

A Soft Heart



Alma 12:10-11

And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full. And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.

Why does a hard heart receive a lesser portion of the word?
Why does a hard heart lead us down to destruction?

Is the word of God in us?

Then if our hearts have been hardened, yea, if we have hardened our hearts against the word, insomuch that it has not been found in us, then will our state be awful, for then we shall be condemned.

(Alma 12:13)

How do we get the word of God in us?
Why are we condemned if we don't have it?



Scriptural terms for a hard heart

- Anger (Psalm 37:8)
- Pride (D&C 29:9)
- Stiffneckedness (Jer 27:23)
- Contention (3 Ne 11:29)
- Hate (1 John 2:11)
- Rebellion (D&C 1:3)
- Stubbornness (1 Sam 15:23)
- Wickedness (Alma 41:10)
- Doubt (Mormon 9:27)
- Blindness of heart (Ephesians 4:18)
- Veil upon the heart (2 Cor 3:15)
- Blindness of mind (Alma 13:4)
- Murmuring (1 Nephi 2:12)
- Strife (Philippians 2:3)

“In the Book of Mormon, the phrase ‘hardening the heart’ is used to describe this backward slide that occurs when disengaging from the doctrine of Christ.”

“Ultimately, whether missionaries remain converted throughout their lifetimes depends on their determination to be engaged with the doctrine of Christ.”



Elder Dale G. Renlund
2021 Seminar for New Mission Presidents

Anger

“For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.”

3 Nephi 11:29-30

Anger

“A cunning part of his strategy is to dissociate anger from agency, making us believe that we are victims of an emotion that we cannot control. We hear, ‘I lost my temper.’ Losing one’s temper is an interesting choice of words that has become a widely used idiom. To ‘lose something’ implies ‘not meaning to,’ ‘accidental,’ ‘involuntary,’ ‘not responsible’—careless perhaps but ‘not responsible.’”



Elder Lynn G. Robbins
April 1998 General Conference

Anger

“Anger is an uncivil attempt to make another feel guilty or a cruel way of trying to correct them. It is often mislabeled as discipline but is almost always counterproductive.”



Elder Lynn G. Robbins
April 1998 General Conference

Anger

To those who say, “But I can’t help myself,” author William Wilbanks responds: “Nonsense.”

“Aggression, ... suppressing the anger, talking about it, screaming and yelling,” are all learned strategies in dealing with anger. “We choose the one that has proved effective for us in the past. Ever notice how seldom we lose control when frustrated by our boss, but how often we do when annoyed by friends or family?” (“The New Obscenity,” Reader’s Digest, Dec. 1988, 24; emphasis added).



William L. Wilbanks
Criminalologist

“Anger never persuades. Hostility builds no one. Contention never leads to inspired solutions. Regrettably, we sometimes see contentious behavior even within our own ranks. We hear of those who belittle their spouses and children, of those who use angry outbursts to control others, and of those who punish family members with the “silent treatment.” We hear of youth and children who bully and of employees who defame their colleagues.”

“My dear brothers and sisters, this should not be. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to be examples of how to interact with others—especially when we have differences of opinion. One of the easiest ways to identify a true follower of Jesus Christ is how compassionately that person treats other people.”



President Russell M. Nelson

“Peacemakers Needed”

April 2023 General Conference

Scriptural terms for a soft heart

- Meekness (Moroni 7:39)
- Spirit of Meekness (D&C 100:7-8)
- Meek and Lowly (Moroni 7:44)
- Humility (Mosiah 4:11; D&C 112:10)
- Broken heart (3 Nephi 9:20)
- Lowliness of mind (Philippians 2:3)
- A willing mind (D&C 64:34)
- Lowliness of heart (D&C 118:3; D&C 107:30)
- Submissive, patient, full of love, long-suffering (Alma 13:28)
- Poor in Spirit (3 Nephi 12:3)
- Teachable (Job 6:24)
- Willing (Isaiah 1:19)
- Receiveth (Matthew 10:40)

How to Soften Our Heart

And **the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart**; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.

How do we soften our heart?

How to soften our heart

Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.

Helaman 3:35

How do we yield our hearts to God?

“We are commanded to repent of our sins and to come to the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and partake of the sacrament. ... We witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and always remember Him and keep His commandments. When we comply with this covenant, the Lord renews the cleansing effect of our baptism. We are made clean and can always have His Spirit to be with us.”



Elder Dallin H. Oaks
Special Witnesses of Christ
April 2001

Turning our Hearts

“The time has come for us to capitalize more effectively on the potent combination of the mighty change of heart, made possible primarily by the spiritual power of the Book of Mormon, and the turning of hearts to the fathers, accomplished through the spirit of Elijah.”



Elder David A. Bednar
2013 Seminar for New Mission Presidents

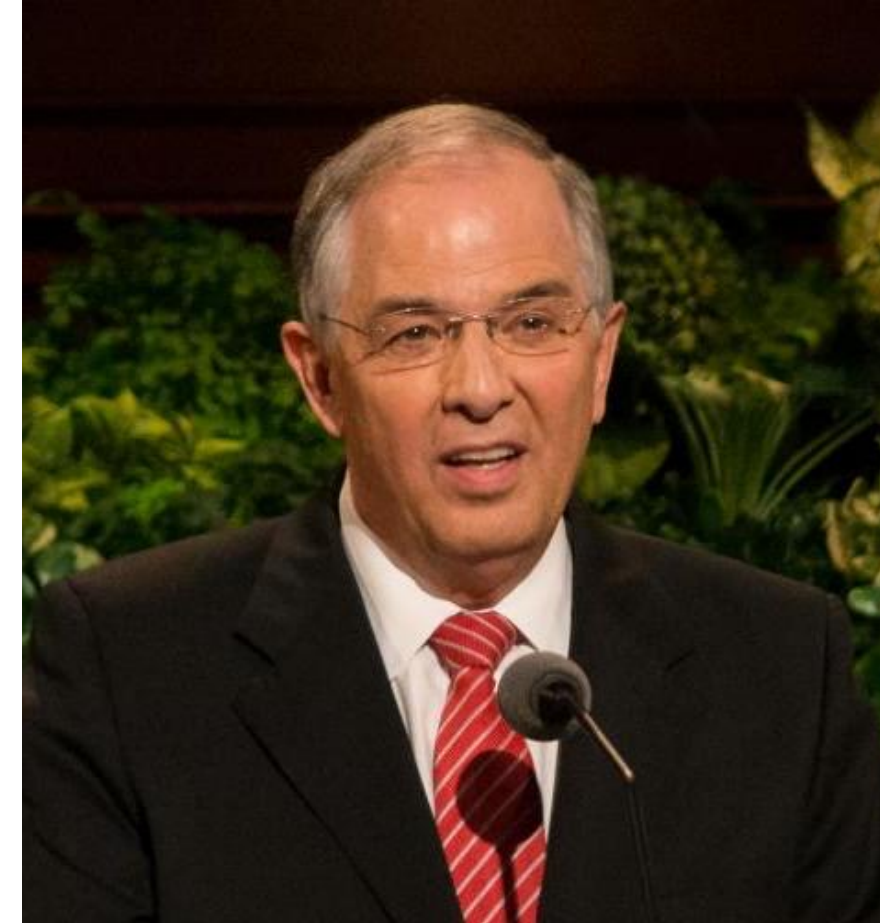
Doctrine & Covenants 112:28

But purify your hearts before me; and then go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel unto every creature who has not received it;

Counsel given to Thomas B. Marsh as President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and those of the Twelve he would send out as missionaries.

How do we purify our hearts?

“The spiritual conditions necessary to proceed along the pathway all relate to the ‘heart.’ The scriptures refer favorably to hearts that are changed, broken, healed, and turned, and to hearts full of love, gratitude, joy, and peace. When we speak of righteous hearts, we are combining feelings that emanate from truth, intelligence, our spirits, the Light of Christ, and the Holy Ghost. I love the description ‘a mighty change of heart.’ Hearts full of love, gratitude, joy, and peace are the righteous rewards of staying on the covenant pathway and enduring to the end. It should be noted that hardened hearts are also a choice and a reality.”



Elder Neil L. Andersen
2014 Seminar for New Mission Presidents

Summary

- We choose whether we have a soft heart or a hard heart
- Hard hearts lead to unhappiness and destruction
- Anger is an attribute of Satan. It is a choice and is rooted in pride
- Our hearts begin to harden when we disassociate from the Doctrine of Christ
- Disciples of Jesus Christ are identified by their compassion for others
- Fasting and Prayer brings humility and softens our hearts
- Repentance brings meekness. Meekness brings the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost brings hope and perfect love...and a soft heart
- If we are to preach the gospel, we need soft hearts and pure hearts
- Hearts filled with love, gratitude, joy, and peace are the rewards for staying on the covenant path

Jeremiah 17:10

“I the Lord search the heart, / try the reins,
even to give every man
according to his ways,
and according to the
fruit of his doings.”



What will the Lord find in your heart?