



# CHANGING THE WORLD ONE WORD AT A TIME!

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A major health concern called “hardening of the arteries” is effecting society today. The arteries begin to close up and the blood flow decreases to major organs of the body, especially the heart. The loss of blood flow is loss of life and our body begins to be deprived of the things it needs to have fullness of life. Areas of our body are short-changed the life flow of blood, oxygen, and antibodies, that fight off disease. These changes happen over time, and can cause multiple problems and ultimately, even death.

Spiritually there is a parallel condition that equally effects our life and the flow of God. This condition causes a loss of the flow of God’s Word into our lives and if left unattended will cause the effect of God’s Word to decrease, be hindered and eventually cease. This condition is known as,

## Hardening of the Heart!

The symptoms of a hardened heart are selfishness, insensitivity, stubbornness, unbelief and rebellion. We all struggle with unbelief occasionally but, when it becomes the dominating way we live it will bring destruction and failure. Our focus in this letter is “unbelief” caused by hardness of the heart. Sadly, we do not always recognize unbelief in our lives. It must be met head on, identified and dealt with.

Many times we give mental assent to the Word, thinking we are believing, but we are really only hoping and wishing. One sure indication of hardening of the heart is when we do not walk and live our lives according to God’s Word. We have begun to slip from having God first place and we find our trust in God, elusive. This continued direction can cause us to take on a form of Godliness, (II Timothy 3:5) but denying His power to change our lives. The acknowledgement of God, without FAITH removes Him as the one who can change us and our circumstances. We have allowed our hearts to become HARDENED, by our UNBELIEF.

In the Old Testament, the scriptures tell the story of the children of Israel and how they were delivered out of the bondage of Egypt. They witnessed the hand of God dealing with Pharaoh, until they were set free. They saw God divide the Red Sea and they went across safely, the enemy being drowned in the waters behind them. Yet because they did not or would not believe what God said, they spent the rest of their lives wandering around in the desert until they died. They could not enter the Promised Land, because of their unbelief. They had hardened their hearts and would not trust, or believe God.

Scripture relates a warning of this unacceptable behavior in Hebrews 3:12. *“Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”* This evil heart of unbelief begins a process in our lives of departing from God and if not dealt with we end up abandoning God. Our hearts should be full of love, joy, peace, and be firmly grounded by faith in God and in His Word. Proverbs 4:23 says, *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.* Matthew 15:18, 19 says, *“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:”* We must keep our hearts from becoming hard and callused so the Word of God can have continual access. We have the responsibility to make sure the ground of our heart is not hard but is plowed up and open to receive the Word of God. If the soil of our heart is hard it will not receive the

seed. Therefore if the seed cannot be planted, there will not be a harvest. Hosea 10:12 says, “*Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you.*” We must give the seed of the Word of God a place to grow and produce a harvest. Unbelief in our life breeds confusion, double mindedness and many destructive works.

The children of Israel, while in the wilderness developed some strong characteristics related to their hard hearts. They murmured, they complained, and were only concerned with their comfort, while talking against Moses, their leader. Even when God gave them the opportunity to talk with Him themselves, they would not. Because of fear and their hardened hearts, they fled from the presence of God. These ungodly characteristics were not what should have been developing. As Israel continued to walk with a hard heart of unbelief, they lost the Promised Land; there was no milk and honey, just death.

Let me ask you, have you allowed your heart to become hard with selfishness, obstinacy or stubbornness? A hardened heart, caused by unbelief will keep you from possessing the promises of God and from His presence. It is time we face this problem, and repent of our hard hearts and unbelief.

Let me list some of the things we experience when we walk in unbelief.

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|---|---|------------------|---|
|   | Have an evil heart .....                          | Hebrews 3:12     |   |
|   | Cause hardness of the heart .....                 | Hebrew 3:8       |   |
| ◆ | Will lose the promises of God .....               | Hebrews 3:8-12   | ◆ |
|   | Will not enter into God's rest .....              | Hebrews 3:18, 19 |   |
|   | Jesus can do no mightily works in your life ..... | Matthew 13:58    |   |
|   | No mountains will move from your life .....       | Mark 11:23, 24   |   |
|   | Natural Israel was broken off, we can be too..... | Romans 11:19-21  |   |
|   | No power over demons.....                         | Matthew 17:19-20 |   |
|   | Loss of Wisdom .....                              | James 1:5-8      |   |

None of the items on this list should be in our lives. God has provided the victory through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Faith is the element to keep unbelief out of our lives. Unbelief is a killer of our faith in God and because it comes from a hardened heart, our whole life flow is effected. Do not be dismayed, or fearful; you do not have to keep a hard heart or remain in unbelief. Romans 10:17, relates, “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*”

In I John 1:9, God says, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” Mark 11:23 says, “*Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*” It is a clear path to God, repent, get in faith and re-establish the flow of God's Word in your life.

With God's mercy, help and power we can keep our heart from becoming hardened. Psalms 95:8 says “*Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.*” This verse establishes we, have the choice not to allow our hearts to become hardened.

Hebrews 3:12 said that we are to take heed, we are to watch, we are to guard that there will not be an evil heart of unbelief found in us. The power of Jesus Christ gives us the ability to overcome any hardness of heart and unbelief, driving it out of our lives completely. Then we can experience the fullness of God, living in the greatest success ever imagined, God’s kind of success, living in the promises, because we are living in and by faith.

**REFUSE TO HAVE A HARDENED HEART!**

