



## Daily Devotionals: Heart | October 10, 2021

Welcome to Week 1 of our All series!

As a church, we've spent the last nine weeks digging deeper into God's character. As a result of growing our understanding of who God is, we want to respond by loving God with ALL our heart, soul, mind, and strength. This week, we'll be specifically looking at how we can love God with all our heart. What does that look like in our everyday, ordinary lives? How do we even begin to love God with all our heart?

To truly understand what this looks like, we must begin with some clear definitions. Merriam-Webster defines "matters of the heart" as "romantic matters."<sup>1</sup> When we consider matters of the heart in Scripture, the implication is far from romantic matters and encompasses much more than feelings or emotions.

The *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* has this to say about the Hebrew term "heart" in Scripture:

The Hebrew term "heart" (*lēb*, *lēbāb*), in its figurative usage, is the most important term for the inner person. It views the inner person from a number of angles...it is the heart that plans or purposes to act (Prov. 16:1, 9)... Decisions of a moral nature take place in the heart (Gen. 20:5; Job 11:13)... "Heart" thus serves as a reference to the person as a thinking, perceiving, and willing being, bringing together the ideas of knowledge, understanding, and will.<sup>2</sup>

It goes on to show how the term "heart" doesn't refer to the bodily organ but refers to so much more within a person.

The Old Testament has little interest in anatomy. No connection is made in the Old Testament between the heart and the beating of the pulse...The whole spectrum of emotions is attributed to the heart—positive emotions like love, loyalty, joy, comfort and negative ones like grief, envy, anger. Thought functions are also attributed to the heart where *lēb* is better translated

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/matters%2Faffairs%20of%20the%20heart>, accessed August 29, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Philip H. Towner, "[Mind/Reason](#)," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 528.



“mind.” Wisdom and understanding are in the heart. The heart is the seat of the will, so that a decision can be described as “setting” the heart (2 Chron. 12:14).<sup>3</sup>

The Hebrew word “heart” was seen as the place within a person from where all decisions, habits, thoughts, desires, longings, and so much more flowed. Proverbs 4:23 demonstrates this well: “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” The heart is where it all begins.

So, what does loving God with all your heart look like? Well, it all starts with God. We can’t love God with our hearts unless He first gives us new ones. Jeremiah 17:9 points out the reasoning well by saying, “the heart is deceitful above all things”. This is precisely why the prophet Ezekiel tells us that God promises us saying, “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

Loving God with all our heart, starts with God. But from there it means that we continually place God himself at the center of our very being. It means that our desires and longings—the beginnings of our every move—would align with who he is and what he desires for us. This week, let’s lean into three practices to help us truly love God with all our heart, allowing him to be the center of everything.

### **1. Invite God to examine your heart.**

Find a quiet place to be alone with God. Take a few moments to be still before him and invite him to show you anywhere in your heart that isn’t fully surrendered to him. Read these words, asking God to reveal to you those places where something else has captured your heart other than him.

**Search me, 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.**

**Psalm 139:23-24**

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<sup>3</sup> Carl Schultz, “[Person, Personhood](#),” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 604.



Read **Psalm 86:11** and **Ezekiel 11:19**. Spend some time in quiet, asking God where your heart is divided. Where is your heart hardened toward the things of God? Confess before God where you need his help to shift and change your heart. Spend some time in prayer, asking God to give you an undivided heart. Find someone you will share your experience with, inviting them to pray with you as well.

## 2. Search the Scriptures

God's Word has a lot to say about the Biblical "matters of the heart." You could say the heart matters a lot to God. Because the heart shapes everything we do, God wants all of it to be turned toward him. Take some time to read through the Scriptures listed below each day with the Hebrew understanding of the word "heart."

As you read through them, take note of the ones that speak to you the most. Notice why they stand out. What might God be wanting to say to you through his Word? How is he inviting you to respond? Take time to pray through your response. Write them on a notecard and place them somewhere you will see them on a regular basis. Commit to memorizing a couple of them.

**Day 1: I Samuel 16:7; Psalm 19:14; Psalm 24:3-4; Psalm 26:2-3**

**Day 2: Psalm 40:8; Psalm 51:10-12; Psalm 73:25-26; Psalm 84:1-5**

**Day 3: Psalm 86:11-12; Psalm 109:21-22; Psalm 119:10-11**

**Day 4: Proverbs, 3:3-7; Ephesians 3:16-19; Psalm 139:23-24**

**Day 5: Colossians 3:1; 3:15-17; Matthew 6:19-21**

**Day 6: Psalm 37:3-6; Deuteronomy 4:9, 4:29**

**Day 7: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 4:23**

## 3. Identify your desires.

Desire is at the core of our heart. It fuels every decision we make. It shapes every word we speak. It can be rooted in things that are not of God and can be shaped by the things that are of him. It's important as we examine our hearts. James K. A. Smith shares this in his book, *You Are What You Love*,

What do you *want*? That's the question. It is the first, last, and most fundamental question of Christian discipleship...Jesus doesn't encounter Matthew and John—or even you and me—and ask, "What do you know?" He doesn't even ask, "What do you believe?" He asks, "What do you want?" This is the most incisive, piercing question



Jesus can ask of us precisely because we *are* what we want. Our wants and longings and desires are at the core of our identity, the wellspring from which our actions and behavior flow. Our wants reverberate from our heart, the epicenter of the human person. Thus Scripture counsels, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Prov 4:23). Discipleship, we might say, is a way to curate your heart, to be attentive to and intentional about what you love.<sup>4</sup>

Spend a few quiet moments entering the narrative of Scripture found in **Mark 10:46-52**. In this text we find Jesus and his disciples entering Jericho where a man named Bartimaeus calls out to Jesus for mercy. Take some time to place yourself in his shoes, listening to Jesus ask you, “What do you want me to do for you?” Follow the prompts below.

Read **Mark 10:46-52**. As you read the text the first time, allow yourself to visualize the scene. What is happening in the crowd? How is everyone responding? What do you notice about the blind man? What do you imagine Jesus is like in his response? Give yourself time to paint the picture in your mind.

Read the text again, this time allowing yourself to be in the middle of the scene. You’re not just an observer here. Remember the people in Scripture were real people with real feelings and thoughts much like our own. Who are you in the narrative? What’s the mood of the crowd? What’s your response to the situation? What questions do you have? What fears do you have?

Read the text a third and final time, this time allowing yourself to be in the blind man’s role. What do you notice here? How does Jesus respond to you? Why are you crying out to him? What will it look like to receive his mercy? How do you respond when Jesus specifically asks you, “What do you want me to do for you?”

Take some time to journal and pray through your response to God through this text.

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<sup>4</sup> James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016), 1-2.