

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)