

E X P E C T T H E  
unexpected

## HOPE FOR A HARDENED HEART

**Jeremiah 17:9-10:** The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.”

### **LIFE GROUP / PERSONAL STUDY:**

Sometimes a person’s heart can become hardened because of negative situations and hurt feelings that have happened. But a hardened heart is never productive and it is certainly not filled with hope. So, this week we need to learn what we must do in order to recognize if we are suffering with a heart that has become hardened. Then we need to see what to do so that we can be filled with the hope that we need to soften our hearts and help us live with a healthy heart not a hardened heart.

1A) PERSONAL: How would you describe a person’s attitude whose heart is hardened?

1B) PERSONAL: How has this pandemic and all the unrest of this year affected your heart? Do you think your heart has softened or hardened? If so, how?

2A) According to Jeremiah 17:9, what do we learn about the human heart in its natural condition (without God in our lives)?

2B) What does the word deceitful mean?

2C) PERSONAL: How do you see this in our world today?

3A) What command are we given in Proverbs 4:23 and why?

3B) PERSONAL: Why do you think it’s important for us to follow this command?

**Read Matthew 12:33-37:**

4) According to this passage, how can we tell what is in a person's heart?

5A) What does Jeremiah 17:10 tell us?

5B) How does this happen and why is it important?

5C) How do the following verses confirm this idea?

1 Chronicles 29:17:

Psalms 17:3-4:

Psalms 26:2-3:

6A) According to Psalm 139:23-24, what should we ask God to do?

6B) PERSONAL: How do you think His answers could cause changes in our hearts?

**Read Hebrews 3:12-15:**

7) What other specific commands are we given in this passage?

8A) What does Proverbs 3:5-6 tell us to do?

8B) PERSONAL: How do you think following the commands that we have looked at this week could help you to have hope so that your heart would be softened and you would be willing to submit to God's will?

**ACT:** Our heart is so vulnerable. We can be easily hurt and a hurting heart will affect the way we act and the things we do. It's vital that we guard our heart and that we ask God to search our heart and reveal places that may be suffering from hardness. We then must trust God and submit to His will. We need to encourage each other because God is in control and we can have great hope because we know that God is working all things together for our good and His Glory.

**Daily Devotional:** It always helps to look at the context of the passage. Then try to answer the following questions about the passage. Who is involved? What is going on? Where is the action taking place? When? How can this concept apply to my life? Why is it important? Also look for Commands, Warnings, and Examples to follow or not to follow.

- This week let's explore passages that describe how a hardened heart is not what we want for our lives.

## **Monday:**

### **Exodus 14:17 NIV**

I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen.

## **Tuesday:**

### **Psalm 95:8-10 NIV**

“Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did. For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.’”

## **Wednesday:**

### **Matthew 13:15 NLT**

For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes—so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them

## **Thursday:**

### **Romans 9:16-18 NLT**

So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it. For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, “I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you and to spread my fame throughout the earth.” So you see, God chooses to show mercy to some, and he chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen.

## **Friday:**

### **Romans 11:7 NLT**

So this is the situation: Most of the people of Israel have not found the favor of God they are looking for so earnestly. A few have—the ones God has chosen—but the hearts of the rest were hardened.

## **Saturday:**

### **2 Corinthians 3:14 NLT**

But the people's minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ.

## **Sunday:**

### **Ephesians 4:18 NLT**

Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him.

