

THE DANGER AND DECEITFULNESS OF A HARDENED HEART



The Deadly Matador Plant (see [discussion](#))

How does one harden his or her heart? It's a process that occurs gradually as we complain about God's work and ignore His Word and sin, step by step, each step taking us progressively further and further from God's goal for His children, our holiness! (1Pe 1:14, 15, 16+) The Israelites complained about the way He led them and the way He fed them (grumbling and sinning over and over). They **heard** God's Word and **deliberately disobeyed**. This is called **testing God**. This is what David prayed against - Keep back Thy servant from presumptive sins! Why? Because eventually they will rule over you! (Ps 19:13+, cf Paul's strong warning commands in Ro 6:12,13+ which are possible to obey because of Ro 6:11+ and Ro 8:13+) When you see God at work and you complain instead of rejoice, when you hear His Word and deliberately disobey it--you are **testing** Him. It's like a little child just daring mom or dad to discipline him (Heb 12:5-11+). The great tragedy is that when you (I) harden your (my) heart, you (I) will miss God's best for your (my) life. You (I) will miss what Jesus came to give us -- life, even abundant (overflowing) life! (Jn 10:10b+) Are you experiencing abundant life in Christ, the Holy One of God? If not it could be because your heart is subtly, slowly being hardened to the beauty of Christ and His cleansing, life giving Word of Truth (Eph 5:26+). You are believing lies and forgetting that sin only gives passing pleasure (Heb 11:25b+) but can bring lasting pain! The people of Israel saw the miracles, while you and I have experienced the greatest miracle, the new birth (Jn 3:3+). They heard the messages, even as we have heard the living and active, convicting Word (Heb 4:12,13+), His Word which is our very life (Deut 32:47+)! They were fed day after day, even as we have fed on His Word (Mt 4:4+, 1Pe 2:2+). But in a period of 40 years, the entire first generation died, except for Joshua and Caleb. Do not be deceived (stop being deceived) beloved brethren (Jas 1:16+), Sin is deceptive (Heb 3:13b+) and will harden your heart. God is not mocked, for whatever you sow, you will reap and it will be corruption (rotting of your soul) if you (I) feed the rotten fallen flesh (Gal 6:7,8+).

What Can We Do If We Have a Hardened Heart?

Jesus has the answer (He always does!)

But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 'Therefore **remember** from where you have fallen, and **repent** and **do** the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place--unless you **repent**. (Rev 2:4,5+).

Remember! Remember the way you felt when you first fell in love with Jesus as by His Spirit He wooed you into unbreakable covenant union with Him.

Repent! Ask God to give you the gift of repentance (Ro 2:4+). Note that Jesus emphasizes the importance of repentance by repetition.

Redo - Do the deeds you did at first when Jesus was your first love (Rev 2:4,5+).

Listen to God's Word and respond to it tenderly as the Spirit enables you. Watch God's work and respond to it thankfully **Stop complaining** and **disobeying** and wantonly, presumptively sinning! Worship the Lord in spirit and truth and keep a **tender heart** before Him. As an aside when we take God and His provisions for granted, we become less thankful and less responsive to Him. Heed the warning: Keep your heart open to God's Word and obey Him.

Or as Solomon wrote and sadly failed to practice

"Watch over (GUARD - a command, not a suggestion) your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life." (Proverbs 4:23+).

A guarded heart is a great preventative to a hardened heart!

ILLUSTRATION OF DECEPTIVE NATURE OF DEVELOPING A HARDENED HEART - S. Coley wrote "In Brazil there grows a common plant which forest-dwellers call the [matador](#) or "murderer." Its slender stem creeps along the ground, but no sooner does it meet a vigorous tree, than it sends out an entangling tentacle, which cleaves and climbs up the tree, at intervals sending out arm-like tendrils that further entangle the tree. As the "murderer" ascends, these ligatures grow larger and their clasp becomes tighter. Up and up the rogue vine climbs until the last loftiest spire is gained and fettered. Then, as if in triumph, the parasite shoots a huge, flowery head above the strangled summit, and there from the dead tree's crown, scatters its seed to begin its entangling work again."

THOUGHT - Beloved disciple of Christ, what is the "**matador plant**" in your life? Like the writer of Hebrews exhorts us "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us ([euperistatos](#) = the easily ensnaring sin, cleverly placing itself around, exerting tight control), and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing ([aphorao](#) - present tense - continually) our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ." (Hebrews 12:1-2+)

Related Resources:

- [Backsliding](#)
- [Beware of Slowly Drifting from your First Love of Jesus](#)
- [Are You Entangled?](#)
- [Give Me An Undivided Heart](#)
- Compromise
- [Daniel-Man of Integrity](#)
- [Proverbs 4:23 Commentary](#) - Watch over your HEART with all diligence
- [Matthew 5:8 Commentary](#) - Blessed are the pure in HEART.

PURE HEART

by Craig Smith

Over and over I hear it again
That the Father desires pure hearts.
Not to seek earthly treasure or the favor of men,
But to be found with pureness of heart.

Pure heart is what the Father desires,
Holy heart, purified by God's holy fire,
Broken hearts, proven to be faithful and true,
Fashion in me a heart that's thirsting for You.

Search every chamber, expose them to me
Create motives of honor and simplicity
May You find faithfulness, integrity,
In a heart that is worthy for Your eyes to see.

My only ambition is to stand before You
And find I was pleasing in Your sight
An obedient child of God, faithful and true,
Found with pureness of heart.

[No Compromise](#)"

by Keith Green

Consider making it your prayer today.

Make my life a prayer to you
I wanna do what you want me to
No empty words and no white lies
No token prayers, no compromise
I wanna shine the light you gave
Through Your Son You sent to save us
From ourselves and our despair
It comforts me to know You're really there.
I wanna thank You now for being patient with me
Oh, it's so hard to see when my eyes are on me
I guess I'll have to trust and just believe what You say
Oh, You're coming again, coming to take me away
I wanna die and let You give Your life to me
So I might live and share the hope You gave to me
The love that set me free
I wanna tell the world out there,
You're not some fable or fairy tale
That I've made up inside my head
You're God the Son, You've risen from the dead