

Missing Just About Everything by 18 Inches

(Selected Scriptures)

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. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his **heart**. (Genesis 6:5-6)

And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his **heart**, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's **heart** is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. (Genesis 8:21)

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine **heart**, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine **heart**: (Deuteronomy 6:5-6)

And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine **heart**, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no... Thou shalt also consider in thine **heart**, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. (Deuteronomy 8:2, 5)

Speak not thou in thine **heart**, —saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land... (Deuteronomy 9:4)

When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my **heart** said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. (Psalm 27:8)

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their **heart** far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: (Isaiah 29:13)

Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose **heart** departeth from the LORD... The **heart** is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the **heart**, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. (Jeremiah 17:5,9-10)

Keep thy **heart** with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. (Proverbs 4:23)

Keeping the Heart

Many years ago there was a Gospel tract that was titled, "Missing Heaven by 18 inches." Its main point was that 18 inches is about the distance from your head to your heart. You can know truth and mentally agree with it, but it will not do any lasting good unless it is applied to the heart. Many people are told a basic doctrinal statement about man's sin and Christ's death on the cross to pay for our sins. Then they are told to say a prayer...and that settles that! No more worries. I've got that settled. Now, step aside, God... I have other things to do! However, if we really study the Gospel, we will learn that Jesus said that **you must be born again** (John 3:3) and that there will be fruit (good works, a changed life) after you are saved from your sins (John 15:1-8; 15:16; Matthew 13:1-23 cp. II Corinthians 5:14-17). God's purpose for saving you from your sins was not only to deliver you from hell, but from the deceitful pleasures and power of sin (John 8:10-12 cp. Romans 6:6-23; 8:8-15,28-29). Jesus also said that becoming a Christian will put you into conflict with Satan and this world's way of thinking and living (Matthew 10:16-39; Luke 22:31-32; John 15:18 - 16:33 cp. Galatians 1:3-4; Ephesians 2:1-3; 6:10-13; James 4:4-10; I Peter 5:8-9; I John 2:14-26).

All of this is to emphasize one point: You need to take care of your heart. Better yet, you need to be sure that God is taking care of your heart.

What is the Heart? Who understands the Heart?

The heart is your inner self: your thoughts, emotions, affections and will.

(Genesis 6:5; Psalm 14:1; Proverbs 4:23-27; Luke 6:43-45; I Peter 3:4)

The heart is deceitful, desperately wicked, and untrustworthy.

(Ecclesiastes 9:3; Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 28:25-26; Matthew 15:19)

The heart needs God for a conversion and for continual maintenance.

(Jeremiah 17:9-10 cp. Ezekiel 11:5; Proverbs 3:5-6; 20:9,24,27; Psalm 19: 12-14; 51:10; 139:23-24; Acts 16:14; Philippians 2:12-13; 3:15; 4:7)

How do I keep the Heart?

Keep it clean.

(Matthew 5:8; I Timothy 1:5; II Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 10:22; James 4:7-8; I Peter 1:22)

Keep it safe.

(Proverbs 4:23-27; Hosea 4:11; Hebrews 3:12-13; 4:16; Philippians 4:6-8)

Keep it filled.

(Deuteronomy 6:6; Psalm 119:11; Proverbs 3:1-3)

Keep it busy.

(Psalm 15:1-2; 19:14; 119:1-8; Ephesians 5:18-19; 6:5-6; Hebrews 13:9)