

Are you hardhearted?

The Bible often describes people, who are obstinate towards God, as being hardhearted and the main cause of unbelief in God. When you take the time to study the Greek words behind “hardening of the heart,” there are a range of meanings:

Making strong or rigid.

Stubborn, stiff-necked and obstinate.

More than a mere stiffening of one's soul and character - an implication that there is the outgrowth of a new feature, which obscures while it hardens, of an outer coating of mental obduracy or permanent bluntness.

1. Carefully observe the warning given by the writer of Hebrews. Is he writing to Believers? What do you learn about “you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin?”

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Heb 3:12-13, ESV)

But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (Gen 3:4-6, ESV)

Blessed is the one who fears the LORD always,
but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity. (Prov 28:14, ESV)

2. Examine what senses are involved here. What do you learn about hardheartedness?

And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” They said to him, “Twelve.” “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to him, “Seven.” And he said to them, “Do you not yet understand?” (Mark 8:17-21, ESV)

Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. (Mark 16:9-14, ESV)

The Teacher Note for this lesson is at:

<http://Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/25Curriculum/Class9-12/print/Sin.Personal.AreYouHardHearted.9-12.pdf>

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Teacher Notes

The Bible often describes people, who are obstinate towards God, as being hardhearted and the main cause of unbelief in God. When you take the time to study the Greek words behind “hardening of the heart,” there are a range of meanings:

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More than a mere stiffening of one’s soul and character - an implication that there is the outgrowth of a new feature, which obscures while it hardens, of an outer coating of mental obduracy or permanent bluntness.

Ask the student: do you see a progression the in hardening of the heart here? Can you give an example of a heart so hardened that there is a permanent bluntness?

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Encourage the student to mark up the text by circling key words or underlining key phrases. What is sin? What is the deceitfulness of sin? Do you see how Eve’s heart was hardened?

Did the student observe that the warning in Hebrews is directed towards Believers?

Sin is more than just the act; it is the mere desire for something against God’s word.

Eve provides an example:

The sin: the tree was to be desired to make one wise like God.

The deceit of sin: the tree was good for food and was a delight to the eyes.

The heart hardening process: the rationalization of the fruit emboldened Eve to disobey God’s word.

Why did Eve fail: she did not know God’s word.

a) not knowing God’s word meant that she could not control her desires.

b) not knowing God’s word meant that she could not discern the truth of the attempted ways to explain away God’s word.

c) not knowing God’s word meant that she did not fear to disobey God’s word.

2. Examine what senses are involved here. What do you learn about hardheartedness?

And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” They said to him, “Twelve.” “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to him, “Seven.” And he said to them, “Do you not yet understand?” (Mark 8:17-21, ESV)

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Ask the student: When Jesus asks His disciples if they had a hard heart, He asks, “do you not yet see or understand?” “Do you have a hardened heart?” “Having eyes, do you not see?” “And having ears, do you not hear?” “And do you not remember,…” Is Jesus talking about historical reality or storytelling / myths?

Jesus Christ is calling for an honest appraisal of reality of God, Jesus Christ, and yourself. It could be the appraisal of tangible works of God that you experience or witness. It could be the appraisal of past historical events like the Exodus or the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It could be the appraisal of archaeological evidence that confirms the people and events and the truth of the Bible.

Ask the student: how does this affect your understanding of hardheartedness? What does a hard heart describe?

Hardheartedness describes a person who has thoughts / rationalizations that cause him to not have faith in God. Without faith, that person will not place a trust in God’s word and engender a trust to obey it.

For Believers, it describes a person who makes excuses for not reading the Bible. As Jesus confronts His disciples, “having eyes, do you not see and having ears, do you not hear, and do you not remember?” You have to know what sin is.

For Believers, it describes a person who rationalizes their sinful behavior and does not fear to disobey God’s word. You have to know if you are being deceived by your sinful desires.