

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

A CHANGE OF HEART

John Edwards

We are told that at any given time, up to 4,000 people are waiting for a heart or heart-lung transplant, in which their diseased heart is replaced with a healthy donor heart. We have a family member who is alive and well today as a result of a heart transplant! As Ezekiel prophesied of Israel’s return and restoration, the Lord said, “...I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (Ezek. 11:19-20). Is it possible that, from a spiritual standpoint, we need to have a change of heart?

FROM A GRUDGING HEART TO A CHEERFUL, WILLING HEART. The Lord has always expected a willing heart of His people. Tabernacle-building instructions required: “Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord” (Ex. 35:5). David charged his son, Solomon: “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind...” (1 Chr. 28:9). It is written in Psalm 110:3: “Thy people shall be willing in the

day of thy power...” Paul pointed out to the Corinthians: “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (2 Cor. 8:12). Some areas where a cheerful, willing heart is needed:

1. **Giving.** 2 Corinthians 9:7, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” Not grudgingly: with a sour, reluctant mind.

2. **Hospitality.** 1 Peter 4:9, “Use hospitality one to another without grudging.” Without grudging: with a cheerful and willing mind.

3. **Work of elders.** 1 Peter 5:2, “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.”

FROM A PROUD HEART TO A HEART OF HUMILITY. Too many have a heart that is lifted up with pride. The Lord warned Israel about such a heart in Deuteronomy 8:11-14. This was the downfall of King Uzziah, in the Old Testament: “But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of

incense” (2 Chr. 26:16). Proverbs teaches us: “Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord...” (Prov. 16:5) and “An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin” (Prov. 21:4). Thus the need to change from a proud heart to a heart of humility. Peter penned, “...be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pet. 5:5).

FROM A FOOL’S HEART TO A HEART THAT IS WISE. The Scriptures often speak of these two hearts (Prov. 10:8; 11:29; 12:23; Eccl. 7:4; 10:2). As you read the following Scriptures, ask yourself, which of these hearts do I have—A fool’s heart: Psalm 14:1, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” Proverbs 10:18, “...he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.” Proverbs 12:15, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes...” Proverbs 28:26, “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool...” Proverbs 15:5, “A fool despiseth his father’s instruction...” Proverbs 29:11, “A fool uttereth all his mind...” Ecclesiastes 10:14, “A fool also is full of words...”—Or a heart that is wise? Proverbs 1:5, “A wise man will hear, and will increase learning.” Proverbs 10:5, “He that gathereth in summer is a wise son...” Proverbs 10:19, “..he that

refraineth his lips is wise.”
 Proverbs 11:30, “...*he that winneth souls is wise.”*
 Proverbs 12:15, “...*he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.”* Proverbs 13:1, “*A wise son heareth his father’s instruction...*” Proverbs 14:16, “*A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil...*”
 Proverbs 28:7, “*Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son...*” The wise in heart hear and do what the Lord says, while those with a fool’s heart do not (Mt. 7:24-27). The wise are ready for the Lord’s coming; the foolish are unprepared (Mt. 25:1-13).

FROM AN EVIL TO A GOOD HEART. Genesis 6:5, “*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*” A reading of Jeremiah 11 reveals the Lord’s people “...*walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart...*” (v. 8). The Lord taught: “*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.*” The Hebrew writer exhorted: “*Take heed, brethren,*

lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb. 3:12). It takes “*an honest and good heart*” (Lk. 8:15) to be acceptable and pleasing to God!

FROM AN IMPENITENT TO A PENITENT HEART. Romans 2:5 says, “*But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*” An impenitent heart is unrepentant; admits no change. As the first son of the two-son father in Matthew 21:28-30 had a change of heart, so must we! (Lk. 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30).

FROM AN UNPREPARED TO A PREPARED HEART. It is said of Rehoboam, “*And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord*” (2 Chr. 12:14). How sad! Hezekiah urged those of his day to have a prepared heart as he prayed: “*The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God...*” (2 Chr. 30:18-19). Hezekiah set a good example in this: “*And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good*

and right and truth before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered” (2 Chr. 31:20-21). Ezra had a prepared heart: “*For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments*” (Ezra 7:10). So did Daniel: “*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself...*” (Dan. 1:8). And he didn’t! Is your heart prepared to do the Lord’s will?

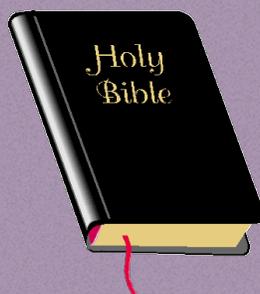
The spiritual heart is so vitally important! (Prov. 23:7; Mt. 12:34; 15:18-19). We are admonished, “*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life*” (Prov. 4:23). The Lord looks on the heart. Remember 1 Samuel 16:7, “...*the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart*”? An urgent question each must answer: Is thy heart right with God? Are we like Simon, who was told “*thy heart is not right in the sight of God*”, and need a change of heart (Acts 8:21-22)?

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