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Number One Killer

By Teresa Hampton

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and is a major cause of disability. With those concerns, many turn to “heart healthy diets.” While heart disease is the number one *physical* killer, it is also the number one *spiritual* killer.

The heart, the thinking part of man, is what understands, reasons, and directs the course of one’s spiritual destiny. Where the heart leads, the body follows. For that reason, scripture often addresses matters of the heart.

Spiritual diseases are born in the heart. Jesus said, *out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander* (Matt. 7:29). He cautioned that even the cares of this life can weigh down the heart and render one spiritually lost (Luke 21:34).

James said bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in the heart produce disorder and every vile practice (3:14-16). Peter spoke of ungodly people whose hearts were trained in greed (2 Peter 2:14). Paul described those who had spiraled deeply into sin as brutal, abusive, and heartless (2 Timothy 3:2-3). Heart disease is certainly the number one spiritual killer.

The heart healthy spiritual diet is righteousness found in God’s word. Solomon said, *Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless, but sin overthrows the wicked* (Prov. 13:6), and *The highway of the upright turns aside from evil; whoever guards his way preserves his life* (Prov. 16:17). About the weighty cares of life, Jesus said, *Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions* (Luke 12:15). It is of utmost importance to guard the heart!

What describes a healthy spiritual heart? It begins with one who is obedient from the heart (Rom. 6:4, 17). It is, then, a cleansed heart that becomes a thankful heart, a compassionate heart, a glad and generous heart, a purpose driven heart, and continues as a pure and sincere heart, doing the will of God from the heart.

Today’s Verse: *Thorns and snares are in the way of the crooked; whoever guards his soul will keep far from them* (Prov. 22:5).

Bonus: see next pages

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More “heart” passages to consider [ESV]:

Genesis 6:6

And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.

Deuteronomy 4:29

But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 4:39

know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.

Deuteronomy 6:5

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Deuteronomy 11:16

Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them;

Deuteronomy 11:18

“You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

Joshua 22:5

Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

1 Kings 8:61

Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.”

1 Kings 11:4

For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

Psalms 19:14

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Psalms 51:10

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

Proverbs 4:23

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

(continued next page)

Proverbs 28:14

Blessed is the one who fears the Lord always, but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

Luke 8:15

As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

Romans 8:2

And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

1 Corinthians 4:5

Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

2 Corinthians 1:22

and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Ephesians 5:19

addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

1 Timothy 1:5

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 8:10

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Hebrews 10:22

let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

1 Peter 1:22

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

1 Peter 3:4

but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

Revelation 17:17

for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.