

Having a Heart Relationship with God

Our relationship with God must be a heart relationship, not just a head relationship, if we expect to be saved. What is meant by a heart relationship?

First, let's talk about what a 'head' or intellectual relationship is. An intellectual relationship is when we simply understand who God is and we acknowledge that He is who he claims to be. We also acknowledge Christ - who He is and what He has done for us. The devils have this kind of relationship (Luke 4:41). We acknowledge that we are to do His will and we profess to follow Him and do His will, like those who did "many wonderful works" in Christ's name, yet Christ "never knew" them (Matthew 7:22-23). We simply intellectually acknowledge Him. This type of relationship falls far short of the mark.

We function on two basic levels, we call them the conscious and subconscious. On the conscious level, when we see or hear something, we consciously think about it and then make a conscious decision as to what our response to it will be. On the subconscious level, we do things instinctively, automatically. On this level we react to things 'without thinking'. We see something flying toward us from the corner of our eye and we instinctively duck. Or we hear something behind us which sounds threatening, and instantly react. We don't take time to look at the situation and think about what our response should be - we simply react automatically. We instinctively protect ourselves from perceived danger, acting 'without thinking'. We call it a **survival instinct**.

On this subconscious level we also have what we call the **gut feeling**. We say that we have a gut feeling about this or that. We may 'choke up' or have a 'knot' in our stomach when we are listening to a moving story, hear a beautiful piece of music, or see, hear, smell or feel something that reminds us of a very emotional experience. In the Hebrew language this type of automatic response is referred to as the 'heart'.

The Bible refers to these subconscious, instinctive gut-feeling emotions as the heart. It is the heart that responds without giving 'conscious' thought. It's the heart that wants to protect us from danger. It's the heart that instinctively responds to music, voices, sounds and other stimuli. It's the part of us that 'just knows' about something. With women, we sometimes call it a woman's **intuition**. They somehow 'just know' and they can't explain how they know, they just do!

This is the heart, and it's on this level that we are to get to know God. The Fruits of the Spirit spring from the heart. It is here -in the subconscious- where the character resides and is developed. Our conscience also resides here, not in the conscious level. It is our heart that makes us who we are.

'Heart' is mentioned 762 times in the KJV Bible. If you read all the texts that refer to the heart you will find that it is referring to the deepest part of our thinking process. This is why in the Bible we read that God wants to write His laws on our hearts.

*"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine **heart**, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine **heart**: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."* Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

He intended His people to absorb His laws into the very core of their thoughts. He wants them to become motivated from this level where they don't need to think about doing or not doing something, they simply react to the situation because they 'just know' what they should do and say. He wants us to have a relationship with Him that is so deeply a part of our psyche that we don't need to 'consciously' think about whether something is right or wrong. We 'just know' because God's laws are written there, on our hearts.

*"O that there were such an **heart** in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Deuteronomy 5:29.*

God tells us how we can get to know Him so He can write His laws on our hearts. *"But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy **heart** and with all thy soul."* Deuteronomy 4:29. *"A new **heart** also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony **heart** out of your flesh, and I will give you an **heart** of flesh."* Ezekiel 36:26. David understood this concept when he asked, *"Create in me a clean **heart**, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."* Psalms 51:10.

It is when we surrender to God on this level, asking him to remove the stony [hard; cruel; unrelenting; selfish] heart of sin from us and replace it with a heart of flesh, **one that is in tune with His heart**, that we begin to respond to Him on a subconscious or 'heart' level. We then 'just know' what is right and what is wrong. We can experience freedom when temptations come. Our hearts can 'just know' what to do and say because we have a deep heart relationship with God. Like Enoch, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, John, and Paul, God through his Holy Spirit will communicate with us on this heart level, warning us of the dangers and perils that come our way, instructing us as to what we should do. In writing Romans 7, Paul was describing an individual who was functioning on the **conscious, intellectual level alone**. . . and getting nowhere. But the whole struggle is not just intellectual. We make choices on the intellectual, conscious level, and those choices help form our character. But the basis for those choices is actually on the heart or subconscious level.

Paul writes in chapters 6 and 8 that freedom comes as we abide in Christ or have a heart relationship with God - a relationship so deep, so instinctive, that temptations won't trouble us. We will be able to say with Jesus, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (meaning: *"finds nothing that responds to his temptations"*.) I invite you to get to know God on a **heart** level, finding that freedom and joy that comes with this kind of relationship with Him.

Jeremiah 29:13-14 *And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity.*