

Doctrine of Hardness of the Heart

1. The *Bible* reflects what experience in life confirms, it is possible for individuals to grow cold hearted or develop what is called a “*stony heart*”.
 - *Ezekiel 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:*
2. A cold heart is characterized by indifference to the pain and suffering of others. One evil act leads to another so that noble feelings are deadened and dark feelings reign.
3. A cold heart affects the most intimate of relationships such as marriage.
 - *Matthew 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.*

Of course it is possible for women to put away their husbands too, and many do. Many times the main reason is the same, the heart has grown cold. This is not to say there are no legitimate reasons for divorce. It is to say that sin is the reason that leads to the separation.

4. A cold heart saturated in religion, but not righteousness, dries up human kindness so that a good act of healing is resented.
 - *Mark 3:2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*
5. A hard heart that resists the good news of the gospel provokes the wrath of God and brings judgment upon the soul.
 - *Romans 2:5 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;*
6. When the heart is hardened against God, His Word and His righteousness, the mind is given over to imaginations of evil which is soon followed by physical expressions of the same. People seek to live out their thoughts.
 - *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. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*

- *Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*
7. As unbelievers are charged with the sin of having a hard heart, so Christians can become hard hearted if care is not taken. When the women came to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead the disciples did not believe the good news. When the Lord finally appeared to the eleven he rebuked them for their unbelief.
- *Mark 16:14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*
6. A hard heart can be recognized upon self-examination. .
- The heart is hardened when sin is repeated with no remorse, no sorrow, no guilt and no regrets.
 - The heart is hardened when a gospel truth is perceived to be true but not believed, or if believed, not acted upon.
 - The heart is hardened when evil can be performed in the literal presence of the *Scriptures*, or in front of those who should stand for righteousness.
 - The heart is hardened when the evil actions of others are justified.
 - The heart is hardened when wrong is called right.
 - The heart is hardened when the truth is suppressed and the conscience is silenced.
 - The heart is hardened when words are spoken known to be offensive, but the decision is made, and the will does not care.
 - The heart is hardened when actions are taken that will wound or offend, and yet it does not matter.
 - The heart is hardened when the reputation of someone is not guarded or protected.
 - The heart is hardened when private fantasies are permitted without restraint or regret.

- The heart is hardened when job, reputation, and all that is precious is risked for a fleeting moment of self-pleasure.
- The heart is hardened when it is remembered how much pain and sorrow others will experience if the evil deeds of self are revealed, and still evil is done.
- The heart is hardened when the Bible can be read, songs can be song, and prayers offered, and there is no change in life. The rhetoric does not match the reality.
- The heart is hardened when life revolves around self-interests and personal interests.
- The heart is hardened when preparation is made for evil.
- The heart is hardened when sin is loved more than the Savior. The sight of a crucified Christ no longer matters.
- The heart is hardened when there is always money for personal interests but no money for gospel ministry.
- The heart is hardened when a secret alternative lifestyle is developed. It is possible to live with someone, worship with someone, and be a friend for many years to someone, and not really know him or her. The stranger next to you might be your spouse, your business partner, your pastor, or your parishioner.

7. The cure for a stony heart.

- God must convert the heart. *Ezekiel 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:*
- Christ must teach the heart. *Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. ...30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*
- The Holy Spirit must sanctify the heart. *2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. Jude 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

- The Word of God must guard or garrison the heart. *Colossians Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*
- Personal responsibility must protect the heart. *Josh 6:18 And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. Acts 15:29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. 1 John 5:21 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. Jude 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*