

HARD HARDENING OF HEARTS

By: Dr. Hal Webb, Evangelist

"Harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways." Heb. 3: 8-10.

The account of God's wonderful care for His children is thrilling and yet sobering to read. For forty years He met their needs with food and water, and guided their steps. However, they still suffered tragic times when they hardened their hearts against His will and wandered from His pathway. The Bible warns in many verses about the tragedy of hardening one's heart against God's will. Doing so will always lead to hardship and heartache. In this message, I want to pinpoint some Bible directions to help us avoid hardening our hearts. What are some of the things that will harden the heart in these days of our journey through life? **(1). Careless Sinning:** *"But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Heb. 3:13.* A born again believer knows our sins are forgiven with our past wiped clean by the blood of Jesus Christ. We all know we are not perfect in the flesh and must avoid Satan's attempt to snare us. Nothing can harden your heart more quickly than excusing things in your life that are wrong. Sin will always be our enemy as we live our daily lives, face our temptations, and walk in the kingdom of Satan. God's word warns of many things that are wrong which will harden our heart against the right. Things that are all bundled into worldliness, things the Bible clearly tells us to avoid. *"But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord:*

and be sure your sin will find you out." Num, 32:23. You cannot excuse sin in your life without hardening the heart in your bosom, **(2). Lukewarm Mechanical Living:** *"For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." Psa. 78:37.* One of the worst things you can do is to take your relationship to God for granted. Many foolishly say, "Now I am saved, that was easy." There are many miles to travel in life after accepting Christ at the cross. Being a son of God leads to a life of vital responsibility to serve God excitedly, and not ever become lukewarm in our daily living. Neglecting church can drop you to an "Oh Hum" level of indifference and sinning. In the verse above their sin was not being steadfast in their life of testimony and service to the King. We need to sparkle with joy and press to please our heavenly Father. Nothing in our worship and duty must ever be allowed to become unimportant. A mechanical Christian's heart will become hard if he fails to serve God with zeal and daily freshness. Beware serving because you feel you must, instead of being happy to serve the Lord. If you have reached the "who cares" attitude toward spiritual things your heart is turning to stone. **(3). Disgruntled Living:** *"And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul." Deut.. 11:13.* Sad but true we sometimes grumble about our daily schedule, and whimper how hard it is to live totally for the Lord. Sometimes responsibilities weigh us down, and we become almost tired with the many things God expects of us. It really hurts the church to have someone grumbling about the sermon, or the pastor, or some member; perhaps a business meeting or something you heard, all of which can introduce a disgruntled spirit toward others, and the life you know you should live. We do not live in a perfect world among people of perfection, and often what we

see as wrong is something we ourselves are guilty of. Keeping a happy spirit and a loving attitude toward others will help your heart to stay tender to the needs and opportunities that surround you. If any believer continues to grumble, you will harden your heart and become a hindrance to the work of God. Keep a smile on your face and a tender willing spirit and your heart will do just fine. **(4). Lack Of Spiritual Exercise:** *"Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."* I Cor. 15:58. At 84 I am being pushed to make myself to do more exercise. The human body has to stay in motion or it stiffens and loses its proper use. It is easier to say I will sit in my recliner than walk on my Gazelle. Exercise builds a stronger heart. The same is true in our spiritual lives. You must go to church, and do so faithfully. Perhaps you have left a church because its music or theology was slipping. Good for you! Many true believers have had to take such action. That is scriptural, but now find a good one and join. The longer you wait, your heart will become hardened to obedient Godly living. Your pastor has many times urged you to personal and family devotions. Failure to do so will deaden the health of your heart. God gave you some ability or talent you can use for His glory and your exercise. If you don't use it you will lose it. Pulling into a shell of doing little can harden your heart, and cause a breakdown in your daily spiritual health before God. **(5). Tolerating Evil Environments:** *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."* I John 2:15&16. There is something worse than not speaking against evil and that is condoling and taking part in its atmospheres. I believe the television to be one

of the Christian's greatest destroyers of spirituality. You wouldn't go to a dance, but you watch evil teams of dancers as they sexually swirl and twirl before approving eyes of cheering onlookers. You become a part of it by watching it and grieve the Spirit within you by watching such garbage. Belonging to worldly organizations can harden your heart in unquestionable compromise. Humming and singing bad music can fill your mind with its lessons of evil, and take the edge from your Godly stand against evil. Close fellowship with ungodly people, religious and otherwise, can also be a bad environment. Sitting with many excuses in a cold, dead, worldly church will likewise hold you in an atmosphere of slavery. Someone has said, you are what you eat. I say you will become what you listen to and fellowship with. Our hearts need the warmth of Godliness instead of the drafts of cold, evil sounds, and pursuits, with which the world surrounds us. Avoid them and keep your heart beating strong for the things of God. *"Keep thyself pure."* I Tim. 5:22b. Perhaps I have time for one more. **(6). Failure To Praise God For His Blessings:** *"I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvelous works."* Psm. 9:1. We live in a world that is spiraling downward in many ways. Financial worry can hurt, while constant news reports warn of the dire consequences coming someday soon. Perhaps a job is lost, and bills are piling up as we live in a tense environment. It seems like people no longer care for one another, and the world's crowd is obsessed with doing away with anything that speaks of God. Natural tragedies are occurring in greater number, the war drags on and evil terrorists can be anywhere. The whole daily atmosphere seems to be woe is me. Perch your heart in the despair tree for long and you will be bathed in unhappiness and prone to worry. Let's stop careless sinning, stop being mechanical and disgruntled, flee evil, and praise God for His goodness.