imaginations to agree with God's Word and see ourselves the way God sees us: happy, healthy, and prosperous.**

### A Good Heart

The Scripture makes it very clear that **the attitude of your heart is far more important than your actions.**

## Matthew 23:25-26

<sup>25</sup> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

<sup>26</sup> Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

- The Lord is more concerned about your heart than He is your actions.

## Matthew 12:35

<sup>35</sup> A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

- We must examine our hearts to reveal what fruit is being produced. This honesty with ourselves, is being honest before God. God only looks upon our hearts! This truth cannot be escaped! The desire we have in our hearts for a relationship with him must be greater than our pride!

## Mark 7:21-23

<sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

<sup>22</sup> Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

<sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

## Proverbs 23:7

<sup>7</sup> For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

- **Our hearts control what we say, and they also control what we do.** All of the above are products of our hearts. The opposite of those can be true also. Love, joy, peace, patience, and the rest of the fruit of the Spirit are also products of what our hearts

believe. The reason the heart responds in a negative way is because we allow it to be dominated by external, or physical, things instead of by the Word of God.

- Our understanding is then darkened, and we become insensitive to God. We actually cause our hearts to become hardened. The word *harden*, according to the dictionary, means cold, insensitive, unfeeling, and unyielding. When our hearts become hardened or insensitive to God, they automatically become sensitive, dominated by, and controlled by our physical senses.
- So, what do most people do when they realize their actions are being controlled by their hearts and are causing problems for themselves and others? They resort to behavior modification. They try to change their actions without changing their hearts, and that never works long-term. **If people want their behavior to change, they must change their hearts. They must make sure that the Word of God is the dominant influence.**
- If you will put these four keys into practice in your life, you will never be the same. It will change the way you think about everyone and everything around you. It will give you a God perspective.