

Hardness of Heart - Article

Hardness of Heart:

A Condition You May Have and Not Even Know it...

By Andrew Wommack

I used to think people with hard hearts were God-haters or, at the least, people in rebellion to Him. **That's what I used to think until the day the Lord told me I had a hard heart.**

While on a flight to a meeting, I was reading about the story of Jesus walking to His disciples on the water, recorded in Mark 6:45-52. They were in a terrible storm. After nine hours they were still only halfway across the Sea of Galilee, normally a two-hour trip. They were in trouble and fighting for their lives. Yet here came Jesus walking on top of the very thing that was trying to kill them. He was totally in control.

This impacted me so much that I put my Bible down and just stared out the window. A solid layer of clouds was beneath the plane. In my imagination, I thought about what it would be like to see Jesus walking on the clouds. That's not any more impossible than Jesus walking on the water! I was just awestruck as I considered this.

I continued reading in Mark 6:51 and saw that the disciples had a similar reaction. The latter part of that scripture says,

"They were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered."

That's exactly the way I felt. I thought to myself that anyone who really thought about the magnitude of this miracle should feel the same way. They should be shocked and amazed at the miraculous power of God. Then I read the next verse:

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

It was just like someone slapped me in the face. For the first time, **I realized that being shocked, amazed, or surprised at a miracle was an indication of a hard heart. WOW!** Or another way of saying it is, relating to the natural more than the supernatural is an indication of a hard heart. By that definition, my heart was hard.

This set me on a three-and-a-half-year journey seeking the Lord. I wanted to know what a hard heart really was, what caused it, and how to cure it. This has turned out to be one of the most important things the Lord has ever shown me.

The dictionary defines *hardened as cold, insensitive, unfeeling, and unyielding.* If you're honest with yourself, you'll have to agree that there are certain areas of your life where you have a hard heart toward God.

God made us so that we can harden our hearts and literally shut out unwanted influences. It was meant to be a positive thing, but because we haven't understood this, what God meant for good has actually worked against us.

One of the best examples of hardheartedness is found in the book of Exodus. Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel leave the land of Egypt as God had commanded. Fifteen times in Exodus, the Scriptures mention Pharaoh's heart being hardened. This is the only explanation to Pharaoh's persistence in resisting God, when it was so evident he was no match for Him. **A hardened heart dulls a person's ability to perceive and understand.** It is the equivalent of spiritual retardation.

In Mark 8:17, Jesus spoke to His disciples about the characteristics of a hard heart:

"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?" (Mark 8:17-18).

In these verses, Jesus gave us symptoms that are descriptive of a hard heart: (1) unable to perceive, (2) unable to understand, (3) unable to see,

(4) unable to hear, and (5) unable to remember. These are all speaking of inability in the spiritual realm.

A hard heart is characterized by an inability to perceive spiritually. And when spiritual things are perceived, a hard heart will keep a person from understanding the few things they *can* perceive. They might see what the Lord is trying to show them, but they can't get a hold of it in a way that they can apply it to their life.

When people are hardhearted toward God, it's like they are spiritually blind and deaf—they just can't see spiritual truth or hear the Lord speak to them. And they can't remember. **Not remembering is a major indication of the condition of their hearts.**

People often tell me that they just don't have the ability to remember Scripture the way I do. They imply that I must have a photographic memory. But these same people can tell me who won the Super Bowl last year or last decade, the Major League batting averages of all the famous baseball players, or the names of all the actors in a movie.

I've watched Super Bowl games, but I don't remember the details. It's not because my mind doesn't work; it's just a matter of the heart. I remember Scripture because that's where my heart is. I don't remember sports or entertainment trivia, because my heart isn't into that. **It's all a matter of the heart.**

Here are some of the major things I've learned that determine the sensitivity of your heart. First, whatever you consider, your heart becomes softened toward. Conversely, whatever you fail to consider, your heart becomes hardened to. That's what Mark 6:52 reveals.

Again, that verse says,

"For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened."

The word *consider* means "to study, ponder, deliberate, examine, or think upon." The scriptural term that would relate to "consider" would be

the word “meditate.” Or we could substitute the word “focus” for “consider.” So the disciples’ hearts were hard, since they didn’t “focus” on the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5,000.

It wasn’t sin that caused the disciples’ hearts to be hard—it was their focus on things other than the miracle Jesus had just performed. They weren’t looking at pornographic magazines nor were in strife or anything; **they were occupied with trying to save their lives** in the midst of the storm. That wasn’t sin.

If you took me sailing, I would want you to have some carnal knowledge about sailing. If I ride with you in a car, I don’t want you to drive by faith; I want you to have your eyes open and your brain working. That’s not wrong.

But, if we get into a situation where our carnal knowledge and abilities won’t save our lives, I would like you to be able to go beyond the natural and draw on the ability of the supernatural. We can’t be limited to the natural realm.

This is what was wrong with the disciples. They had just witnessed Jesus taking five small loaves of bread and two small fish, and feeding an entire multitude of at least

15,000 people. What an awesome miracle! If they had kept their minds stayed on that miracle, they wouldn’t have been shocked or surprised to see Jesus walking on the water.

And notice that Mark 6:45 makes special mention of the fact that Jesus “constrained” His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side. That means He had to compel them. They didn’t want to go, but Jesus made them do it. Therefore, they didn’t get into this situation because of some mistake on their part; they were under direct orders from the Master. That means Jesus was responsible for what happened to them.

If they had been thinking spiritually instead of naturally, they would have known that Jesus would take care of them. Instead of being surprised to see Jesus walking on the water, they would have expected it.

Likewise, if we were not so dominated by considering the natural, we would not be surprised by the supernatural. We should expect to see the miraculous power of God manifest in our lives all the time. But the truth is, our hearts have become hardened toward God and His supernatural power **because of our failure to stay focused on spiritual things.**

One of the benefits of understanding what causes hardheartedness is that you can reverse this process and use it to become hardened against the devil. That is absolutely true. You have the power to determine what your heart accepts or rejects.

In my book and teaching album *Hardness of Heart*, I go into much more detail. For example, you cannot be tempted with something you cannot think. You won't act in a way that you haven't already considered in your mind. So, **control your thoughts and you'll control your actions.** That's simple but profound. Most people don't operate that way.

This letter has only scratched the surface of these truths that the Lord has shown me about how you can soften your heart toward God. You really need to get the entire teaching to reap the full benefit. **It's important because one of the ways to soften your heart toward God is to just sit and soak in the truth. It's not enough just to hear truth; you need to absorb it. This teaching will really help you do that.**

This teaching has been available since the early eighties. It is one of the most important and practical revelations the Lord has ever shown me. But recently, I taught this on television and have expanded it from a three-part to a four-part series. I encourage you to order this updated teaching for yourself and one to share with another.