

Let God Search Your Heart By E. D. Hettinger

~Other Speakers S-Z: Classic Christian Writings:

There is one great truth that we must acknowledge and not neglect in order to experience in all reality a life of obedience to the Word of God, a life controlled by the Holy Spirit, a life of prayer and faith, a life of soul-winning, and the revival that is so desperately needed. This truth we must acknowledge is: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).

The Lord is greatly concerned about the inner part of men. He knows also the outer part. He knows all! This is why He tells us:

"...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34).

"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19).

"This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me" (Matthew 15:8).

What Is Meant By "Regard Iniquity In My Heart?"

It is to look on the iniquity with approval instead of disapproval. It is to know there is something wrong in one's life and to neglect or reject doing anything about it. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

In Hebrews 12:1 we read, "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [attack] us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

The besetting sin is the sin that conquers you and me. It is the area of our weakness. It is the sin that beats, defeats, defiles and eventually brings about disgrace. It is a sin that one ignores, but is known to God. We must be aware of the fact that Satan is always studying the child of God and will quickly enter by way of that weakness.

Therefore, I must strive to know if such a weakness exists in my life, as a child of God. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

"Who can know it?" The Lord knows our weakness, the sin that is believed to be covered. We read, "O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; Thou understandest my thought afar off" (Psalm 139:1-2). He knows our thought life. "Thus saith the Lord...I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them" (Ezekiel 11:5).

God knows all our secret sins. "For now Thou numberest my steps. Dost Thou not watch over my sin?" (Job 14:16). We may be able to cover our secret sin from the church, the family, the prayer meeting--but never from God who hates sin.

There are some churches and Christians who say, "Let us forget our faults, failures, and worldliness. Let us close ranks to move ahead." How sad! Satan is causing a great compromise in the ecclesiastical and personal separation of the church. He is causing divisions and offenses. He is causing a state of complacency in the prayer and Word ministry. He is causing a neglect of the Holy Spirit--lovelessness, even coldness in the church. He is causing the church to lose compassion for hell-bound sinners and to function in the flesh, all of which is out of the will of God and will not bring glory to God in our lives.

"Search Me, O God!"

The psalmist prayed: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23,24).

Dear ones, how we need to get alone with God and allow Him to search our hearts in regard to the iniquity that may be in them! God knows you and me. He can search us when we allow Him to reveal the area that needs cleansing. We must remember, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whosoever confesses and

forsakes them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

Many years ago a group of men of my congregation gave of themselves to pray for revival and the salvation of souls. One day while they were praying, one of the men rose from his knees and halted the prayers of the others. Essentially this is what he said:

"Men, I cannot continue praying with you because I have a besetting sin in my life which is known by no one but God." He named his besetting sin and then confessed it to the Lord, after which he rejoined the men in prayer. There was joy in the circle that night!

The following day, which was the Lord's day, who should be present in the morning service but his son, for whose salvation he had been praying. When the invitation was given, who should come walking down the aisle but his son! When the besetting sin was confessed, forgiven and cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, the father's prayer for the salvation of his son was answered. Truly, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).

Iniquity In The Heart Divides

As we read in God's Word, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1,2).

The "besetting sin" in a Christian's life prevents him from abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Satan attacks in this area to break that closeness with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Iniquity divides from power, from fruit, from prayer, from faith, from love, from abiding in the Spirit, and from the will of God. It all culminates in "Not Christ, but I" instead of "Not I, but Christ."

Iniquity In The Heart Drives

The sin of iniquity in the heart not only divides, but it also drives us away from the very presence of God. It drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. It drove David to commit adultery with Bathsheba. It drove Cain to kill Abel. It drove Peter out of the presence of the Lord and caused him to deny Christ.

Iniquity drove Judas out of the Lord's presence and caused him to hang himself. It drove Demas back into the world from the Lord's presence. Sin has driven many from the presence of the Lord in the past, as it is doing in the present. What is it doing to you?

Iniquity In The Heart Dulls

Iniquity dulls the ears. The Apostle Paul desired to impart the deep truths that are so needful for a Christian to mature in the Lord. We read as follows: "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing" (Hebrews 5:11).

The Word of God teaches the result of the dullness of the ear: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

The Word reveals the result of sin's dulling the ears. We become insensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit, the result being that Christians remain babes in Christ. Iniquity of the heart not only dulls the ears of man, it darkens the eyes of man's understanding. It deprives the heart of man's love. It diverts the feet of the believer's walk. It poisons the tongue of man's talk. It deprives one of the fellowship of God.

Iniquity In My Heart Dulls God's Ears.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).

"Therefore, will I also deal in fury; Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in

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Mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them" (Ezekiel 8:18).

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).

The harboring of sin in the heart, which we know does exist, will effectively prevent us from sharing with our Lord Jesus Christ. He will not endorse sin by answering prayer when sin is in the heart.

The Cure For Iniquity In The Heart

First consider it: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23,24). "Make me to know my transgression and my sin" (Job 13:23).

Second, confess it: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The confession of sin brings us back into fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

How about the iniquity in your heart? I pray you will be honest before God, so that you can be honest before others. Let us seriously, in His presence, search our hearts before a Holy God. Then "Whatsoever He says to you, do it!" (John 2:5).