

The language of the heart – 5/10/08
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In my early childhood, I am certain I missed a very important stage of development... and I have suffered for it. For some reason I could not go to Joanne Pirlo's birthday party, and as a result I missed out on the first interactive game of catch 'n' kiss in the living history of Modanville Public School. How could I miss such a momentous occasion? Surely this is a milestone in childhood development, and it just passed me by... I was pretty devastated when I learnt about this at school next week, all the kids had some secret knowledge, a bond – and I who had not participated was excluded.

Those of us who've come to know God have a sense of being 'caught' by him – but how good are we at the kissing part????

No doubt this way of looking at God might be making a few of us feel a bit uncomfortable... but I guess what I'm getting at – is how do we experience that heart connection with our God?

How did you come to know God? What attracted you to him? How does your relationship with God make you feel?

One of the ways God relates to us – is as a lover. Jesus lover of my soul.

I have come to realize that my experience of God has mainly been limited to my head. I think about him – I know him – I respond to him from my intellect and reason. I analyse him and I even criticize him and his word – using this complex brain he gave me.

The problem with this approach is that it reaches its limits pretty quickly. We are not all-knowing, our brains do not have the capacity to understand or process the depth of who God is...

Our brains are just as capable of deception as our hearts. One is neither all good nor all bad – both can be used for the glory of God and to express our own depravity.

And so – we stay at that level of connection with God.. that is, unless we employ the other tools he has given us to use in relationships.

Our heart. What a mysterious organ. When we hear the word "heart" – what do we think of? If someone were to say "my heart hurts"..

would our first response be to cart them off in ambulance, or to ask them what was up?

Heart can mean many things; (<http://www.yourdictionary.com>)

heart (härt)

noun

1.
 - a. the hollow, muscular organ in a vertebrate animal that receives blood from the veins and pumps it through the arteries by alternate dilation and contraction
2. the part of the human body thought of as containing the heart
3. any place or part like a heart, in that it is near the center
4. the central, vital, or main part; real meaning; essence; core
5. the human heart considered as the center or source of emotions, personality attributes
 - a. inmost thought and feeling; consciousness or conscience [to know in one's heart](#)
 - b. the source of emotions
 - c. one's emotional nature; disposition [to have a kind heart](#)
 - d. any of various humane feelings; love, devotion, sympathy, etc.
 - e. mood; feeling [to have a heavy heart](#)
 - f. spirit, resolution, or courage [to lose heart](#)

No wonder we are all confused about how to relate to God on a heart level!!

Add to this the Western bent of idolising the mind, and really there's a world of confusion.

I realized recently that I had been brought up to believe that my mind was much more to be trusted than my heart. The power of logic, reason and facts were much more trustworthy – then just basing it all on emotions which can just run rampant. Those wayward emotions must be controlled and brought into line by the mind. The mind is more powerful and should be listened to.

What I am learning now – is to value my heart. To listen to my heart. To connect with my heart. I am learning the language of the heart.

This doesn't mean we let our minds go blank and go wafting around in some type of 1970's love-in with God – but rather, that we use all

those tools – our heart, our minds, our spirits – to connect with our God.

It doesn't make a lot of sense to only love God with our minds – his word makes it pretty clear he wants all of us.

Matthew 22:36-38

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment.

'Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' (The Message)

So, when the men who wrote the Bible – used the word "heart" – what were they actually referring to??? I recently started a word study of "heart" and was amazed at how many times it's used in the Bible.

(Good question...)

The bible refers to such things as a deceitful heart, a hard heart, a spiteful heart, an evil heart, pure in heart, a tender heart, a heart that seeks God, an uncircumcised heart, a clean heart, kindness of heart... perhaps they were as confused as we are?

(Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words)

kardia "the heart" is the chief organ of physical life, it occupies the most important place in the human system. By an easy transition the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life.

The Bible describes the heart as a centre for sin;

Matt 15:19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander."

Alongside this it is also regarded as the sphere of Divine influence,
Acts 15:8, 9

God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.

The heart, as lying deep within, contains 'the hidden man,'the real man. It represents the true character but conceals it" (J. Laidlaw, in Hastings' Bible Dic.)

"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." Luke 6: 43-45

As to its usage in the NT it denotes

- the seat of physical life ([Acts 14:17](#); [James 5:5](#))
- the seat of moral nature and spiritual life
- the seat of grief ([John 14:1](#); [Rom 9:2](#); [2 Cor 2:4](#))
- joy ([John 16:22](#); [Eph 5:19](#))
- the desires ([Matt 5:28](#); [2 Pet 2:14](#))
- the affections ([Luke 24:32](#); [Acts 21:13](#))
- the perceptions ([John 12:40](#); [Eph 4:18](#))
- the thoughts ([Matt 9:4](#); [Heb 4:12](#))
- the understanding ([Matt 13:15](#); [Rom 1:21](#))
- the reasoning powers ([Mark 2:6](#); [Luke 24:38](#))
- the imagination ([Luke 1:51](#))
- conscience ([Acts 2:37](#); [1 John 3:20](#))
- the intentions ([Heb 4:12](#), cp. [1 Pet 4:1](#))
- purpose ([Acts 11:23](#); [2 Cor 9:7](#))
- the will ([Rom 6:17](#); [Col 3:15](#))
- faith ([Mark 11:23](#); [Rom 10:10](#); [Heb 3:12](#))

You can see why for us to worship God with our hearts is so important. It means many things – not just a “falling in love” with God sensation – but a lasting intimacy. Perhaps Song of Solomon gives us another insight into this mystery;

Song of Songs 8: 6, 7 (NLT)

6 Place me like a seal over your heart,
like a seal on your arm.
For love is as strong as death,
its jealousy[c] as enduring as the grave.[d]
Love flashes like fire,
the brightest kind of flame.
7 Many waters cannot quench love,
nor can rivers drown it.
If a man tried to buy love
with all his wealth,
his offer would be utterly scorned.

Song of Solomon 8: 6-7 (The Message)

6-8 Hang my locket around your neck,
wear my ring on your finger.
Love is invincible facing danger and death.
Passion laughs at the terrors of hell.
The fire of love stops at nothing—
it sweeps everything before it.
Flood waters can't drown love,
torrents of rain can't put it out.
Love can't be bought, love can't be sold—
it's not to be found in the marketplace.

How great is God's love that he should lavish it upon us, his children.

In walking through this life – with its pain and its joy – we are on a journey where we can choose to draw closer to God and each other or to move away.

If intimacy is about acceptance, belonging and value – then these things are understood and experienced not just through the mind – but also through our hearts.

Our heart is more than just a place from where feelings emerge – it is much more profound than that. Do you want to worship God with your heart? Then maybe you too need to learn some more about the language of the heart.