

Introduction: Morals and integrity are missing from today's culture. The public educational system, the modern church, and the average family does not impart the things of the Lord into the inner man. Solomon was very concerned about the quality of the inner man, "the heart."

1. THE IDENTITY OF THE HEART (What is the heart?)

The "heart" (Hebrew "leb" or "lebab") may have two different meanings:

A. the physical "heart" which provides the flow of blood and life to the body, not found in Proverbs but is found in Gen. 18:5; Jdg. 19:5; 1 Ki. 21:7; Ps. 38:9-10.

B. the abstract "heart" which is man's inner or immaterial nature. The word heart means less an isolated function than the man with all his urges, in short, the person in its totality. This concept is found in Proverbs:

1. the heart is the seat of the emotion, Proverbs 12:25; 14:10; 19:3; 23:17; 27:11,
 2. the heart is the seat of the understanding, Proverbs 8:5; 10:20; 15:28; 27:19;
 3. the heart is the seat of the will, Proverbs 5:12; 7:25; 16:9; 22:17; 23:26;
- the heart is not limited to these three areas, but is much broader in scope.

("heart" by T. Sorg in Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 2, page 181)

Summary notes:

1. The concrete meanings of "heart" referred to the internal organ and to analogous physical locations (i.e. "the heart of the sea"). However, in its abstract meanings, "heart" became the richest biblical term for the totality of man's inner or immaterial nature. In biblical literature it is the most frequently used term for man's immaterial personality functions as well as the most inclusive term for them since, in the Bible, virtually every immaterial function of man is attributed to the "heart."

("labab" by Andrew Bowling in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 1, page 466)

2. Both in ancient times and today, different parts of the body are used figuratively as the seat of different functions of the soul; and ancient usage often differs from the modern. In expressing sympathy, we might say "This touches my heart," where the ancient might say "My bowels were moved for him." Ancient concept of "heart" is commonly equated with the modern "mind" and ancient "rein" (i.e. often "kidney") with modern term "heart."

("heart" by Arthur B. Fowler in The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, page 340)

3. The kidneys (Hebrew "kelayot") are frequently mentioned in close connection with the heart. They are, in the metaphorical sense, the seat of the deepest spiritual emotions and motives, so secret that men cannot fathom them. Only God is able to search and test them.

("heart" by T. Sorg in Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 2, page 182)

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HEART (How important is the heart?)

A. Proverbs 4:23 = Out of the heart are the issues of life (one's actions).

B. Proverbs 10:20 = The heart affects the worth or value of the person.

C. Proverbs 14:30 = A sound or tranquil heart brings health to the body.

D. Proverbs 15:13 (15:15; 17:22) = The condition of the heart affects the internal health.

E. Proverbs 22:15 = Foolishness dwells in the heart of everyone from birth.

F. Proverbs 23:7 = How one thinks in his heart, so is he.

3. THE INCLINATION OF THE HEART (What will the heart trust for its guidance?)
The heart will tend toward one of two realms:

A. Proverbs 3:5 = The heart can trust in the Lord.

B. Proverbs 28:26 = The heart can trust in its self.

4. THE INSUBORDINATION OF THE HEART (What is the problem with the heart?)

A. Proverbs 5:12 = The heart can despise reproof.

B. Proverbs 6:14 = The heart can develop frowardness (crookedness).

C. Proverbs 6:25 = The heart can lust after a woman's beauty.

D. Proverbs 12:20 = The heart that imagines evil develops deceit.

E. Proverbs 14:14 = The heart that is backslidden will fulfill its desires.

F. Proverbs 17:20 = The heart with frowardness finds no good.

G. Proverbs 19:3 = The heart of a foolish man fretteth or rages against the Lord.

H. Proverbs 24:2 = The heart of evil men looks for ways to destroy.

I. Proverbs 28:14 = Those with a hardened heart fall into mischief.

J. Proverbs 28:25 = Those who have a proud heart stir up strife.

5. THE INDICTMENT OF THE HEART (How does the Lord view a man and his heart?)

A. Proverbs 6:18 = A heart that deviseth wickedness is an abomination to the Lord.

B. Proverbs 11:20 = Those with a froward heart are an abomination to the Lord.

C. Proverbs 12:8 = Those with a perverse heart shall be despised.

D. Proverbs 16:5 = Those with a proud heart are an abomination unto the Lord.

6. THE INVOLVEMENT WITH THE HEART (How can I impact my heart for God?)

A. Proverbs 2:2 (8:5; 10:8; 22:17; 23:12) = Apply the heart to wisdom.

B. Proverbs 3:1 (3:3; 4:4) = Make the heart keep God's Word.

C. Proverbs 4:21 = Keep wisdom in the midst of the heart.

D. Proverbs 4:23 = Guard the heart with all diligence.

E. Proverbs 6:21(7:3) = Bind wisdom upon the heart continually.

F. Proverbs 6:25 = Eliminate lust from the heart.

G. Proverbs 23:15 (27:11) = Take delight in your children's heart when it does right.

H. Proverbs 23:17 = Do not allow the heart to envy sinners.

I. Proverbs 23:26 = Children must submit their hearts to their parent's moral teachings.

J. Proverbs 23:33 = Stay away from wine and strong drink.

K. Proverbs 24:17 = Do not rejoice in the heart when your enemy falls.

Conclusion: The heart is very important to one's life. "A person's emotions affect his physical condition. A heart at peace helps produce a healthy body, but envy, an ardent agitating desire to have or achieve what one sees in others, produces adverse effects physically." "Happiness and depression are issues of the heart. What a person is inwardly has more lasting impact on his emotional state than do his circumstances. Some people hold up under difficult circumstances better than other because of inner strength."

(Book of Proverbs, Sid S. Buzzell, as found in The Bible Knowledge Commentary, page 936, 938)

The spiritual condition of an individual relates to his heart's condition. The relationship of an individual with the Lord is reflected by his heart's condition.