

## TURNING HEARTS

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We often point to the wrong place on our bodies when we refer to the heart. Frequently, when we mean the thoughts, the inner self, or the mind, we gesture toward our chests. The more proper place to point is at our heads. That's where intentions, desires, and purposes originate.

Scripture sometimes mentions the heart "turning," whether for good or bad. For example:

- Hearts could be turned away from God by human substitutes (Deut. 17:17; cf. 1 Ki. 11:2).
- Hearts could be turned back to the world (Acts 7:39).
- Hearts can be turned toward sexual immorality through seduction and temptation (Prov. 7:25).
- Hearts can be turned back toward righteous conduct (Luke 1:17).
- Hearts can be turned toward one another in unity (2 Sam. 19:14).

The Bible says similar things with different language, but the point is dramatic. Hearts can change. Negatively, they can grow dark, callused, hardened, and rebellious. That appears to have happened through various influences in the current culture. The hearts of men embrace and defend what would once have been widely rejected and condemned. Such hearts have no tolerance for what God's Word says on a variety of eternally important matters—abortion, homosexuality, fornication, adultery, pornography, true worship, the exclusive salvation through Christ, etc. Positively, hearts can be softened, opened, and receptive, too. The gospel is still the power of God (cf. Rom. 1:16). The saving message of the cross still reaches hearts (1 Cor. 1:21). Many hearts may ultimately be unreachable, but our task as Christians is to turn as many hearts to Christ as we can! Hearts won't be changed without our getting out the message.

All the while, each of us has a stewardship over our own hearts. We cannot allow the darkness of sin to eclipse the Son. We must keep our hearts sensitive and soft to the voice of God through Scripture, dependent on Him through prayer, and trusting in Him as He providentially leads us each day. God through Moses promised blessings if His people were obedient to Him, "But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish" (Deut. 30:17-18a). May we take this to heart!