

What's Your Heart's Condition?

If I told you I had a **heart condition**, you would probably be sincerely concerned about me. However, the truth is, everyone's heart is in *some* condition right now. The question is *what* is the condition of your heart?

To put it more plainly, what is going on inside of you? Why do you do the things you do? What is the motive behind your actions? Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep and **guard** your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life." In other words, we need to be mindful of the things we think, say and do, because what's *in* us is what will come *out* of us—whether it's good or not so good.

In the parable of the sower in Luke 8, Jesus taught His **disciples** about different "soil" conditions that caused the Word of God to either be fruitful or unfruitful in people's lives. He was teaching the value of maintaining conditions within that will help foster our **spiritual growth** and productivity. This is just another way of emphasizing our responsibility to guard our hearts. It's important to keep our hearts pure before God (see Matthew 5:8) in order to hear from Him, to know His presence and His leading in our lives.

No one can guard *your* heart but *you*. That is why I believe it is essential to spend time with God, studying His Word yourself, and learning how to be led by the **Holy Spirit**. What is in your heart will eventually show in your actions and the way you live your life, therefore, the question is what will you allow into your heart?

So, let's talk about some conditions of the heart, because in order for the life of Christ to flow through us, we should all do our best to keep our hearts in *good* condition.

Stand your ground against a **hard heart**. A person's heart can certainly become hardened from abuse, disappointments, and going through hardship, especially if it's been going on for a long while. When a heart becomes hardened, it can be difficult to have childlike faith in God. We can become spiritually deaf, no longer hearing from God, or selecting only what we *want* to hear. When our heart is hardened, we are unable to love (or receive love) in the right way. The important thing to remember is God is with you. He promised to never leave you. Ask Him to soften your heart and guide you through difficult the times.

Beware of a **hypocritical heart**. A hypocrite acts one way, but expects or tells others to behave differently. Jesus had hard words for the Pharisees because of this: "Woe to you ... pretenders (hypocrites)! ...You are like tombs that have been whitewashed, which look beautiful on the outside but inside are full of dead men's bones and everything impure. ...You also outwardly seem to people to be just and upright but inside you are full of pretense and lawlessness and iniquity" (Matthew 23:27-28). Hypocrites are a lot like the fig tree Jesus cursed; they show "leaves" but have no "fruit."

Be careful of a **judgmental heart**. It is sad to say that many Christians have this heart condition. People in religious communities often judge others for not believing or behaving the way they do. They judge others' sins, but more often make excuses for their own. Jesus reminds us to "first get the beam of timber out of [our] own eye, and then [we] will see clearly to take the tiny particle out of [our] brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5). One thing to remember is no one is perfect—no one doctrine, no one denomination, no one person.

Safeguard yourself from a **proud heart**. Pride is probably the most deceptive of the heart conditions, because most prideful people won't admit that they are, and therefore, won't seek help. Pride is an independent spirit, an "all about me" attitude that causes people to be rude and disrespectful,

especially if they feel someone is less than they are in some way. Sometimes the more successful people are, the more prideful they become. God *wants* His people to be successful but we must all remember that whatever we do well is only because He enables us to. The truth is all the glory belongs to God.

These are just a few of many possible “heart conditions” we can have. Every person’s heart is in some condition right now; that is a fact. As important as it is to take care of our physical health, I urge you to do frequent *spiritual checkups*, as well. Go to God in prayer and ask Him to show you the condition of your heart. He may put you through a test or series of tests in order to show you what’s in there. Be honest with yourself *about* yourself, and follow the Holy Spirit’s prescription for your success. Remember, God loves you and He wants the best for your life.

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