

Take Care of Your Heart Deut. 11:16

I. INTRODUCTION • Read Deut. 11:13-17

A. Heart Disease

1. Heart disease is the #1 killer of men & women in this country.
2. One person dies of a heart related ailment every 34 seconds.
3. Cardiovascular disease accounts for more deaths than the next 5 causes of death *combined*.
4. And heart disease isn't something only the elderly deal with;
 - a. a significant number of *young people* are stricken with cardiovascular disease each year.
 - b. heart disease ranks 3rd among the causes of death for children under 15.
 - c. in 2001 nearly 200,000 heart surgeries were performed on children 15 & younger. [\[1\]](#)
5. In 2002, 23 million adults were diagnosed with heart disease in this country. That's roughly 10% of the total population! [\[2\]](#)
6. In 2001, cardiovascular disease was listed as the cause of death on 1.4 million death certificates.
 - a. 1.4 million! That's 1 out of every 300 people.
 - b. let's bring that home for a second – that would be 3 people out of our church – or one out of each of our services.
7. We hear so much about HIV & AIDS & what a tragic disease it is!
 - a. every year there are major rallies & benefits hosted by the media & Hollywood elite to raise AIDS awareness & to press for more funding for research.
 - b. as bad as AIDS is, in 2001, the same year in which 1.4 million died of heart disease, 14,000 died of AIDS.
 - c. that's 1% of those who died of heart disease!!!
8. It's estimated that the total cost of heart disease this year will be \$368 billion. [\[3\]](#)

B. Today

1. In these verses, Moses warns the people of God about a *different* kind of disease – not heart *disease* but heart *deceit*.
2. Moses knows the time left to him is winding down.
 - a. the leadership of the nation of Israel will soon pass to Joshua.
 - b. the people who listened to him speak these words were the grown children of the generation he'd led out of bondage in Egypt.
 - c. they would soon be crossing over the Jordan River and into the Promised Land.
3. But Moses knew their conquest of Canaan would present many difficult challenges for them.
4. The only way they'd be able to come through them successfully was by total

- dependence on God.
5. The book of Deuteronomy is the record of his impassioned appeals to them to be faithful to the Lord.
 6. Over & over again He reminds them of the covenant they'd entered with God.
 - a. Israel's side of the covenant was to **obey God** by faithfully observing the laws He'd given them.
 - b. God's part of the covenant was to bless them with protection and prosperity.
 7. We see that here . . .

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 8-9

8 "Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess, **9** and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, 'a land flowing with milk and honey.'

1. As we've been studying through Exodus, Numbers, & now Deuteronomy, we've seen how the NT tells us Israel is a model as we follow Christ. ^[4]
 - a. their deliverance from bondage in Egypt is a picture of our deliverance from spiritual bondage in this world.
 - b. and their living in the Promised Land parallels our experience of the Spirit-filled life.
2. That being the case, what Moses says here to the children of Israel is a vital insight *for us*.
3. **Their** strength, **their** equipping for the task of conquering the territory God had given them came from **keeping God's Word**.
4. Their ability to **conquer & hold** Canaan would come from their **obedience** to the Lord.
5. What was true for them is true for us.
6. Do you want to be spiritually strong? Do you want to take possession of everything God desires to give you? Then learn & live God's Word.

7. I know I sound like a broken record.
 - a. I say this same thing a lot but I do so precisely because it's what we find [in here] so often.
 - b. in fact, Moses says it **dozens** of times in Deuteronomy to the people of God.
 - c. I make no apology for emphasizing what God emphasizes!

8. Christian – Learn & Live God's Word. It's the key to your success.

9. All over this area you see fitness centers.
 - a. LA Fitness, 24 HR. Fitness, the Body-Shaping Gym, Mavericks, Gold's
 - b. some people spend a lot of time, money, & effort improving their physical fitness.
 - c. I was a member at a gym recently & noticed there were certain people who were **always** there.
 - d. some of the guys spent hour after hour pumping weights, trying hard to increase their strength.

- e. I could *see* the effect such intense weight-lifting had on them – they got bigger & lifted more weight as the weeks went by.
 - f. but I also know from my own experience at working out, that once you stop lifting weights, that bulk & strength diminish.
 - g. and even if you *keep* working out, over the long haul, as the years pass, gravity wins; what goes up must come down.
10. In 1 Timothy 4, we read –
- 7Exercise yourself toward godliness. 8For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.**
11. That word *exercise* comes from the same word we get *gymnasium* from.
- a. it was a word with the smell of sweat in it;
 - b. it spoke of intense effort.
12. The Apostle Paul encouraged young Timothy to exert himself in the pursuit of obedience to God.
- a. he acknowledged that physical exercise is *good*, it *does* produces results,
 - b. but those results are miniscule compared to the benefits of putting effort into pursuing God.
13. If you lift weights, you'll increase your strength, but when you stop lifting, the strength slips away.
14. Not so with spiritual exercise! As Paul says – The pursuit of godliness alters us *permanently*.
15. But 1 Timothy 4:7 makes it clear that godliness is something we have to make a determined effort toward.
- a. just as you can't take a pill & wake up the next day with muscles, there's no easy or quick route to godliness.
 - b. there are all kinds of pills on the market that promise to give you a competition ready physique in just a month.
 - c. the marketing programs for these things are slick and a lot of people shell out hundreds of dollars thinking that by popping a pill they'll turn into the next Arnold Schwarzenegger or Sly Stallone.
 - d. at *best*, all those pills can do is help squeeze a tiny bit of assistance into a vigorous workout.
 - e. in fact, research has shown only a few of those supplements provide *any* kind of benefit.
16. If you go to a fitness center you'll notice that along with the few who are *really working out* are those who just sort of *hang out*.
- a. oh, they have the right workout gear; the latest sweats, sports bottle, gloves, & MP3 player.
 - b. but you rarely see them *actually* lifting or exercising.
 - c. they may do some stretches & set up a machine as if they're going to do a set,
 - d. but they wander off to go chat with one of the trainers or with some of their friends.
 - e. and after 45 minutes of that, they wipe their forehead with their towel as if they're exhausted & head for the door.

- f. they are only fitness *posers*!
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17. **THIS** is a fitness center – a *spiritual* fitness center.
- and some have come here today *to work out*.
 - they come with the expectation that they're going to meet with God in worship & study.
 - they know that they're likely to hear something that will be a challenge to them, something that will convict them & call them to repentance & change.
 - and *that* is why they come, because they want to walk out **DIFFERENT; BETTER** than when they entered.
 - they are exercising themselves toward godliness.
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- it's possible a few others have come with the *appearance* of wanting to do some spiritual exercise, but really, they're just *spiritual posers*.
 - they have the right gear; a nice new Bible with deluxe cover, a set of highlighters & a journal.
 - but truth be told – the pages of the Bible are still stuck together, the highlighters have never been opened, and the journal is a collection of a half dozen doodles made during another one of Pastor Lance's incredibly lame & boring sermons.
 - church **IS an effort** for them – an effort to *stay awake!*
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18. Moses tied the ability of Israel to take & hold the Promised Land to their keeping God's Word.
19. What was true for them is true for us: The life of faith, the life of the Spirit is a life that is given to *discovering* then *living* God's Word.

B. Vs. 10-15

10 For the land which you go to possess *is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot, as a vegetable garden;* **11** but the land which you cross over to possess *is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven,* **12** a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God *are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.* **13** 'And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, **14** then I will give *you* the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. **15** And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.'

- The land of Egypt was generally pretty flat with only light rainfall.
- They drew water for their fields by irrigation from the Nile.
- As a result, the entire nation was located in a long, thin corridor along the banks of the River.
- Canaan was very different; it was mostly hills.
 - for growing, they would depend on the annual cycle of rains.

- b. their drinking water would come from wells.
- 5. God promised to keep a close eye on them and their needs.
- 6. They must keep a close eye *on Him* – seeking always to be obedient to Him.

- 7. The lesson for us is this – Just as Israel had to learn a *new* way of living in Canaan from what they'd known in Egypt,
- 8. So *we* must realize that the Spirit-filled life is *different* from the life we lived in the world.
- 9. We don't live the life of faith in God by the *same rules* we lived our lives in selfishness.
 - a. before we came to Christ, self-sufficiency & independence were the main thing.
 - b. but in Christ, *total dependence* on God is the goal; utter & complete surrender to Him is our aim.

- 10. I continue to be surprised by people I meet who've made a profession of faith but they don't appear to be willing to *change*.
 - a. they *claim* they are – in a general kind of way.
 - b. but when it comes down to a *specific area* of change, of let's say, laying aside a sinful habit, they become indignant & claim they don't need to change.
 - c. they think being a Christian is little more than eternal fire insurance.
 - d. they don't embrace the truth that the sin Jesus died to forgive & set them free from, *they must put away!*
- 11. Mickey Cohen was a member of the Mafia who went forward at an early Billy Graham Crusade in Los Angeles.
 - a. when after a few months his new friends realized his criminal activity went on unabated they asked him if he was going to turn away from a life of crime.
 - b. Cohen said, "Why? There are Christian movie stars & Christian politicians. Why can't I be a Christian gangster?"
- 12. Becoming a Christian means being turned from sinner to saint.
 - a. and that transformation doesn't begin & *end* with the sinner's prayer.
 - b. that's where the *biggest change* takes place,
 - c. but it's a change that's realized & renewed *every* day!
- 13. Christian –Are you changing and becoming more like Christ?

C. Vs. 16-17

16 Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, 17 lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

- 1. In vs. 13-15, Moses said if they loved God with all their heart & carefully obeyed Him, then the rains would come and they would flourish.
- 2. Here he gives the other side – if they *don't*; if their heart is seduced by other loves, then they'll suffer & diminish.
- 3. What I want to concentrate on in the time left us today is Moses' warning in v.

16 when he says . . .

Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived.

4. Moses well knew what lay across the Jordan to the West.
 - a. the Israelites were about to come face to face with some of the most blatant temptations imaginable.
 - b. after being sheltered in the isolation of the Wilderness for the last 40 years, the licentious & provocative practices of the Canaanites would present a powerful attraction to them.
 5. So Moses urges caution & calls them to *set a guard over their hearts*.
 6. Because they were in a covenant with God that was very much like marriage, their hearts *belonged* to the Lord.
 7. Here he calls them to stop & think about it – had they *really given themselves* to Him?
 8. The danger was that their hearts would be deceived, seduced away from devotion to God.
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9. Our hearts, which *belong* to Jesus, can be given to other loves, other affections.
 - a. living in this world, we face a daily, unending barrage of tempting images, sounds, & thoughts –
 - b. each of them like a flaming arrow the enemy shoots *at our heart*,
 - c. trying to set us aflame with an unholy passion.
 10. As Israel stood there that day listening to Moses, they were in a desolate place on the eastern bank of the Jordan.
 - a. and as they listened, thousands of them standing side by side for encouragement,
 - b. there in the wilderness they would say,
 - c. “Oh sure – we’ll take heed to our hearts! We’re God’s people. He is our God & no other! No sweat Mo. You got it – we’re all down with that!”
 11. They had no real idea what temptations awaited them, & because they *assumed* everything was okay with their hearts, they *didn’t really listen* to or do what Moses said here.
 12. They *didn’t* take heed to themselves & as we read on we see their hearts *were* deceived.

III. CONCLUSION

A. Our Hearts

1. So here *we* are today – as Israel was, in a safe, spiritual place.
2. The world is *out there*, but we’re safe *in here*, listening to God’s Word.
3. We all know we need to take careful heed to ourselves & make sure our hearts aren’t deceived. We got it. We’re down with that.
4. So let me ask you – does your heart really belong to the Lord? Completely?
5. Or is your heart deceived – thinking you’re okay when in fact, your heart belongs to the world.

B. Heart Examination

1. As I was pondering this myself I realized the only way to answer honestly was by asking some other questions.
2. So try these on yourself and see how they fit.

3. Who are you? What are you?
 If you had to identify yourself as ONLY ONE THING, what would you say?
 The answer to that will tell you how you *identify yourself* and *what relationship* you use as your reference point.
4. What is your greatest desire? Right now if you could have *anything*, what would it be?
 The answer to that reveals the very core of your heart, for the heart is the *seat* of desire.
5. What is your greatest fear?
 Fear is the back-side of desire.
 While desire draws us toward something, fear repels.
6. Who/What are you? What is your greatest desire? What is your greatest fear?
7. This week, spend time meditating on v. 16 & these questions.
8. This is a *self heart examination*.
 - a. if you had heart disease, you'd want the doctor to discover it as early as possible so it could be treated before real trouble set in and you ended up in the hospital with a heart attack.
 - b. there's no doctor's office you can go to for a diagnosis of *spiritual* heart deceit.
 - c. only Doctor Jesus can tell you that.
 - d. what He diagnoses, He can also cure.

[1] <http://www.americanheart.org/downloadable/heart/1079736729696HDSStats2004UpdateREV3-19-04.pdf> Nov. 5, 2004

[2] <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/heart.htm> Nov. 5, 2004

[3] *Health Care Financing Review, 2001 Medicare and Medicaid Statistical Supplement*, CMS, Apr. 2003

[4] 1 Cor. 10:1-13