

Heart of Faith

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Smashwords Edition

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Preface

It is impossible to write this book without at times stepping into a first-person narrative. The very nature of what I hope to accomplish requires that you understand the intensely personal nature of God's truth.

God is a Person, not some impersonal force out there in the cosmos. Further, all truth is a reflection of His character. There is no objective body of factual truth except in the wild imagination of Western rationalists. The Bible says flatly that God can remake reality on-the-fly and that all things are wholly subject to His whim. When He decides to let us see Him doing it, we call it "miracle" – otherwise we would never know the difference. All of reality remains entirely dependent on His attention, and Scripture affirms His interest does not wax and wane like ours does.

While there is a vast body of common experience in Christian faith, there is plenty that is of necessity entirely unique to the individual. The Western reflex to emphasize the common can literally smother the unique. Even Western liberalism trades one set of enforced conformity for another against Western conservatism, so this is not a question of choosing between those competing philosophies. The Bible is neither, but a wholly different kind of approach to thinking.

That's what I aim to show you in this book, but I can only tell you what I have learned and experienced first-hand. You are bound to find that some of this simply cannot apply to you. It is between God and you. God makes His own path in each human soul.

Introduction

It's a tragedy of Western culture that relegates the heart to a mere metaphor of human emotion. Ours is the only culture that does that; every other civilization seems to have understood that the heart is quite literally the seat of a higher level of understanding. Recently scientists have discovered that the heart has a sensory field more powerful than the brain, connected to a parallel neuron network of its own. It's not simply a figure of speech when the Bible refers to the heart as the one place where you can hear the voice of God. He doesn't speak to the intellect, so if you don't have your heart attuned to His voice, you can't hear Him at all.

Early Christians were very Hebraic. This is not the same thing as the Hellenized Judaism of Christ's day and that we still see today. Rather, Christ was calling His people back to the ancient Hebrew perspective that predated Greece and Rome. He called them back to the Ancient Near Eastern intellectual assumptions about life and reality itself. The Old Testament arose within that frame of reference, and simply cannot be understood from a Western viewpoint.

The Bible speaks consistently of the heart as the seat of the will, the driving sense of commitment to eternal values and questions of morality. Scripture further presumes the reader understands that the heart is superior to the mind. Human intellect was treated as an extension of the fallen fleshly nature, incapable of dealing with genuine moral considerations. Rather, the heart was where real decisions in life were made. The mind could smother the voice of the heart, but it could in no wise do the same work.

Whatever it is that God has to tell us, He speaks to our hearts, not to our minds. In order to understand how this works, we need to go back and rebuild the ancient Hebrew cosmology and anthropology.

Chapter 1 – Hebrew Outlook

On the one hand, we need very much to correct the Western assumptions. Even very scholarly Christians tend to operate from perverted Western notions without giving it much thought. We can call them “perverted” because they are entirely heathen in nature, arising from outside the ancient biblical traditions. On the one hand, Western Civilization owes a great debt to ancient Greece and Rome for a rational organization, but the deeper mythology of what it means to be human comes from the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture that absorbed what was left of Greco-Roman Civilization. Both were at times even anti-Christian, so for the organized Church hierarchy to adopt any part of it was a moral and spiritual compromise. Yet the Church embraced it wholly. Far too much of that heathen background still deeply stains mainstream Western Christianity today.

On the other hand, it would be very easy to get lost in the details. My previous books (see *A Course in Biblical Mysticism* and *Biblical Morality* for examples) only introduce the vast ocean of differences between Western Civilization and the Ancient Near Eastern outlook in the Bible. Even then, such studies restrict themselves to what Westerners already know from their own attempts to understand Ancient Near Eastern culture and intellect. It’s not as if we could simply become a part of that ancient way of life, but if we don’t get a feel for the differences, we make no room for the Bible to speak. That the differences are significant is simply too obvious to anyone willing to take a brief look. If you haven’t pursued this before, you may struggle a bit. In this book, I’ll simply ask you to be aware of it until you have time to verify my assertions later.

The Bible authors assumed that the reader was possessed of the Ancient Near Eastern background that dominated their world. Thus, you don’t find Jesus or the Apostles railing directly against Hellenism because virtually no one in their world called it that. Rather, Christ spoke in terms of how things ought to be, which was always consistent with the ancient Hebrew viewpoint. From our standpoint today, we can easily see how Jewish scholars had swallowed an entirely new and different intellectual orientation that Alexander the Great had evangelized during his conquests in that part of the world. We have to take the time to roll back that momentous shift in thinking and recover those ancient biblical assumptions.

In terms of cosmology, Hebrew thought presumes ultimate reality is the Spirit Realm. That realm of existence is entirely separate and different from our existence here in this world. It’s not a difference in location, but a difference in quality. Ours is more like a restricted pocket, almost an artificial construct, within the Spirit Realm. You can in theory touch the Spirit Realm any time because it is the fundamental realm of existence in the first place. However, we are generally separated from it by our fallen nature.

Creation is not limited to our plane of existence, but we could hardly grasp anything outside of our portion. Ours is the lowest, the most “dumbed-down” part of existence. Where we are is rather like the bottom of the well, where it always dark, dank and confined. We experience here the limitations of time and space, but the rest of Creation suffers no such thing.

God's existence is rooted outside our domain. We are inside of a highly constrained bubble of existence that He holds in His hand. We are forced to use all sorts of metaphors, figures of speech, parables and symbolism to begin addressing what we need to know about things outside this realm, and that includes God. All we can do is characterize Him, and it will always vary with the context, because He is simply outside of all our categories of mental grasp. To imagine that we can make Him consistent with our logical categories is frankly blasphemy. It's not just false and misleading, but downright sinful.

In broad terms, the Bible indicates that God made our world and placed us in it on far better terms than we experience now. We were the pinnacle of Creation in terms of this world. It would be silly to suggest that the universe exists for us. Rather, the Bible indicates that the universe exists for God's glory. In terms of our focus on the question, everything exists to draw our attention to His glory. Not merely as passive entertainment, we are supposed to participate in making His glory apparent. Initially, we did that reflexively as stewards of His Creation.

Something changed all of that. The change was not in Creation itself, but in us. Whatever else is meant by the term "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," it symbolizes a decision to make judgments about good and evil apart from God's revelation. It amounts to usurping God's authority and making ourselves our own gods.

Why this doesn't work too well is not immediately apparent. While Western minds can obviously catch onto the arrogance of this choice, there's much more to it than that. Human faculties are utterly incapable of judging such things. We are taught in Western education that human reason is the highest possible faculty, that intellect holds the key to conquering the universe. We imagine that if we can just remove all the impediments to our intelligence, there is nothing we can't do. Such is the essence of the Fall. To imagine that Creation can be brought under the control of human hands is sheer madness.

If God creates anything at all, He weaves His own moral character into everything. That is part of how it glorifies Him. Creation is not merely a passive lump of matter, but He breathes into it His personality. We don't take seriously enough Paul's characterization of Creation as a living thing that longs for His glory to become apparent (Romans 8:18ff). It's not a question of objective fact; you could never prove it on those terms. Rather, in our existence here we should act as if Creation itself desires His glory, because Creation is programmed to respond to His glory shining through us. Paul insists that it makes a difference in how things happen to us, and Jesus surely demonstrated it by His miracles. Whatever potential we might discover in this universe, it rests on understanding God's character.

But the human mind is not up to the task – not by itself. The Bible repeatedly refers to the heart as the human faculty for understanding God's character. It's not enough to know His commandments, but there must be a firm commitment. And it's not enough to be committed to the discipline of obedience, but God demands personal loyalty. Not just a reasonable loyalty, but He requires a commitment that reaches beyond the grave. Human reason is incapable of justifying such a thing on its own terms. Even if you assert as a given that there is such a thing as the Spirit Realm on a higher level above our plane of existence, the mind does not possess the power to do more than organize or implement things. It requires another level of understanding that is above intellect and above the mind to touch that higher realm.

In the Ancient Near East, such talk would not have raised any significant questions. They took much of this for granted. It was so deeply enmeshed in their understanding of reality that no one

had to explain it. For them, it was merely a question of who the god is that demands their loyalty (Acts 9:5). In our far different time, in a far distant place, we have lost contact with such an instinctive understanding. It requires a little more information to overcome our built in resistance.

Chapter 2 – Sensory Heart Science

Look up the term “bioelectromagnetics” – as a branch of medical science, it’s been around awhile. While the bulk of research is aimed at exploring how electromagnetic fields affect biology, some scientists have discovered that the human body generates its own fields.

We have long known that the human body has its own electrical currents. The nerves in our bodies form a network for passing information via both chemistry and electrical currents. It’s pretty low power because that’s all it takes. And wherever there is electrical current, there is usually a certain amount of electromagnetism. Since the brain is a tightly packed bundle of neurons and electrical activity, it stands to reason that it offers a measurable electromagnetic field. However, being such a weak current, you just about have to keep your instruments in close proximity, if not directly against, the head.

If you introduce a stronger electrical impulse to the head, you can wipe away memories; they called it “electro-shock therapy.” Recently, research indicates you can also plant false memories with carefully tailored electromagnetic interference. The field around the brain isn’t that strong, so it doesn’t take much to knock it around. A hand-held battery is enough to operate tasers that pretty much shut the whole thing down.

What keeps tasers from being consistently fatal is that the heart has its own electrical system that is considerably stronger than the primary nervous system. Indeed, the heart has its own neural network, running parallel to the brain’s nervous system. It’s so much more powerful that scientists have discovered that the electromagnetic field generated by the cardiac system is thousands of times stronger than the one from the brain. In fact, the heart’s field is measurable as much as fifteen feet (4.5m) away from the body.

This heart field has its own resonance. While the equipment used to measure this can detect a reaction with the presence of other hearts within range of the field, few scientists pretend to know much about just what it is that reaction does. That is, we don’t have any real scientific details about how two human hearts interact, only that they do. There’s an obvious and largely untapped potential there. Further, the resonance responds to the presence of a wide range of other living things, including plants or even some supposedly inert objects.

So it’s a simple matter of fact that the heart is a sensory organ in its own right. But beyond that fact, the science gets pretty murky. I would suggest part of the problem is that scientists still tend to associate emotions with the heart. That is, you can find a lot of effort to use this information as a means of giving the mind a better connection to human emotions. Even when scientists recognize that the heart has its own “brain” of sorts, they tend to assume the intelligence in that brain is closely associated with emotions. It seems as if it never occurs to them to look elsewhere in human nature.

Perhaps that’s because science in the West remains trapped in Western assumptions, particularly as found in the teaching of the Greek philosopher Aristotle. He taught that the universe was a unitary entity. While he gave room for the existence of non-physical beings, he insisted that they

were confined to this universe. Materialism is written into his basic assumptions about reality. It's hard to imagine he didn't encounter Ancient Near Eastern philosophers who traveled the entire Mediterranean Basin, but if so, he consciously rejected their notion of a distinctly separate Realm of the Spirit. So it is that modern Western science just assumes such as reality and makes no room for human nature beyond the material and rational. The Bible says you have both a heart and the capability for a spirit as separate faculties. Hebrew people assumed the emotions were in the belly, while the heart was the seat of the will.

Indeed, the Western assumption is so pervasive that it affects Western Christianity. Despite parroting the words of Scripture that flatly state we have at least potentially a spiritual component, you end up with Christians instinctively picturing "eternity" as unlimited time, instead of time being no longer a factor at all. We suffer a similar mental image about the Spirit Realm regarding the space factor. We cannot imagine an existence that is not affected by time and space. So we read that bias back into the Bible and come up with a lot of false notions about what it says.

But saddest of all is that Christians seem to have ignored the entire field of study about the heart as a sensory organ. I've not found any major Christian teachers addressing this in writing. How do we suppose Paul was able to tell that a certain disabled man had faith to be healed (Acts 14:9)? Did Paul have long-range clinical analytical abilities? Or would we prefer to think of God's power as murky as magic? Would it not make more sense to envision that he was within range of the literal heart-to-heart sensory field, and knew how to use his heart?

Chapter 3 – Rebuilding Redemption

The science is clear enough as far as it goes. Because of the Western bias against a higher faculty in the human soul, a common assumption is that anything not rational is something less. Often you'll see references suggesting that "something less" is seldom more than sentiment. So pervasive is this assumption that Western Christianity is affected by it. Despite offering good words about having a spirit and desiring spiritual development, what it often boils down to is simply a better form of intellect, human reason more correctly informed by revelation.

As such, revelation is reduced to mere proposition. The notion that God's character can be reduced to a mere logical proposition is not just foolish, but is blasphemous. Revelation is more than mere words and ideas; it is an expression of God's Person. Jesus warned that He was forced to use parables because ultimate truth was beyond human language. He spoke of things beyond this realm of existence, using the typical figure of speech – Kingdom of Heaven. It could just as easily have been translated as Kingdom of the Sky, not because it was up in the atmosphere, but somewhere beyond earthly human existence. Hebrew is inherently symbolic as a language.

There is a meeting point between Heaven and Earth: The Law Covenants. Not law as legislation, but law as the covenant requirements of the sovereign in terms of personal commitment. Law was not morality, but a manifestation of it. Morality is defined in Scripture as the character of God. Thus, while the mind is flesh, and the spirit is of the Spirit Realm, the heart is the link between them. The heart is the seat of moral discernment. That substantial neuron network has a purpose. The heart is not merely a sensory organ, but the means to also process what it senses. The heart has its own form of intelligence and its own logic. The heart is the one part of us capable of connecting directly to the character of God that is woven into all Creation.

The Bible warns that you can suffocate your heart and not let it speak. It also warns that you can be so thoroughly misinformed that whatever comes from your heart is badly garbled and confused. If the brain isn't ready for what the heart has to say, your mind cannot accurately analyze the situation and organize a valid moral response.

What we face today is worse than a culture that denies the intelligence of our hearts, but a deeply confused moral mythology. Virtually every thread of Western moral philosophy, including all the conflicting flavors, arises from the dark and confused mythology of Greco-Roman Civilization as interpreted by the Germanic tribal hordes that overran what was left of Greece and Rome at the birth of the Middle Ages. And the organized Church was right there, facilitating the whole thing. In no time at all, the fundamental moral values of organized Christianity became just a modified European heathen value system.

Western Christianity is hardly even conscious of it these days. When you ask about godly virtue, you'll get good Anglo-Saxon morals. This is what is read back into Scripture, so that everyone is quite certain it is all biblical. While it's possible to prove academically how this is utter nonsense, good luck getting anyone in church leadership to listen. We don't have room to delve into all the details here (see my book *Biblical Morality*), but I ask you to be aware that when you begin to open your mind to the guidance of your heart, it will be confused until you become familiar with Hebrew moral culture.

The reason it matters is that morality is not a neutral, multiple-choice thing. There is no abstract moral frame of reference; it is either God's character or it is a lie. God wove His own moral character into the moral fabric of the universe. His personality is reality itself. This is the Creation that Paul says cries out for the revelation of the Children of God. You and I reveal ourselves as His children when we embrace His actual character, not some fabricated heathen nonsense. Progress in growing more Christlike means an improved training of the mind to listen to the heart as it searches the moral fabric for divine imperatives. We can be sure that, while the specifics of the Covenant of Moses applied only to those who participated in that covenant as full members of the ancient Nation of Israel, Paul said it was for us to discern in the Law the moral character of God as it applied to us (2 Timothy 2:15; the Old Testament was their Scripture). The Law of Moses came from the hand of God, so it reflects His moral character in that specific context. However, He created the Hebrew culture as the proper setting for revealing Himself.

The mind alone is not capable of this Herculean task. Nor will the task ever be finished, but this is something that calls us ever upward (Philippians 3:14). While it is true that we cannot simply glorify Him in our strength, we can reach for the redemption that He offers. Redemption is the outer gate to His glory. So our internal organizational focus is redeeming things, restoring divine justice as much as He allows (see my book *Biblical Law: Divine Justice*). Redemption is defined as steadily conforming ourselves to His character. We examine the Law Covenants (Moses and Noah) for clues that our heart will recognize. The mind learns and organizes; the heart recognizes God's character in things it encounters.

The mind can grasp formal theology and be made to believe certain intellectual concepts as teaching. However, the intellect is incapable of building a genuine faith. Faith is a word that means unconditional commitment and trust in someone. Only the heart can maintain a commitment contrary to all reason and logic. The faith that took Jesus to the Cross is entirely unreasonable. Only those who subject their mind to the faith of the heart can expect to be faithful. Holiness is not a concept, not an abstract construct to which the flesh can conform.

Holiness is living like Christ, who considered His death His greatest victory. The mind might understand what the heart of faith says about that, but cannot get there on its own.

Chapter 4 – How Will I Know?

Our biggest problem is that we have nearly two thousand years of Christian history ignoring this critical aspect of human nature. More, the secular society at large is hostile to the whole concept on multiple levels. The only reason it's not illegal is that no one in government has heard of this kind of faith.

So while there are surely plenty of people over the past 2000 years who managed to live by the commitment of their hearts, it was instinctive, not a fully conscious choice. Their minds knew something deep inside was not going to budge, so the intellect surrendered to the task and organized a decent response. This makes it almost hit and miss. In more ancient times, it was part of the ambient culture. For us in our Postmodern world today, it requires that we consciously adopt something initially alien to us.

In striving to link our minds back to serving the heart, we quickly become quite alien to those around us. We will surely stumble across folks who manage to live this way, but it is wholly unlikely they have this kind of explanation for it. If you should echo my explanation above, it is once again hit-and-miss whether they will accept it. In general, people who have been striving to make that connection to their heart of faith will embrace it as soon as they hear it. That's because their hearts already know the truth, and will overwhelm the intellectual resistance.

People who come into this with little or no experience trying to follow their hearts will struggle. If they imagine this is something "cool" or has the potential to serve as a social trend, they may elect to fake it. Anyone with significant church experience has already seen plenty of religious fakery. Paul warned the Corinthian church against such in their upside-down fascination with speaking in tongues. I've been in some groups where different kinds of fakery was institutionalized and carefully controlled. You learned your performance and were instructed to never question whether it was genuine. Part of why it was so easy to detect is that these institutions were also hung up on Western mythology and a high reliance on objective proof.

There is no objective proof for an awakened heart. Proof and objectivity belong in the realm of the intellect, on a lower level.

For those of you determined to claim this legacy of God's mercy, there's no reason to doubt. If you can accept the basic facts and concept behind it, I find it hard to imagine that you would fail to eventually connect. Then again, there are so precious few among my acquaintances who live this way that we lack a significant body of experiential lore. So I'll offer the few common elements that I've seen thus far.

The thing you are looking for is primarily a driving sense of moral purpose. Something far bigger than yourself will call you and start sorting out your previous commitments. In relatively short order, things you once doted on will become rather unimportant, while some other things will loom large. Some people experience that shift in priorities as waves over the remaining years of life. But you won't have trouble giving away stuff that belongs to now dead interests. The danger is that, without sufficient awareness of the unique Hebraic sense of morality, you may easily mix emotion or passing fancy for something eternal. Be cautious, because you may

waste time chasing the wind. Then again, if you pursue nothing, you can't grow by the necessary experience factor.

But even the mind can grasp that a powerful sense of communion with God brings a powerful sense of communion with His character in Creation. Once you understand that nothing God has done has to be justified, that all living things *belong*, then you can more easily let go of the false Western morality of saving the world. There is no need to bring order out of chaos, as it were, because the natural world at large is just fine as it is. While it may not mean you are eager to sleep in a tick-infested bed of poison ivy, you still gain a sense of joy at nature as it is; the ticks and poison ivy won't offend you by doing what they do.

By the same token, you realize that humanity is also part of Creation. Too often we encounter the Western assumption that mankind is separate from nature, that we have to handle humans differently, in a special way that isn't appropriate for the rest of nature. This is mostly wrong, it that what works in nature works in human nature. Again, your biggest barrier is a vast ocean of false Western expectations. There's nothing wrong with people using what God has provided, but you'll find some uses disturbing because it seems more like taking God for granted. At the same time, you may experience a fresh interest in morally justified uses, such as discovering edible plant life in your area that is often dismissed as weeds by others. This is not the same thing as the Green religion that despises humans as a plague on nature.

What separates mankind from the rest of nature is our mandate to restore divine justice through our growing awareness and obedience to His moral character. No other part of Creation has that task. However, it requires that we develop a sense of communion with God through the living joy of moral truth singing back to us from all Creation. Remember what Paul said about that desperate longing of Creation for the revelation of who lives for His glory? Creation greets those of us who live by our hearts, rejoicing that someone gets the message.

You will be better connected to your own body. There are a thousand ways this will affect your self-awareness. It's not a massive solution to your internal problems, but puts you in a better position to know the truth of your problems. For example, it becomes possible to trace the source of your own emotions, to discern why you have such a strong reaction to something that others find inconsequential. Oddly enough, you will begin to doubt authority figures like never before. That's because we know for a certainty that the majority of those you encounter in our Western world will be hostile to the truth in the first place. Again, this is not some objective truth, but God's own truth to which you are connecting. Aside from powerful moral assertions, your heart allows your mind to ask better questions.

Once you begin to make your mind accommodate a higher moral purpose in the heart, you'll find your mind tends to work with a greater clarity. This is in part because, once the heart claims it's rightful position superior to the mind, the intellect no longer wastes resources trying to work out a wide range of questions that are now answered. Unjust options are eliminated, so there's fewer frivolous and unproductive paths to explore. Instead, the mind sticks to what it does best, which is organizing and implementing the moral purpose supplied by the heart.

Let's hear from others.

[Chapter 5 – Veloyce's Story](#)

In her own words:

I never thought much about the relationship I have with nature; it just seemed natural. I was always able to talk with dogs and sometimes other animals. It just seemed as I grew up that people around me put a damper on hearing most things of that sort. Nonetheless, I still could have a relationship with dogs and cats.

One day I met the man God had chosen for me. I knew in my heart he was the one, but others tried to stop me. I waited on God and Ed made the move first. It was not the kind of love where fireworks go off, but I could hear in my heart he was for me. It was one of the few things I knew for sure.

At that point I still didn't have the full awaking of my heart to hear and see things as God made them. Recently I have made an effort to recover that gift. I've begun to feel and hear things again. I can walk into a store and hear things calling to me – food, herbs, supplements, etc. It's consistently things that my body actually needs. The results are proof enough of that.

I also hear the different songs the birds sing if they are happy or sad. I can feel things changing in the world and my heart gets heavy. I don't hear the trees talk but I can touch one and feel it's pain or if it is rejoicing. I'm still growing and learning how to use this gift.

– *Veloyce Hurst*

My wife is not a writer, but she isn't kidding about allowing her heart to interact with sources of nutrition. She also uses this gift when cooking and gets rave reviews. Most food was once a living thing, and there remains a residue of morality in it for help and harm. At Creation, God granted us the means to know what we should and shouldn't eat based on what our bodies could tell us about our needs.

Chapter 6 – Linda's Story

Linda writes:

This is just an introduction of the first page in the first chapter of a story that I cannot begin or end. I know neither the beginning nor the ending. It is Father's Story and only He knows. The heart is the connection to that story, directed solely and at the whim of Our Lord. It is the connection to all of creation, the heart of our world and universe.

I am not good with words. I cannot explain that which cannot be explained. It is a knowing kind of thing that goes way beyond the mind's comprehension. It is a "being" kind of thing that only the heart can understand.

How easy it is for me to let my mind take control of everything that I do. When that happens, I fall hook, line and sinker for all the suggestions that it makes. Falling for all of the suggestions that it makes to me, I can become agitated or depressed or anxious. Hours and hours of listening and believing those thoughts will make me crazy, ready to react or respond in kind to myself or some other person I was thinking about. My mind is my enemy.

But how can this be? My mind is a most splendid thing, capable of knowing, understanding, and logically discerning anything it desires. My mind is brilliant actually, having a high enough IQ to be a member of Mensa. So what exactly is the problem if I am such a "smart" person? How could it be that my mind can possibly think such crazy things that are not even rational, but instead based on emotions or paranoia enough to cause me so much pain?

Then something happened; another voice started speaking. It was a calm voice, bringing peace to my overwhelmed, over-thinking mind. A voice of Love, a voice of Joy, a voice I had never heard before. Or, maybe it was because I never listened for it or to it.

At first it was like a parent and child kind of conversation. I felt like I was being judged as though I had to justify the thoughts that my mind was thinking. I argued with that voice and it just waited patiently and just answered me with love. I thought it was the good me and the bad me having an argument about how I could be justified in thinking and feeling as I did.

This confusion over what was going on, this little argument going on inside my head, went on for months. Little did I realize that what was really going on was something far outside of my normal way of thinking.

It was my heart. It was that beating heart in the middle of my chest that was speaking to me with love, with kindness, with gentleness that was bringing me this peace. Because it had always been my mind that controlled me, that always explained things to me. I couldn't understand that another part of me, my heart, could actually have a "mind" and voice of its own. It was my heart. Not the beating rhythmical sound in my chest, but a voice that spoke with wisdom of a different kind. It was a voice that spoke to me out of love. Love for me, for others, and for all of creation. It was a voice that didn't judge or condemn or try to reason or compel.

Okay, so I can't explain it. I can't even begin to try to explain it. I don't need to, not any more. It is really quite simple. When my heart rules and my mind obeys, I am at peace.

My mind could only do two things: react to something or respond to something. Reactions are usually a result of how we feel about ourselves and our responses usually based on experiences that we can recollect. React or respond to something, we are always basing it on our mind. That's my take anyway. Right or wrong, it's how I see it.

The heart, on the other hand, expresses itself through only one means and that is love. It does not react or respond. It simply expresses itself as a conduit through which God speaks. God speaks through the connection that our spirit has been blessed with from God's Holy Spirit.

Therefore, it is our choice to allow our hearts to speak or to let our brain react or respond. In my personal experience my mind will always second guess me, criticize me, or not exactly get me the results I want. My heart, on the other hand, will never lead me wrong. For in matters of the heart, God is the One in control.

Most people have no clue of any of this, nor could they. Most of us don't listen with our heart or even know that such a thing could exist. It isn't rational. It doesn't make sense. Nevertheless, it IS. And that is The Truth.

– *Linda Cooke*

Linda is a devoted member of my online parish.

[Chapter 7 – About Christine](#)

Much of what you read here arises from my blog, which is a sort of virtual parish that I pastor. There is one other blogger who serves as a ministry associate. This book was born from some of her ideas. Christine has asked me to share her story second hand. She's a marvelous writer but

the timing of this book caught her tied up with a lot of her own moral responsibilities. What makes her story important for us is what keeps her from telling it herself.

Most children have a nascent ability to learn how to live by their heart-mind, but we've already noted how typical Western upbringing smothers the spark. Christine had the good fortune to live in proximity to some horses as her close friends and this peculiar setting fostered her awareness of Creation as a whole. I note in passing that those of us who live by the heart don't merely carry a sensitivity to flora and fauna, but we sense that Creation at large seems to be aware of us. This is wholly consistent with Paul's comment about Creation crying out to commune with us when we restore the full range of moral awareness. We should not be surprised that horses will foster a child's moral development on that level.

Meanwhile, her family was deeply engaged in mainstream Christianity, same as I was. However, mine was not such a big hindrance as her situation was for her. She remembers it as one of the less salutary expressions of such religion. What she describes was a religion deeply stained with perverted Western mythology, not to mention a measure of hypocrisy, and quite confusing to her. It served to drive her away from Christianity. Instead, she undertook a study of various religious expressions because she couldn't simply turn off the longing for a moral frame of reference.

Of course, what she found made better sense to her. She felt more at home with the pagan religions' acknowledgment of a spiritual reality inherent in nature. However, what she found did not answer all the questions. She was still haunted by ghosts of her difficult childhood.

Here it becomes necessary to interject something editorially. It is a strange thing, indeed, that Western Christianity is notorious for a heathen fear of pagan religion. Typical Christian parents and church leaders panic at the idea that their kids might read something by Aleister Crowley, for example, and have built up a vast lore of confused nonsense about what he actually taught. Crowley didn't like the church as he knew it, but it would seem all of his experience was with mainstream Western Christianity. He genuinely aimed at heart-led religion. Had he encountered a genuine heart-led Christian faith, he might not have chased so many external sources with such ardor.

The superstition against such outside sources is not from the Bible; it is a peculiar Western bias. Where it shows up in Judaism is due to Hellenized legalism. Old Testament religion did require some care to remain faithful to the Covenant, but the danger was confusing Jehovah with lesser deities, not in simply knowing about pagan beliefs. They couldn't avoid knowing.

We have two major examples here: Joseph and Daniel. Both of them were obliged by their calling from God to expose themselves to a very massive lore of pagan religious materials. This was not from some special dispensation from God; such thoughts are alien to Scripture. These men weren't harmed by their exposure to such stuff because it had no power on its own to pull them off track. While people do find themselves intrigued by some of the things written by the likes of Crowley, since he seems to have some awareness of certain spiritual factors in human nature, his stuff has no real power to destroy your Christian faith. It might blow holes in mere cerebral Christian religion, but not genuine faith.

So instead of panicky restrictions on, say, your teenager's exploration of such things, make sure you know enough to guide them through a natural period of curiosity. Not with the fearful prejudice common in mainstream Christianity, but trusting God to guide those who belong to

Him. If your child departs from your particular brand of religion, it's not because you somehow failed to enforce things, but because God had other plans for them.

Thus, while Christine found some sense in pagan religions, what really mattered for her was the open door to explore her vivid connection to Creation. Pagan religion is far more amenable to heart-mind living, something Western Christianity forgot entirely. She was able to develop a talent for discerning what God intended with all the vast quantity of natural provision on this earth. Provided you live in a place that sustains human life in the first place, she discovered that God had already granted within that ecosystem virtually everything needed to survive and prosper in good health. With a properly tuned awareness of Creation's million voices of joy, you can expect to find growing on your doorstep what God knows you need. This is the way God created things to work.

When your heart is allowed to work the way God intended, He cuts His own path through your soul. His truth registers on your awareness as a moral necessity. Once Christine encountered a genuine Christian faith stripped of confusing Western mythology, it called her name. It wasn't necessary to dump everything she had learned, but following Christ rearranged everything and brought His priorities to life in the complex of resources in her soul. All truth is God's truth, and His divine Presence settles all questions.

Chapter 8 – More on Legalism

It seems odd that mainstream Christianity is so quick to nitpick over some passages of Scripture – what Christ called “sifting out gnats” from flour – and swallowing the camel on other passages (Matthew 23:24).

In 1 Corinthians 10:14-22, Paul warns against idolatry. He's writing to Corinthians who were deeply immersed in a depraved idolatry that rivaled the ancient Canaanites. It's hard to recapture the distaste, and leering smirk, that people in Paul's day associated with the label “Corinthian.” It was an epithet slung at folks who might have never seen the city itself, but acted with complete insensitivity to any moral standard of any kind.

Most people see a connection between Paul's admonition and the comment in Deuteronomy 32:17, along with a slew of other cross-references. And how do they square this with Joseph and Daniel? Granted, Joseph was prior to the Moses, but if it means anything at all, then the moral principle remains the same. Abraham and his descendants were under a covenant that excluded worshiping any of the other gods he had known in Mesopotamia. As best we can understand, Abraham knew a lot of them because he belonged to the scholarly pagan priest guild of Ancient Sumer.

Try to understand this: Study and awareness of pagan mythology and other deities is not the same thing as idolatry. There won't be demons hiding in the print, waiting to jump out and stake a claim on your soul just because you read the sacred texts of some non-Christian religion. Recognizing how certain pagan myths do promote some elements of God's moral character is not blasphemy. All truth is God's truth – your heart transmits a note of recognition to the mind because the heart discerns moral truth. We should rather be surprised when elements of God's revelation *aren't* found in pagan mythology.

It is the more degraded forms of pagan religion where revelation is missing. How hard is to imagine that “pagan” is not uniformly evil? How hard is it realize that the Norse and Anglo-

Saxon pagan myths are more degrading and inimical to Christian revelation than an awful lot of other pagan backgrounds? I wonder why mainstream Christians see Jehovah in their minds portrayed as the grouchy Old Norse deity instead of the wisecracking and pleasant Eastern nomad shiekh that God chose as His image. And yet we defend to the death our perverted brand of Anglo-Saxon “morality” by calling it “Christian” while rejecting a whole range of pagan stuff that is actually much closer to the Bible.

Do we forget so easily that Balaam (Numbers 22-24) accurately understood the proper rituals for getting God’s attention under the same context as Abraham? Balaam was a pagan scholar of religions, much like Abraham, a common occupation in Ancient Mesopotamia. Such scholarship was the primary path to government service in the several empires that occupied that land. It was *mandatory* for Daniel and his Hebrew buddies. And has anybody noticed in the narrative that Balaam seems unsurprised that his mount would communicate with him a divine moral truth? God didn’t hesitate to answer Balaam’s requests for revelation under the terms that applied to him.

This is the same God who didn’t hesitate to address a pagan Abraham and several other characters in Scripture who weren’t under the Covenant of Moses. Just because the Old Testament carefully focuses on a single thread of narrative does not justify excluding any of the ways God spoke to the rest of the human race. Did we forget about Jethro or Melchizedek, both recognized by God’s men as also being spiritual and moral peers?

Too many mainstream Christians are quick on the trigger to condemn anything different than what they think God requires for them personally. It’s as if they imagine God gave them alone some grand dispensation of truth on the Mountain of God with Moses. Even Moses understood that the Covenant was with Israel only, not binding on the rest of the world. And how easy it is to forget that Moses was highly influenced by his own Egyptian pagan education, and his father-in-law’s background in Mesopotamian (Abrahamic) religion. Moses was heart-led and recognized God’s truth within each of those sources, and his broader experienced resulted in a religion that was significantly different from that of Abraham.

This narrow legalistic reading of the Bible from a highly compromised frame of reference, like the Pharisees, serves only to keep us away from the richness of God’s full blessings. I note with great sadness how many Western Christians make the Pharisaical mistake of conflating their mental conception of God with God Himself, and worship their own intellect instead. This takes us right back to the Fall, placing human reason on the throne. This is precisely the problem we are addressing in this book.

Chapter 9 – Jeanette's Story

Jeanette writes:

My parents were cold and unloving and had no idea how to prepare their daughters for living in this world. After I gave my life to Jesus at the age of seven, I felt isolated and always ashamed because I never really came up to the expectations of the people around me. At 15 when my hormones began to rage I was in a hurry to get away from my parents and married the first boy who said he loved me. I soon realized I had not accomplished my goal in getting away from what was haunting me.

I spent the rest of my life running away from the situations I found myself in. In the process I gave birth to 4 youngsters and continued searching. I read and studied everything I could find, never quite finding the answer I sought. I was socially isolated, which I always blamed on my husband and I sought solace in the arms of other men. I was always seeking a man to rescue me from my dilemma. Sometime during the 1980s I began a serious personal revival and repented. My husband played along, but the fruit of spiritual life was never there.

I was a very poor mother to the children I loved so dearly. I felt trapped and afraid to break free of my bonds because the Bible teaches that a Christian should not divorce another Christian. But a few years ago, after a particularly ugly scene, God showed me that my husband was a hypocrite and a liar, not at all a man of God. This released me from my bondage. Once more I turned and sought the truth from God. As my son grew in the Lord and wrote of his journeys, I too began to see the truth of what I needed to do. I divorced his father and began to return to the calling I had felt at the age of 13 years. I promised God that I would be the wife of a minister or missionary.

After prayerful consideration, I turned to Christian dating sites to find the mate He had for me. My two stated requirements were that he be Christian and have a loving heart. God found me the perfect mate. He was an ex-military man who had retired after 22 years of service and met the Lord. He was then called to be a missionary to Sri Lanka, a task that he pursued 15 years.

Oh, the peace that settled over me when I began to fulfill my calling. Granted, he is not on the mission field or the pastor of a church. God didn't say my husband had to be serving at the time, only what kind of man he had to be. Maybe we are too old to do those things. Time will tell.

– *Jeanette Porrell*

Editorially, I'll add that the first man she married was a borderline sociopath, the kind of man who saw no sin in tormenting or torturing his own family members. Hypocrisy was the least of his problems. The wonder is that it took Jeanette so long to realize she had enabled his abuse. The second man she married was a widower.

[Chapter 10 – My Story](#)

God laid upon the family household the duty to provide children with a frame of reference, a structure that would include and enable a grasp of God's moral Law. It's a bias. To be human in this fallen world is to live in the grip of certain biases. The only unbiased mind is the dead one. The only question for the living is which biases they will hold. I maintain that it must be a conscious choice.

We know that Jesus was born unfallen. In other words, He was born fully integrated, with His Spirit in control of His heart, and His heart in control of His consciousness. In that sense, He was a moral genius, born fully developed in the ability to sense directly His Father's moral character in all things. We see the biases of Jesus in the substance of His disputes with the Jewish leaders of His day. Objectivity is a myth; truth is whatever His Father said it was. For us today, truth is whatever Jesus taught.

We can do better than we have so far. We could construct a society with a solid moral frame of reference, even if we now have to make it a parallel society hidden in plain sight. The Hebrew nation had none our complications in that respect. They had a mandate and written revelation,

given directly by the hand of Almighty God Himself, to occupy a certain territory with the blessings of God's moral character. But they kept running away to other things. One wave of influence after another washed over them, and their own inherent rebellious nature made them suckers for all of it. They didn't cull much, swallowing everything. So when Alexander the Great marched through in 323 BC and offered them his own Aristotelian Hellenism, they looked it over. After a very short courtship, they married it. Like Esau, they traded their rich inheritance of ancient wisdom for a relatively new package of shallow nonsense. This nonsense killed the last vestige of divine moral influence in their nation. They placed their own reason on the throne, and bowed down to worship it. Then they put God's name on it and viciously defended it against any attempt to correct.

Those who followed Christ were striving to go back to the ancient frame of reference. The world at large joined the assault against this. In just a few centuries, the structural organization of the Christian religion was hijacked. As previously noted in this book, the leaders were sucked into a new civilization rising on the ashes of Greco-Roman ruins, but with the fresh vitality of wild heathen German tribal society.

Unlike Christ, I was not at all born morally mature. Still, I was born with a powerful sense of pull from my heart, striving to gain mastery over my mind. I suppose the children around me had surely experienced it at some point, but for the majority of them, it was crushed between fallen childish nature and a social mythology that denied the heart. That my pull remained so strong made me very alien and alone.

It's not as if I was such a wonderful little boy. I could be as self-centered as the rest of them. Still, the powerful pull from those unconscious forces would not allow me to fully participate in any social setting. I didn't even dare to admit those forces to myself, because I was punished for talking about them. My whole life was one long string of emotional disasters because I kept trying to act according to a moral pull that was too often wholly inappropriate for the world in which I lived. I could never reconcile the conflict. A dominant theme of my youth was constant embarrassment and shame from a cruel world that had no patience with me. My family was wholly unsympathetic, and it seemed they couldn't wait to crow and bully me over the next mistake. I suppose everyone needs a punching bag, and I felt like I was everyone's favorite for such abuse.

It's not as if there were no good times. I know they loved me, but my social background was lower class and generally brutal about such things. Precious few were the adults in my world who realized I had a powerful calling that demanded I not be like everyone else. My own kin seemed to feel threatened by the mere existence of anything different. So my life was filled with nightmares and demons because, while such were actually rather few, they were simply so overwhelming in their size and impact on my awareness.

At the earliest opportunity, I took solace in literature. I read voraciously because it was a safe escape and generally acceptable to others. Into adulthood I pursued Science Fiction, always hoping to find a key to a better world. At the same time, my personal faith continued to blossom. Perhaps you recognize the jarring discontinuity between the generally anti-moral Science Fiction world and my ever stronger allegiance to Christ. But while I was too Christian for the other nerds, I was also too nerdy for my fellow church members. Early in my life I professed to what my family referred to as the call to the Gospel Ministry and went to college for it. Despite my strongest efforts to conform to that profession, no one ever took me seriously. I never got closer

than volunteer staff positions. Still stumbling often and facing embarrassment daily, I managed to find a place somewhere on the fringe of the mainstream where I could exist. I even became somewhat famous locally at the peak of my efforts to conform while serving in the military.

But along the way, key figures planted the seeds of truth in my soul. The first glimmer was when I realized that the Bible was an Eastern document, and Christianity was an Eastern religion. I had heard it said pretty much in those words long before they came to life. So I went back to my academic religious training and dug into the more obscure elements of Antiquities and Comparative Civilization studies. The fresh jarring disconnect between the approved “churchianity” I had adopted versus what I was slowly discovering to be the actual background of Christ’s teaching nearly brought me to suicide several times. It was as if the whole world conspired to destroy my faith, even as I was beginning to discover what God made me to be.

Once I got past the danger and the attendant turmoil, I was able to explore vast stretches of forgotten faith. The more I pursued the Hebrew intellectual assumptions and moral outlook, the more at home I felt. This is where I have always belonged. This is also where mainstream Christianity has attacked me the hardest. Over the past decade, I have made it a point to forgive everyone, but completely left behind mainstream organized Christian religion. And while it was only recently I stumbled across the language to describe what’s going on with my heart-mind (thanks to Christine), I have been walking in the guidance of my heart more than ever. Lord knows, I understand how this is not for everyone, because it rests entirely on His calling. However, I refuse to be silent about what I’ve found.

I am no reformer. No part of me has an interest in replacing one orthodoxy with another. I’m willing to let the mainstream Christians continue on their path. But for those who sense a need for Christ outside that mainstream, I’m offering hope. Not in aping my path and resulting stand, but I want to encourage you in the task of finding your own path. Don’t allow religious leadership to steal your faith. Mainstream Christian religion has tried to bury the truth. It won’t matter what the motivations are, the leadership finds themselves condemned under Jesus’ own words: “You keep locking people out of the kingdom of heaven! For you neither enter nor permit those trying to enter to go in” (Matthew 23:13 NET).

Chapter 11 – Testing, Testing

I propose a test. Teaching the mind to follow the leadership of the heart takes time, for those who have never tried it. The full flower is when a firmly held intellectual belief is trumped by the heart recognizing something more accurately reflecting God’s reality. Previously I noted that relying purely on reason and dogmatic assertions have led to some bad theology.

We can agree that Jesus was the Son of God, the clearest revelation ever offered by the Father. Obviously the whole point is the Person of Christ, not merely some narratives of second-hand experience. We are accountable to those narratives because they are God’s provision for introducing His Son. Yet, the intent of the Gospels is that He should be born in your soul via the Holy Spirit. He is not confined by the Gospels, but outlined. You have to know Him as a Person, not as a collection of mere propositions. We know that His blood shed on the Cross satisfied all penalties for sin, and that His resurrection and return to Heaven did open the door for the Holy Spirit to come into our souls and live with us. When His Spirit enters us, our own spirits are brought to life.

It's not as if people before Christ couldn't connect with the Spirit of God, but they had to first go through the applicable Law Covenant – Moses for Israel and Noah for everyone else. And it should be painfully obvious that mere ritual observance was not sufficient (1 Samuel 15:22). Pharisaical legalism was the result of Hellenism perverting the ancient Hebrew approach, an approach common among all Ancient Near Eastern cultures. Everyone knew that you were personally obliged to commit your entire soul to desiring what your sovereign desires; that was presumed in every covenant. But in Christ, we can receive that spiritual birth before we dig into a long and heart-led study of the Law. We receive His Spirit first, and *then* study the Law.

Up to this point, it's likely that most readers with a Christian background are nodding their heads in agreement. But to show what an awful influence Western mythology has on Christian doctrine, let me pick out one story: the myth of Pandora's Box. It's part of a larger tale from Ancient Greece wherein Zeus gave Pandora a box (a jar, actually) containing all the evil stuff. She was tricked into opening it, releasing all that nasty stuff back into the world. As with most mythology, it's designed to shape our view of reality itself. So we get this crazy idea that stuff we find unpleasant is somehow not from God. It's a knee-jerk reaction you'll see across the whole of Western Christianity, and it shows up in doctrine and theology.

The Pandora myth is entirely alien to the Bible, yet we read it back into Scripture unconsciously.

To correct this, we need to back up just a bit. Creation and nature are not fallen. You and I are fallen. Nature is under the Curse of the Fall because we are, and because we were created to be stewards of this universe. From the very beginning, poisonous snakes, biting insects, bacteria and viruses were always there, among other things. In the Fall, we surrendered our instinctive communion with nature along with the power to guide natural processes according to God's moral character.

So when God told Adam the ground was cursed, He said it was because of Adam's choice. We struggle now to understand nature well enough to stay alive, never mind exercise moral dominion over it. In our moral blindness, we continually place ourselves in a position to be vulnerable to everything that could potentially hurt us. On top of this, we struggle under an entirely false notion of imaginary "perfect health," that getting sick from time to time is somehow not natural. Plenty of things we call "disease" are merely the body reacting as it should; it is part of the natural cycle of human existence starting in Eden. It's as if all pain and discomfort is from Hell – what a pampered and entitled mindset! So we suffer from ignorance of what ought to be, and ignorance on how to avoid what ought not to be. At a minimum, we have to reclaim a connection to our hearts even to begin reclaiming what we lost in the Garden of Eden.

Please get this: Stasis is not a blessing. Reaching some ideal moment in your life and locking it in for countless years was never any part of biblical thinking. The human body might have once been able to live a very long time, but it was never meant to be eternal. It was built from the dust of the ground and must eventually return there. There is a higher realm of existence to which we belong and this flesh cannot go there. Don't confuse Heaven and Earth. If you are going to insist that Eden was free of any human discomfort and aging, then it was never on this plane of existence and their bodies were nothing like ours. Adam could not have been made from dirt, either. Eternity is not "endless time" but timeless; the human mind cannot conceive of it. Constant change was a fundamental design feature of this universe from the start.

Nature does not need human reason to guide it. Nature is just fine as it is if reason is all you have. What nature does respond to is any individual who rises above mere reason and reconnects to their heart, because that is a step on the path of reconnecting to what Adam and Eve tossed aside in eating the Forbidden Fruit. Sickness, suffering and sorrow are not inherently contrary to the will of God. They are part of the Curse, but the Curse includes our ignorance of what is good and right. Christ on the Cross did not simply wipe away the Curse all at once; spiritual birth doesn't grant you the privilege of healing and wealth just because you like those things and they make good logic. The Cross ameliorates the Curse and starts us on the path to redemption, which path doesn't end anywhere on this plane of existence, but ends when Christ returns. Meanwhile, so long as you live in this fallen flesh, the Curse will remain at least partially in effect.

If nothing else, we remain under the constraints of time and space limitations. As long as you cannot fold up your house and put it in your pocket, space limitations effect you. So long as your body ages and you eventually die, time affects you. Despite using symbolic language, it's pretty clear from Scripture that God and the Spirit Realm do not suffer space-time limitations.

Nor did Pandora release demons that hadn't been there before. The Bible presumes you understand that demons are simply angels under Satan's authority – John's Apocalypse indicates it's about one-third of the angels. Satan isn't nasty and evil as Westerners imagine such things. Satan is a very high-ranking servant of God, His official Punisher. Every Ancient Near Eastern lord gave the office of Jailer to someone who was quite powerful. It could be very profitable to run the emperor's prison. We can grasp that Satan took this position as punishment, a reduction from an even higher privilege (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19). We should avoid any notion that Satan is at war with Christ, the Divine Heir before whom he has ever been utterly helpless. That silly imagery of Satan attacking Christ is foreign to Scripture.

If anything, the Wilderness Temptation shows that Satan did His best to keep Jesus from the Cross. He tried to tempt Jesus into avoiding any human suffering. Political power and magic tricks were a diversion from the reason Christ came to earth. Far better for Satan it would have been to let Jesus have mere earthly powers for earthly gain than to keep His eyes on the Spirit Realm. Our Savior came to suffer for us, not to take over the world in a political sense. We pervert His message when we use it as an excuse to get involved in human politics.

Satan is at war with us humans. Lucifer's office in God's court allows him to consume the labors of those who violate God's divine moral character. Prison in the Ancient Near East was as much about slavery as confinement. Obviously, Satan wants to keep us in his slavery, and deception is a primary tool. It's how he subverted Adam and Eve in the first place. It's how Satan gained authority over humanity and took away our moral perception. He keeps us from participating in God's glory and walking in God's Law, which Law was originally offered as our best hope and our greatest benefit.

The same Law of God woven into Creation is binding on Satan, too. Jesus obeyed the Law, as well, in part because He was that Law personified. There is a sense in which our embrace of God's moral character is all it takes to crawl out of that prison. Those who allow their hearts to awaken, who start down the path of letting the heart lead the mind, will progressively gain more freedom from the Curse. We reduce our Enemy's legal authority and he consumes less and less of our lives. His ploy is to keep things confused so that people don't find out how to escape. Does it not seem obvious that Western Civilization is one of the greatest tools to ever serve Satan's purposes?

Just this little bit is probably a shock to many Christians. You don't have to buy into everything I wrote here. However, if you found something inside of you unable to deny parts of this, despite being contrary to previous beliefs, then your heart may be awakened.

Religion in general, and theology in particular, are simply human constructs. They are the result of the human mind striving to respond to a divine imperative. There is plenty of genuine biblical doctrine that is pretty clear, but with much dispute over it because people keep reading their theological biases back into Scripture. In the long run, your heart should help you understand that theology is merely a matter of your own personal logical organization of how you intend to respond to that divine call. One man's theology is as good as another, though some are far more eloquent, and even compelling, in their statements. Still, it remains nothing more than a human tool for organizing revelation, not revelation itself.

We have a long way to go unlearning our Western biases and relearning the intellectual background in which the Bible itself was written.

Conclusion

Don't live in your head.

Be on guard against simplistic reading of the Hebrew Scriptures. Yes, Jeremiah 17:9 says that "the heart is desperately wicked" in most English translations. Hebrew thinking is the antithesis of legalistic semantic wrangling. A fair translation in the context would be "consciousness" instead of "heart." That's because the context condemns reliance on human capability and turning your consciousness from obeying the Lord. Jeremiah works from the assumption that the mind and flesh are inseparable, but that the sense of self cannot be restricted to the mind alone, and that your heart can decide it will follow moral truth, dragging the flesh along behind.

Use your mind, but don't trust it. Sure, when it comes to developing and following routines, the mind is great. It saves energy and resources when you don't have to keep reinventing the wheel. But by the same token, your heart must keep an eye on things, looking down on the mental operations from the lofty perch next to God's heart. It is for the heart to realize when something in the context has changed that demands the mind shift gears appropriately.

Much of our modern social confusion about moral questions starts with a sneaky trick, in which the activist or advocate refuses to address more fundamental questions of what constitutes good morals. So you'll often confront condemnations that presume you already agree with the underlying moral ground. And we have been conditioned to respond without going back and checking those moral assumptions. "Everybody knows," they say. Thus, a vast territory of hard wiring in our human nature is ignored or outright condemned without a fair consideration of whether we can even do anything about it. We are held accountable to an artificial and impossible standard. Of course, the purpose is to make you feel self-revulsion and remain helpless before the onslaught of manipulative propaganda.

False guilt is a very powerful disabler.

Most of the time it's pointless to acknowledge, much less engage, such evil. When possible, we who walk in Christ by our hearts will simply bypass the whole noisy riot. But there is nothing wrong with analyzing these things from a pure heart. This requires that you reject first and foremost the entire range of Western Civilization and all the moral baggage that comes with it. I

don't mean that we should stop living with modern conveniences simply because they come from a decadent materialistic society. We accept what is; all things are tools for His glory, but making Him glorious includes how we handle propaganda.

In your own heart, at least, be aware of the truth. Your flesh is what it is – fallen and unguided by moral truth. Your intellect is part of that. What makes for good logic may have nothing to do with moral truth, but don't buy into the nonsense that your mind is inherently good or bad. It's just flesh and acts according to its nature. Thoughts are the product of this raw and untamed nature.

What our society condemns as racist or sexist thoughts are simply thoughts. If your mind is not in charge, then it really isn't a big deal. There's no need for frantic efforts to keep a magnifying glass on every suspicious nerve impulse traversing your brain. Truth? Racism is a highly conditioned response to the fundamental human need to spend most of our time with our own extended family. Sexism is a highly conditioned response to the very hard-wired recognition that male and female are not interchangeable in most contexts. Frankly, most of the problems arise from a perverted social mythology that preaches heathen moral values.

It does no good to inflict shame on yourself simply because something in your flesh desires evil. That's not the same as saying there is no evil in you, but that the proper way to handle things is not how the vast majority of Westerners do it. Western mythology makes no room for the existence of your heart-mind, and denigrates God's love and mercy as the grudging provision for weaklings. Thus, the desperate attempts at controlling the mind and all the various thoughts, with the demand you permit some outside force to do it for you. It's the wrong force. God doesn't work that way.

Solomon was reputed the wisest man in human history. His mind seemed boundless. Yet for all his great understanding, it didn't keep him from acting foolishly (1 Kings 11:1-13) in the long run, and he passed that folly on to his designated heir. There was room for repentance; that was the whole point in the sacrificial ritual system. Holiness is measured as the desire of your heart, not whether you can compel your flesh to perform accordingly. But Solomon's loyalty was divided, and he couldn't bring himself back far enough to repent. That didn't invalidate the wise advice in his writings, but served instead to prove that real wisdom is not in the mind, but the heart – reverence for the Lord.

The oft-repeated biblical phrase, "purify your heart," is a figure of speech. Perhaps it would better translate for us as "clarify your commitments." You have to live there in your heart in order to discern it. It's not a question of nifty little exercises (implying control by the intellect) that help you move your consciousness into your heart. It's more a question of teaching your mind to recognize something that already exists. The pace and manner of change is between you and God. Your sense of awareness may never change all that much for you, but the content will surely follow a new path. With that changed content comes an awareness of a powerful necessity, a drive that is greater than anything you could experience any other way.

This is what we mean by a heart of faith.

Epilogue

Nothing precludes bringing your heart of faith into your church. You are the one to decide if God calls you out of, or into, or alongside, any existing institution. We should hope this teaching is

not divisive in the sense of fracturing any organization, or creating sectarian tensions within it. Perhaps you realize that any such thing tends to negate the teaching in the first place. Yet, by the same token, you realize that nothing prevents you building your own new faith group around this teaching.

At a bare minimum, this teaching will demand a new consciousness of religion. Again, religion is the human response to the moral imperatives in your heart. God gave us a mind to organize and implement the demands of faith.

Heart-led faith is your direct connection to a parallel universe, as it were. Within that universe, you should be aware that everything is entirely voluntary, dynamic and alive. People become leaders simply because others follow, but a heart-led faith would never result in following anyone too closely. It's rather like sheep in a flock keeping line-of-sight contact with whomever serves as the shepherd. In heart-led faith, you are likely to follow different shepherds at different times for different reasons.

In that alternate universe, the character of Christ is the only rule. No human is permitted to define that for you, nor you for them. When your heart senses His Presence in another, you hang out together and travel along that invisible path in fellowship. You owe all to Christ, and thus His love is the only thing you owe to anyone else. There are lots of people who live this way and simply call it something else, so keep your heart-eyes open.

A genuine heart-led communion doesn't form on this plane of existence; it simply manifests here in the burning bush of that moment. The only thing consumed by the holy fire is your sin. The only objective is your continued journey while you remain in this fallen realm.

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