

An Undivided Heart

Abraham Lincoln, the soon-to-become 16th president of the United States, said, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” The statement of the then U.S. senator cautioned against compromising on the issue of slavery. The powerful and memorable remark warned against threatening the stability of an already fragile nation by being divided on this foundational human rights issue.

Even more importantly, the Bible calls every Christian to have an undivided heart (Ps 86:11). Our very existence is to be singularly centered on God, because a united heart births trust, while a divided heart breeds faithlessness. After Israel had conquered Canaan, Joshua gathered the tribes and their leaders to recount their history and remind them of all God had done for them. He concluded with the following admonition:

“Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But **as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**” (Joshua 24:14-15)

The people responded as one: “we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God” (vv. 16-18). Sadly, that didn’t last long ...

God’s desire has always been to have a holy people, a people of His choosing, a people to treasure, a people that would glorify Him among the nations. In turn, He would strive with them, protect them, and provide for them. Yet, Israel had wandering eyes. For their entire existence, the fickle and faithless hearts of God’s people proclaimed: “You are not enough!”

Fast forward to today and little has changed. Idols carry our hearts far from God. The sin of faithlessness causes us to direct our attention away from God, considering Him to be unreliable and not worth trusting. As our hearts drift from God, we fill the space with other people and things: idols.

So what are the idols that divide and capture your heart today? A few questions, answered honestly, might begin to identify the idols that battle for your heart’s allegiance:

- What disappoints you?
- What do you make time and financial sacrifices for?
- What causes you to worry?
- What do you dream of?
- Where do you seek comfort?
- Whom do you seek approval of?

Remember, breaking the idols' grip and uniting your heart will demand drastic surgery, beginning with a circumcision of the heart that only God can perform (Rom 2:29). Then, maintain good heart health by responding to conviction with repentance and running to grace with confidence. He is and will be faithful!

Mark 8:34-36 (ESV) - *“And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, [Jesus] said to them, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. **For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?**”*