

Our heart's role in prayer

Our 'heart' is the root of who we are, the source of the 'fruit' we produce

God is very interested in our 'heart'. The Biblical heart is the seat, or root, of a person. It is the source of character, and is responsible for the reaction or response we might expect from a person. 'Where your heart is, so is your treasure.' 'I will write my Law on their hearts.' 'What is in a man's heart is what makes him unclean, not what he eats.' Salvation begins the process of the changing of our heart. God is committed to bringing our heart into conformity with His Spirit, Who is given to us when we are Saved. A good heart is everything – it is the goal God is after.

Our interaction with the Holy Spirit, and our prayer, is directly related to the condition of our heart

Sin affects the state of our heart. Our heart, in its perfect state as God intended, is something like an instrument - like a unique and beautiful drum. Without anything to hinder it, the finest drum will respond brilliantly to the slightest rhythm. The Holy Spirit on our heart relates the Father's truth to us, like that rhythm. The Holy Spirit is responsible for our interaction with God, and He is like the mallet to our drum. If that finest quality drum is hindered or deadened to the rhythm in any way, it will not produce the beautiful sound it is made for. In the same way, sin on our heart insulates us from the rhythm of the Holy Spirit, and it hinders our response and relationship to Him. Because our interaction with God in Heaven is through His Holy Spirit here in us, anything standing in between His Spirit and us adversely affects our relationship with God. The sin we carry on our heart negatively effects our relationship with God the Father, and so, our prayers.

A healthy heart is a confessed, humble heart

A heart that is anything but humble will hinder prayer. James 4:1-10 tells us God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. We must approach God earnestly, in faith. Now, we are still sinners, but yet Saved in Christ's forgiveness. The difference for someone Saved is that his sin will repulse him, and he will seek and receive relief from it. Salvation is a good example of a sinner with a humble heart - no one has ever been Saved in his own pride, but only in true humility before God. Humility demands our recognition, confession, repentance, and our plea to Him for forgiveness. This is the foundation for all good prayer. This humility is necessary for God to recognize our request.

The sin we refuse to get rid of hardens us, and it hardens our heart toward conforming to God's Will and everything He desires us to pray for. Consider Jesus' words of having the heart of a child in order to see Heaven, or the four soils and the effects of the hardness of sin, or the battle between the Holy Spirit in us and the sinful body we still have which wants to do just the opposite. All of these issues speak of the Christian heart. Sin hardens our heart and dampers our responsiveness to God.

Good prayer is the overflow of a healthy heart, spilled out before God's Throne

God prepares 'good works' for us by making way for a good heart, in combination with plenty of opportunity to serve Him. He has made an 'arena' in Creation, as well as a collection of able and equipped servants, through Jesus. Anyone who is Saved and living anywhere in Creation must acknowledge the need and the means for taking issues to the Father in prayer. Our firsthand interaction with issues caused by sin serves to fill us with an awareness of need. These needs will always lay heavy on a healthy, sensitive heart.

God also gives us plenty of opportunity to worship Him in prayer for Who he is and what He is doing. We are Saved through the Word, but we also continue to be refined and edified through it as well. As our experience with God grows through knowing Him in the Word and our experience of His interaction in our lives, thankful love steadily grows in us. As we get to know our Father more and more, this gratitude swells in our heart.

We must maintain a healthy heart, and then fill it with these opportunities of worship and need. Then, with our hearts full of these issues, we bring them before God for His response. We have been Saved to sensitively carry the issues, and we have the unique right to bring them to the Father. As priests made by God, to serve God, we have been recruited for the work of carrying needs and worship before the Father's Throne. Only His children, as priests through the work of the High Priest Jesus, have the right to come to the Throne. Our job is to serve as faithful stewards, wisely using the means He has given us, to serve Him through the opportunities of needs and worship He presents to us. We must know the issues, both of needs and God's Word, and take them to heart.