

Give Me An Undivided Heart

LORD, GIVE US UNDIVIDED HEARTS (Psalm 86:11)

Integrity is derived from "integer" (a whole number as opposed to a fraction) and speaks of the quality of being undivided. O, to be men and women of integrity, lights shining in the midst of the darkness in such a way that the world might see our undivided hearts and this would bring glory to our Father Who is in heaven. (Mt 5:16-note, cf Php 2:15-note).

A great prayer to pray (daily) would be David's words...

**"Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth.
UNITE MY HEART to fear Your Name."
(Ps 86:11-[note](#))**

The NIV has "Give me an UNDIVIDED HEART." **Pastor Ray Pritchard** paraphrases Ps 86:11b "Put me together, Lord, because right now my life is scattered in a thousand directions!" (from [The Undivided Heart](#))

An UNDIVIDED HEART, O Lord,
Is what we need each day,
For we are prone to compromise
And wander from Your way.
-D De Haan

The men of the tribe of Zebulun "helped David with an **UNDIVIDED HEART**" (literally "without a double heart" = undivided loyalty) (1Chr 12:33-note) They were "all in," of one heart, all the time, nothing held back.

Spurgeon commenting on Ps 86:11-[note](#) said "Having taught me ONE WAY, give me ONE HEART to walk therein, for too often I feel 'a heart and a heart' (In Ps 12:2-note "double heart" in Hebrew literally = "a heart and a heart"), two natures contending, two principles struggling for sovereignty (Gal 5:17-note). Our minds are apt to be divided between a variety of objects, like trickling streamlets which waste their force in a hundred rivulets. Our great desire should be to have all our life floods poured into one channel and to have that channel directed towards the Lord Alone. A man of DIVIDED HEART is weak (cf Jas 1:6-8-note), the man of one object is the man. God Who created the bands of our nature can draw them together, tighten, strengthen, and fasten them, and so braced and inwardly knit by His uniting grace, we shall be powerful for good, but not otherwise. To fear God is both the beginning, the growth, and the maturity of wisdom (Pr 9:10-[note](#), Job 28:28-[note](#)), therefore should we be undividedly given up to it, heart, and soul (cf Mk 12:29-31-[Spurgeon's sermon](#))."

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.
([Play Fernando Ortega's great vocal](#))

May we all be motivated and enabled by the Spirit (Php 2:13NLT-note) to imitate men like Paul (1Cor 11:1-[note](#), Heb 6:11-12-note) who said "this **ONE THING I DO**. forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:13-14-note)

And remember that "the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." (2Chr 16:9-[Spurgeon's sermon](#))

Lord, by Your amazing grace and enabled by the power of Your Spirit, give us undivided hearts to fear Your Name, in the Name of Jesus, the Name above all names (Php 2:9-11-note). Amen

Listen to **Rich Mullins'** great song "[MY ONE THING](#)" that speaks of an **UNDIVIDED HEART**.

JESUS' DESCRIPTION OF

AN UNDIVIDED HEART

Jesus describes an **undivided heart** in the Sermon on the Mount

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. " (Matthew 5:8-note)

In Mt 5:8-note the Greek word for **pure** is **katharos** which describes a heart that is **pure in motive** and which exhibits **single mindedness, undivided devotion** and **spiritual integrity**. The idea is "This one thing I do" (as Paul said in Php 3:13[[note](#)]). So although, "pure in heart" includes the ideas of moral purity or freedom from sensuality, that is not the primary idea in the word **katharos**. **Pure** (katharos) has to do with attitudes, integrity, and singleness of heart as opposed to [duplicity](#) and [double mindedness](#) (cf Jas 4:8-note). Thus, one might paraphrase Jesus' words in this beatitude as..."I desire a heart that is **unmixed in its devotion and motivation**."

SPIRITUAL "TUNNEL VISION"

The word **undivided** means not divided, separated, or broken into parts, not mixed with other feelings or intentions. The idea in Matthew 5:8-note is that it is a heart that is concentrated on or devoted completely to one object, specifically the true and living eternal God not the idols of this fallen, temporal world. To use an medical term from my days in medical school, it is a heart with "tunnel vision" which is literally a defect of one's vision, but which has a spiritual application. **Wikipedia** writes that [tunnel vision](#) "is the loss of [peripheral vision](#) with retention of central vision, resulting in a constricted circular [tunnel](#)-like [field of vision](#)." [Look at this depiction of literal tunnel vision](#) which helps understand that while physical "tunnel vision" is a bad thing, spiritual "tunnel vision" is a good thing because it describes a heart fully fixed on the object of its devotion, specifically on God Himself!

See also the description of **"Vertical Vision"** which is the type of vision associated with an undivided heart.

Another description for an **undivided heart** is a [single-minded heart](#), one having but one aim, a heart that is dedicated to God, a heart having one driving purpose which is to live pleasing to God, a heart whose attention is fixed on God alone and does not allow itself to be distracted or influenced by the passing pleasures of sin.

MacArthur adds (commenting on Mt 5:8 "pure in heart") explains that in secular Greek usage **katharos** "was often used of metals that had been refined until all impurities were removed, leaving only the pure metal. In that sense, purity means unmixed, unalloyed, unadulterated. Applied to the **heart**, the idea is that of pure motive-of single-mindedness, undivided devotion, spiritual integrity, and true righteousness. ([MacArthur, J: Matthew 1-7 Chicago: Moody Press](#))

SPIRITUAL "DOUBLE-VISION"

In a similar sense Jesus said that "double vision" will radically impact your inner spiritual man, especially your heart (cf Mt 6:21) teaching that...

The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You (ABSOLUTELY) cannot serve God and mammon. (Mt 6:22-23-note, Mt 6:24-note)

The phrase "**if your eye is clear**" is translated variously as - "if therefore thine eye is **single**" (KJV), " If then your eye is **healthy**" (NET, ESV), " If your eye is **good**" (CSB), " if, therefore, thine eye may be **perfect**" (Young's Literal). The key word Jesus used is the adjective "**clear**" (NAS) which is the Greek word **haplous** which strictly speaking means single (as rendered in the KJV) or without folds which came to mean simple, sincere, innocent, healthy, clear ("clear vision" - cp spiritual vision discussed above) and finally conveying the sense of [generous](#).

BDAG says **haplous** "pertains to being motivated by singleness of purpose so as to be open and aboveboard, single, without guile, sincere, straightforward i.e. without a hidden agenda." **Marvin Vincent** a respected Greek scholar says "The picture underlying this adjective (haplous) is that of a piece of cloth or other material, neatly folded once, and without a variety of complicated folds. Hence the idea of simplicity or singleness (compare simplicity from the Latin simplex; *semel*, once; *plicare*, to fold). So, in a moral sense, artless, plain, pure. Here sound, as opposed to evil or diseased. Possibly with reference to the double-mindedness and indecision condemned in Mt 6:24-note."

Wiersbe suggests that we "Compare Abraham and Lot in Ge 13:5-18 for an illustration of the "single eye." The eye here speaks of the outlook of the heart. A single eye means one that is fixed on the spiritual (**Ed**: cp an "undivided heart"). It is the opposite of the double-minded person in James 1:8-[note](#); Jas 4:4-[note](#), Jas 4:8-[note](#). ([Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#))

Zodhiates adds that "Haploús stands in contrast to diploús (double or many). Even though we have two eyes, they are designed to pick up a single object, preferably the Lord Himself, as David counseled. Jesus connected the purity of the body with the holy character of an eye that does not vacillate between treasures on earth and treasures in heaven. Similarly, in James 1:8-[note](#) we read that the "double minded [[dipsuchos](#)] man is unstable [[akatastatos](#) from a = without, not; and [kathistemi](#) = to settle] in all his ways" (cf. James 4:8-[note](#)). A circularity of "unsettling" effects exists between the **soul** and the **physical eye**. Just as **double-minded** ("two-souled") persons can direct their physical eyes between good and bad objects, so physical eyes can transmit good and bad signals into the soul (**Ed**: And I would add into our heart). If we think about the blurred and conflicting (double vision) messages our brains attempt to process when we merely cross our eyes, we can understand how our physical eyes can destabilize our **souls** (**Ed**: hearts) when they receive and transmit conflicting data. The "eyes of [our] understanding" (Eph. 1:18-[note](#))-our spiritual eyes-work in conjunction with our physical eyes to our good or to our detriment. ([Exegetical Commentary on Matthew](#))

William MacDonald applies the truth about haplous - "The good eye belongs to the person whose motives are pure, who has a single desire for God's interests, and who is willing to accept Christ's teachings literally. His whole life is flooded with light. He believes Jesus' words, he forsakes earthly riches, he lays up treasures in heaven, and he knows that this is the only true security. On the other hand, the bad eye belongs to the person who is trying to live for two worlds. He doesn't want to let go of his earthly treasures, yet he wants treasures in heaven too. The teachings of Jesus seem impractical and impossible to him. He lacks clear guidance since he is full of darkness." ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#)-excellent).

It follows that a **single eye** is necessary for an **undivided heart**. Do you need to schedule an appointment with the "Divine Optometrist" for a checkup of your spiritual eyesight. Perhaps you've been having "[double vision](#)" and are in need of a new "prescription" from the Spirit of Jesus Christ! He and He Alone can give you the desire and the power (Php 2:13NLT-note) to obey Paul's command to "**Set your mind** (your heart) ([present imperative](#) = command to make this your daily delight!) on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." (Col 3:2-note) Truth be told we all still have fallen flesh and therefore daily wrestle with "**spiritual diplopia**" and thus are continually in need of casting off our natural tendency to rely on self (e.g. in a vain attempt to obey Paul's command in Col 3:2-note) and instead to wholly lean on Jesus' blood and righteousness, trusting wholly in His Holy Spirit to correct our daily "diplopia!" Are you arising each morning firmly convinced that YOU by yourself cannot continually set your mind on the things above throughout the day? If you think for a second you can succeed, you are already deceived and will soon be defeated! If you think you are immune to "**spiritual diplopia**" then here is a little test - [take a look at this picture](#) - how many watches do you see? If you see more than one watch than you are afflicted with **spiritual diplopia** and must daily depend on the Great Physician to enable you to see with single vision (Mt 6:22-23)! Brethren the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick (Jer 17:9) and the same can be said of our spiritual vision! So it follows, dear fellow follower of Jesus, if we desire an undivided heart, we need to resolve to arise each morning with the words of David's prayer on our lips "Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth. **UNITE MY HEART** to fear Your Name." (Ps 86:11-[note](#))

SINGLE HEART PURE HEART Two songs for your heart

Take a moment to listen to this song, one of my favorites from Craig Smith, entitled [Single Heart...](#)

He had only one aim
In placing us here
This is His domain
And His message is clear.

Single heart, Single mind.
My eyes forward all the time.
Single heart, purified.
Undivided, unified.
Single heart, Single mind.

May You find in us,

Solitary trust
May you find a single heart!

Here is another song [Pure Heart](#) -- **take a moment to ponder your life in light the words sung by Craig Smith and make it your prayer to the Father today:**

Over and over I hear it again
That the Father desires pure heart
Not to seek earthly treasure or the favor of man
But to be found with pureness of heart

Chorus

***Pure heart is what the Father desires
Holy heart purified by God's holy fire
Broken heart, proven to be faithful and true
Fashion in me a heart that's thirsting for You***

Search ever chamber, expose them to me
Create motives of honor and simplicity
May you find faithfulness, integrity
A heart which is worthy for Your eyes to see

Chorus

My only ambition is to stand before You
And find I was pleasing in Your sight
An obedient child of God, faithful and true
Found with pureness of heart

Chorus

THE NEW COVENANT AND AN UNDIVIDED HEART

In Ezekiel 11:19-note in a prophetic promise to Israel which speaks of the New Covenant

"And I shall give them **one heart**, and shall put a new spirit within them. And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,

The NIV translates it

I will give them an **undivided heart** and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

This description of **one heart, an undivided heart**, is the miracle that occurs at conversion when a spiritual and moral transformation takes place which enables God's people to follow Him wholeheartedly. So an undivided heart is describes as it were our "position" but may not always describe our "practice." That is where we must learn to relinquish all vestiges of self-reliance ("*I will grit my teeth and follow God with an undivided heart.*") and instead learn daily (and even moment by moment) to rely wholly on the Holy Spirit Ezekiel describes in Ezekiel 36:26-27-note

"Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

This is clearly a promise of the New Covenant and in that covenant we do well to carefully note "*the spiritual cooperation*" between God and man. So in Ezekiel 36:27 first God's Spirit will **cause** those in the New Covenant to **walk in His statues** The New Testament parallel is described by Paul who teaches that the Spirit is in us continually giving us the desire and the power to be pleasing to our Father (to walk with an undivided heart) (Php 2:13NLT-note). The second part of Ezekiel 36:27 describes our responsibility to act on the provided "desire and power." While we are 100% dependent on God's Spirit, we are (somewhat enigmatically or mysteriously) **100% responsible** to be **careful to observe** God's ordinances. As we learn to walk by the Spirit's

enabling power, we will not carry out the desire of the flesh (a manifestation of a divided heart!) (See Galatians 5:16-[note](#)).

In summary to manifest an undivided heart toward God and His law is our divinely given potential, and yet we must daily work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Php 2:12-note), learning to depend on the Spirit Who will enable us to walk with an undivided heart. And this is a process of progressive sanctification that will continue all the days of our life on earth. And realizing our continual need for supernatural power and grace, we cry out to our Father as did David...

Teach me Thy way, O LORD; I will walk in Thy truth; Unite my heart to fear Thy name. I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And will glorify Thy name forever. (Psalm 86:11, 12)

Have you prayed this way beloved? It would be good for us to daily humble ourselves at the Throne of God beseeching Him to have mercy on us in the time of need and bestowing upon us by His enabling Spirit an undivided heart, a whole heart that gives thanks to Him and seeks to glorify His Name forever. Amen

"BAD FAITH"

Wikipedia has an interesting article on "**bad faith**" that essentially describes the opposite of an undivided heart:

Bad faith ([Latin](#): *mala fides*) is double mindedness or double heartedness in [duplicity](#), [fraud](#), or [deception](#). It may involve [intentional](#) deceit of others, or [self-deception](#). The expression "bad faith" is associated with "double heartedness", which is also translated as "double mindedness". A bad faith belief may be formed through self-deception, being double minded, or "of two minds", which is associated with faith, belief, [attitude](#), and [loyalty](#). In the 1913 *Webster's Dictionary*, bad faith was equated with being double hearted, "of two hearts", or "a sustained form of deception which consists in entertaining or pretending to entertain one set of feelings, and acting as if influenced by another" The concept is similar to [perfidy](#), or being "without faith", in which deception is achieved when one side in a conflict promises to act in good faith (e.g. by raising a flag of surrender) with the intention of breaking that promise once the enemy has exposed himself. ([See full article](#))

AN UNDIVIDED HEART "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8-note)

The apostle Paul said, "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead ..." (Philippians 3:13). Now there is a person who had an undivided heart. Many of us today could say, "These eight things I do ..." or "These four things I do ..." instead of saying, "This one thing I do. ..." It's the problem of a divided heart.

The word, "**pure**," in Matthew 5:8 means "**undivided**." In other words, blessed, or happy, is the person who has an **undivided heart**. Happy is the man or woman with a pure heart. Happy is the person who knows where he or she is going in life, who has priorities and lives by them. Happy is the person who isn't trying to live in two worlds. We live in such a wicked time in which we are exposed to so many things that could be spiritually harmful. It seems that we are lacking purity today. But according to Romans 16:19, we as believers are "to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil." Another translation reads, "I would have you well versed and wise as to what is good and innocent and guileless as to what is evil" (AMPLIFIED). God is offering you true happiness, which is not contingent on how much you have, but who you know. If you don't get your life properly aligned with God, you will always be chasing an elusive dream. But if you get your life aligned with God and start seeking Him, you will find purpose in life. You will find the happiness you are seeking. (Greg Laurie - For Every Season: Daily Devotions)

In Deut 18:13 God says "You shall be **blameless** before the LORD your God." The NAS marginal note reads "Lit complete, perfect; or having integrity." Wiersbe explains that "It speaks of integrity and an undivided heart, what David meant when he wrote, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart" (Ps. 101:2NKJV). The Jewish "Shema" declared, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5NIV)."

Blameless (without defect or blemish, perfect, integrity) ([08549](#))([tamim](#)) from the verb **tamam** = to be complete, entire or whole (literal sense in [Lev 3:9](#), [Ezek 15:5](#)), refers to a action which is completed) has both physical (without defect) and spiritual (blameless, devout, upright) significance. **Tamim** has the fundamental idea of completeness or wholeness. In Deut 18:13 tamim is translated in the Septuagint with [teleios](#) means complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness, in good working order. In the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) [teleios](#) is used several times to describe a heart that is **wholly devoted** (Heb = [shalem](#)). This begs the question beloved "Is my heart teleios? Would God describe me as wholly devoted to Him? Or have become like Solomon, who began "wholly devoted" but ended his race not "wholly devoted?" David had a whole heart but Solomon a **divided** heart! And as a result God **divided** the 12 tribes into 10 northern and 2 southern! There are serious consequences for not seeking to maintain an undivided heart!

The antithesis of an undivided heart is a "Divided Heart" - Herbert Vander Lugt has a devotional on **THE DIVIDED HEART** - Hosea describes this heart

Ephraim mixes himself with the nations; Ephraim has become a cake not turned. 9 Strangers devour his strength, Yet he does not know it; Gray hairs also are sprinkled on him, Yet he does not know it. 10 Though the pride of Israel testifies against him, Yet they have neither returned to the LORD their God, Nor have they sought Him, for all this. 11 So Ephraim has become like a silly dove, without sense; They call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. 12 When they go, I will spread My net over them; I will bring them down like the birds of the sky. I will chastise them in accordance with the proclamation to their assembly. (Hosea 7:8-12)

The Israelites of Hosea's day were trying to worship both pagan idols and the one true and living God. So the prophet Hosea used three colorful figures of speech to describe their divided hearts. First, they were like a half-baked cake—palatable neither to God nor the pagans (7:8). Second, they were like a proud man who can't see the signs of his aging—they were unaware of their spiritual decline (Hosea 7:9-10). Third, they were like a senseless dove—flying from one pagan nation to another in a vain quest for help (Hosea 7:11). Today, we as Christians are often afflicted with the same divided-heart syndrome. We believe on Jesus but are reluctant to commit every area of our lives to Him. We go to church but don't want to live out our faith each day if it deprives us of worldly success or pleasure. A divided heart, though, results in some serious consequences. First, we don't please God or attract nonbelievers to Christ. Second, it may take a crisis to show us our true spiritual decline. And third, we live unfulfilled lives, even though we flit from one worldly pleasure to another. Let's pray each day, "Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name" (Psalm 86:11). —Herbert Vander Lugt (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

**An undivided heart, O Lord,
Is what we need each day,
For we are prone to compromise
And wander from Your way.**

—D. De Haan

A divided heart multiplies our problems.

Beloved, yes, we need an **undivided heart each day**, but the only way possible to *humanly* maintain an undivided heart is by continually relying on the *superhuman* power of the indwelling Spirit. When we wander (which we will) we need to quickly confess and repent, and even those actions are enabled by the Spirit, Who gives us the desire and the power to walk in a manner pleasing to our Father (Php 2:13NLT).

UNDIVIDED - Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. (Ps 86:11)

IN WORD - A divided heart. It's a Christian's greatest enemy, and it should be our greatest fear. It wreaks havoc on our contentment and undermines our devotion. It corrupts our worship because one side of our heart competes with the other. The competition causes us to tell God we want to love and honor Him, while simultaneously telling ourselves we can pursue our own agenda at will. A divided heart has multiple loves, and multiple loves are always weak. That's what Jesus said too. He told His disciples they couldn't serve two masters because they would end up loving one and hating the other (Matthew 6:24). That's what divided hearts do; they are eventually compelled to choose one of their loves over the other. They have too many choices to start with, so they compromise. David prays in this psalm that God might give him an undivided heart so that he might fear God's name. He knows that when a person tolerates other loves, it's because that person has grown casual with God. An undivided heart solves the problem; single-mindedness toward God makes a person free to serve and love Him with everything at his or her disposal. It reintroduces respect and awe. It puts things in the proper perspective.

IN DEED - Pursue an undivided heart. Ask God for it. A divided heart will ruin your spiritual life, introducing apathy, removing godly fear, and tempting you with other loves. Worship cannot exist under such conditions. A divided love is hardly love at all. David's remedy isn't within himself. He knows that his heart is God's domain, and only God can change it. He resolves to praise God with all his heart and glorify God's name forever (Ps 86:12), but pure resolve isn't the answer. So David asked God for His resources, His strength, and His work within him. We can too. We can trust Him with the greatest enemy to our worship and ask Him to give us a single, focused love. ([The One Year Worship the King Devotional: 365 Daily Bible Readings to Inspire Praise - Chris Tiegreen](#))

Blessed are the single-hearted; for they shall enjoy much peace.

—THOMAS À KEMPIS

Blessed in Believing - "She who has believed is blessed because what was spoken to her by the Lord will be fulfilled!" (Luke 1:45) In the kingdom of God, **believing** is a prerequisite to **receiving**. God spoke to Mary and gave the assurances He always gives when He assigns the impossible to His people. Everything was in place for God to act. Everything waited on Mary to believe Him. Once she believed, it was done! **It takes an undivided heart to believe under such circumstances** and a pure heart to see God (Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14). This has always been God's way with His people. Mary could not see all that had been arranged and assembled in the courts of heaven. She could not see the legions of angels prepared to protect her and her baby. She was unaware of the future and all that she and her child would face. All she knew was that God had spoken to her, and that was enough. So she responded: "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). When God speaks about His plans, He does so with everything already in place to fulfill His word. God never speaks hypothetically. He knows exactly what will come to pass. He simply asks you to believe Him. You will experience great blessing when you place your absolute trust in Him. Mary could not have dreamed all that would result from her faithful obedience. Likewise, you cannot possibly imagine all that God has in store for you when you trust Him. He knows exactly what He will do to bring salvation to someone you have prayed for or to heal your friend or to provide for your needs. God has everything in place. Will you believe Him? (Henry Blackaby - Experiencing God Day by Day)

AN UNDIVIDED HEART (Lutheran devotional published in 1799) - THE heart should not be divided. I say to the hypocrite, God has given you two eyes, that you may look both above and beneath you; that you may contemplate both heaven and hell. He has given you two ears, that you may hearken both to the accuser and the accused, when you have to judge between them; two hands, that you may raise one upwards to God, and receive, and stretch forth the other towards your neighbour, and give; two feet, that you may serve yourself and your master; but you have only one head, and one heart. God approves not of those who are double-minded, or double-tongued; from whose lips comes forth at the same time that which is cold and hot; and who speak not the same when they sit as when they stand; who divide their heart between Him and the devil. A double-hearted man is a monster, which God will not accept as an offering. God demands an undivided heart. Such, also, is the demand of Satan; for though he may not immediately persuade you that you should give him your heart, and seems to be satisfied with a part of it, yet he aims at the whole. He knows full well that God will not receive a divided heart, and that therefore the whole shall yet be his own, being rejected of God. The heart is but of small capacity; but if it were greater, it would be your duty to make it the undivided dwelling-place of Him from whom you have received it, and who alone can make it better. Who has given you authority to dispose of that which was not yours, but God's? To Him the whole belongs, and not merely a portion. How is it possible that you can unite God and Satan within you? How can they both take a part of one heart? Satan tempts to that which is evil; God moves you to that which is good. God destroys the work of Satan; Satan, on the other hand, would throw down the work of God. Where God dwells is heaven, where Satan dwells is hell. How can your heart, at the same time, be in heaven and in hell? Where God dwells, he is served and obeyed; where Satan dwells, he also is obeyed. Can you serve two masters so opposite in every respect? God has given me my whole heart, not to use it at its uncontrolled possessor, but as a steward, answerable to Him. I will, by his grace, not abuse my trust; but restore him his own. My heart is His, not mine! ([Henry Muller - Hours of Spiritual Refreshment](#))

[Horatius Bonar](#) writes that "God's desire that we should be clean. He desireth truth in the inward parts. He is faithful to us, and he wishes us to be faithful to him. God is not indifferent to our unfaithfulness, as if it mattered not to him. Nor does he treat it as a mere affront, or only as a sin, with which he is angry and which he condemns and will avenge. He wants our heart, our whole undivided heart; he wants it all for himself; he wants to fill it. He is a jealous God. Moreover he pities us because of the misery which our unfaithfulness brings on us. He sees us gaining nothing, but losing everything by it; and he pities us; he yearns over us; for our own sakes he desires to see us faithful to himself. Such is the God with whom we have to do. He is one who takes a deep and loving interest in our welfare, and who pities us even when he judges us. ([Light and Truth](#))

Ruth 1:14-note "And they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung ([dabaq](#)) to her." Bonar comments on **Ruth and her cleaving**. "Orpah kissed, but Ruth clave. Orpah kissed that she might not cleave. Ruth cleaves silently, and without show or demonstration. She lingers not nor halts. Moab is behind her, Israel is before her, Naomi is at her side. Her choice is made. She falters not either in heart or in step. Yonder are Judah's hills; behind them lies Bethlehem; she presses forward. Jehovah must be her God, and Jehovah's land her heritage. Nothing shall come between. She forgets her kindred and her father's house. What are Moab's hills, or cities, or temples, or gods? Jehovah, God of Israel, is now her God for ever. **Here is cleaving; here is decision; here are faith and love; here is the undivided heart.**"

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THE UNDIVIDED HEART

Psalm 86:11

"Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name" (Psalm 86:11).

[Listen to this sermon](#)

[Sermon by Ray Pritchard - visit his site](#) - often uses wonderful stories to illustrate Biblical principles

The translators are divided on how to translate this phrase. For instance, the NASB says, "Unite my heart to fear your name." The CEB gives a more general sense, "Make my heart focused only on honoring your name." Then we have this paraphrase from the ERV, "Help me make worshiping your name the most important thing in my life." Eugene Peterson (MSG) gives us this colorful rendering:

"Put me together, one heart and mind;
then, undivided, I'll worship in joyful fear."

I like that because it sounds like the way I often pray: "Put me together, Lord, because right now my life is scattered in a thousand directions." Most days my heart doesn't seem "undivided," and it certainly feels like it needs some kind of "uniting." So I like this phrase both ways:

"Unite my heart to fear your name."

"Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name."

The first speaks of my need.

The second speaks of my desire.

Because my heart is so often divided, I need the Lord to unite it somehow so that I might worship him with nothing held back. That is the situation many of us face right now. Our hearts are fragmented because we are pulled in so many directions at once.

The world around us is no help. Last Sunday our pastor preached on "Trash, Trinkets and Treasures," in which he commented that sometimes we are enticed by things that turn out to be trash, and sometimes we are distracted by things that are not bad in themselves, but when pursued as the goal of life end up being trinkets, little gaudy baubles that amount to nothing much when you look at them closely.

Sometimes we treat trinkets as if they were treasure.

How hard it is to focus on the treasures of life!

How easy to mistake the trinkets for treasures!

In order to get some practical help in this area, let's start with a very basic question. What are the marks of a divided heart?

1. Perpetual Ambivalence

It has been said that a narcissist is a person who is unable to commit to anything outside of himself. He flits from one relationship to another, from one job to another, from one friendship to another, from one church to another, from one promise to another, never staying in one place long enough to make anything stick. He's here today and gone tomorrow. He promises and then makes excuses. He says, "I'll call you tomorrow," and then forgets and apologizes later. Or maybe he never remembers at all. He dates one girl after another, never able to pop the question because he's so easily distracted and because he deeply fears making a commitment that will require him to stay married for the rest of his life.

As I pondered this situation, a verse came to mind from 1 Chronicles 12, which lists the soldiers who came to David's aid when he was in Ziklag and later in Hebron. These soldiers from various tribes in Israel realized that even though David was not king over Israel yet, God's hand was upon him and he was bound to replace Saul sooner or later.

He's here today and gone tomorrow.

So you have the list of men from Benjamin, Gad, Manasseh, and so on. Perhaps the most famous are the men of Issachar (1 Chronicles 12:32) who "understood the times and knew what Israel should do." Many fine sermons have been preached in praise of these men from one of the lesser-known tribes. Then in the very next verse we find this note about the warriors from the tribe of Zebulun. They are described as

Experienced soldiers prepared for battle with every type of weapon, to help David with undivided loyalty-50,000 (v. 33).

Here you have a great host of trained soldiers who came to David ready to fight. They showed up in full battle gear, shield and spears and bows, ready to go to battle at a moment's notice. But that is not their finest quality. There is something even better to be said about them. They were men of "undivided loyalty." The original Hebrew text emphasizes this in an unusual way when it uses the word for "not" and the word "heart" repeated twice.

Not heart and heart.

Not "double-hearted."

Not partly for Saul and partly for David.

But having made their choice, it was one heart all the time, nothing held back.

These men said, "David, we are all in. Where you lead, we will follow. Say the word and we will go into battle. We serve at your command-and only at your command."

Are you "double-hearted"?

Three thousand years after the men of Zebulun came to David, we remember them not for their military prowess (which must have been great) but for their hearts.

They were not "heart and heart."

They were not "double-hearted."

They were in all the way.

People with a divided heart can't talk that way.

They are in and out at the same time.

There is a second characteristic of a divided heart . . .

2. Divided Priorities

In Matthew 13 Jesus told a parable about a man who went out to sow seed. Some fell on the path, some on the stony ground, some among the thorns, and some on the good ground. When Jesus explained the parable, he said that the four soils represented four responses to the message of the kingdom. Let's focus on the seed sown among the thorns. Here is that part of the parable:

"Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants" (Matthew 13:7).

And this is the explanation:

"The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22)

If you have ever planted a garden, you understand what Jesus is saying. No matter how good the soil may appear from above, weeds lurk just below the surface. If you do not pull them up, they will choke out the seed you have planted.

Jesus said that some people are like that. They are fence-straddlers. They say "Yes but . . ." when they hear the Word. Maybe they mean business, but they never pull the weeds out of their

Weeds lurk just below the surface.

life. In this parable Jesus mentions two particular kinds of weeds. First, the worries of this life. This refers to any consuming concern in your life that catches all your attention. It could be something that in itself is not bad—such as a genuine concern for your job or your health or your personal financial situation. It could be a relationship that takes up all your waking moments. It could be a family issue that keeps you tossing and turning at night.

Second, there is the deceitfulness of wealth. Again, we all understand this. Money is addictive. The more you have, the more you want. You've probably heard the story of the rich man who when asked when he would stop working so hard, replied, "When I have enough money." How much is enough? "Just one more dollar." That is the deceitfulness of riches. And it's not just a temptation to the rich man. The love of money comes to all of us, seduces us, whispers to us over and over again: "If only you had a little bit more, you would be happy."

It's important to remember that Jesus is not describing "unusual" or "strange" temptations. We all have things that worry us. Several months ago I happened to see the Wednesday night prayer list that our church publishes. It was printed on a legal-size piece of paper. The list of the sick took up one side of the sheet, printed in extremely small type, so small I could hardly read it. So many names, so many needs.

Money is addictive.

We all face sickness, family crisis, medical issues, financial troubles, marital problems, struggles with our children, disappointments,

setbacks, career issues, and periods of doubt and anger and spiritual struggle.

We live in a very fallen world.

No one is exempt from the troubles of life.

We get sick, our loved ones get sick.

Financial pressures weigh on all of us.

Death knocks on our door sooner or later.

No one is exempt from the troubles of life.

How quickly the “thorns of life” arise to divide our heart and divert our attention. These problems, trials and difficulties can choke out God’s work and leave us spiritually anemic.

There is a third sign of a divided heart . . .

3. Unclear Identity

This follows logically.

When the heart is divided, you won’t know who you really are.

You can’t decide what team you’re on.

You don’t know what uniform to put on.

You act single even though you are married.

You have two sets of friends that you keep separate.

You have two vocabularies depending on where you are.

You know how to fit in wherever you happen to be.

You are like the proverbial chameleon, changing your colors so you will always blend in.

When the heart is divided, you won’t know who you really are.

Living with a divided heart messes up the mind eventually. When you join the devil’s team, you won’t feel comfortable going back to the Lord’s locker room at halftime. The strange, sad case of the Apostle Peter provides a prime example. On the night before the crucifixion, when Jesus met with his chosen men in the Upper Room, Peter took a look around and wasn’t very impressed with what he saw:

“Lord, I don’t know about these other guys. They look a little weak to me. I wouldn’t count on them if I were you. But don’t worry. You’ve got me. I’m your man. No matter what the rest of them do, I will never betray you. You have my word on it. I’ll never let you down.”

Or more simply put,

“Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never desert you”(Matthew 26:33 NLT).

I’m sure Peter meant it. If you had asked him, I’m sure he would have said, “I know I’m a little rough around the edges, and sometimes I put my foot in my mouth. It’s true I’m a fisherman and not some Torah scholar, but I know my own heart, and I will never desert you, Lord.”

But that’s the problem. Peter didn’t know his own heart.

Less than five hours after proclaiming his loyalty, the bold apostle turned to butter.

All it took was a servant girl to bring him down.

When you join the devil’s team, you won’t feel comfortable going back to the Lord’s locker room at halftime.

When the sordid triple betrayal was over, Peter wept bitterly and went away to be by himself, awash in shame and regret.

Then came Easter morning when the women went to the tomb, little knowing that Jesus had risen from the dead. When they arrived at the tomb early on Sunday morning, an angel announced the good news and instructed them to “go, tell his disciples and Peter” (Mark 16:7). What does that mean-“his disciples and Peter?” Peter’s denial has separated him from the other disciples. No doubt he wondered to himself many times, “What am I now? Am I a traitor or am I a disciple?”

How quickly he fell.

No wonder he is confused.

His divided heart has tripped him up.

That happens when we decide to play for Jesus’ team and for the Devil’s team at the same time.

At some point you’ve got to make up your mind.

Choose a team and stick with it!

Follow Jesus-or don't!

But stop messing around with most basic commitments of life.

When You Know Who You Are . . .

Two weeks ago I had the privilege of teaching the book of Daniel to 120 eager students at Word of Life Bible Institute in Hudson, Florida. Whenever I teach Daniel, I start out in the first session talking a lot about Daniel's decision not to defile himself with the king's food.

But I don't start with Daniel.

I start with a quote from Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard:

"And now with God's help, I will become myself."

That leads to a question that is hard to answer:

"Do you know who you are?"

Until you do, you'll never really know where you fit in.

Once you know who you are, you can fit in anywhere.

That was the secret to Daniel's greatness. He knew who he was, even in Babylon, hundreds of miles from Jerusalem, ripped away from his homeland, forcibly marched across the desert to the pagan city of Babylon.

Do you know who you are?

There he was enrolled in a school he did not choose.

Learning a language that was not his own,

Absorbing a culture both foreign and utterly pagan,

Being trained to serve in the Babylonian court.

Then he was given a pagan name. The name Daniel means "God is my judge," which tells us that he was raised in a godly home. The Babylonians called him Belteshazzar, which means something like "Bel, protect his life." It was a prayer to a pagan deity.

To all of these changes he either gave his assent or at least he did not actively protest. In the case of the deportation to Babylon, he had no choice. He and his friends were captured and taken by the Babylonians against their will. When they arrived in Babylon, he and his friends were put in a three-year, all-expenses-paid training program. Without doubt, it was a great honor to be chosen to serve the Babylonian king.

Part of that training involved eating at the king's table. It would like eating at Buckingham Palace. The king always eats well. They give him the best of the best. So to eat at the king's table meant the best food, expertly prepared, served with the best wines.

The King always eats well.

It meant eating well every day.

It was the best the world had to offer.

And Daniel said no.

"But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank" (Daniel 1:8).

The King James version says he "purposed in his heart."

You can only "purpose in your heart" when you have an undivided heart.

You know the rest of the story. Daniel and friends ate water and cereal for ten days. They ended up looking healthier and stronger than those who ate at the king's table. As a result, they were recognized and rewarded by the king himself (Daniel 1:17-21).

Daniel purposed in his heart.

Good story. Happy ending.

One question hangs in the air. Where did Daniel find the strength to say no to the food from the king's table? My answer is simple. Daniel knew who he was so he knew where to draw the line.

Daniel never forgot who he was and he never forgot where he came from. It was as if he was saying, "I may look Babylonian on the outside, but I'm 100% Jewish on the inside."

This teaches us that you can't corrupt a man from the outside. You can change a culture but not a character. You can change his name but not his nature. Daniel may have looked like a pagan, but on the inside he was a servant of the living God. Even the mighty Nebuchadnezzar could do nothing about that.

Daniel never forgot who he was.

We live in a world where biblical values are constantly under attack. We won't change the world's way of thinking any time soon.

But will the world change our way of thinking?
That's the question that hangs in the balance.

When I taught all this to the students, I told them it finally comes down to one great principle:

When you know who you are, you can serve Christ anywhere.

And the reverse is also true: When you are unclear about who you really are, you will struggle to serve Christ anywhere.

A man with a divided heart cannot grasp his true identity.
He will be pulled this way and that.
Under pressure he almost certainly will cave in.

But the man with an undivided heart knows who he is.
Because he knows who he is, he doesn't have to constantly make decisions.
Once you make up your mind, life becomes simpler (though not always easier).

Years ago I used to watch a preacher on TV who had one signature line that he repeated over and over again:

If you're going to be a Christian, be one!

That strikes me as excellent advice.
It starts by having an undivided heart.

And that brings us back to the beginning, back to Psalm 86:11, "Unite my heart to fear your name" and "Put me together, Lord." As Spurgeon contemplated this verse, he offered this succinct summary:

If you're going to be a Christian, be one!

A man of divided heart is weak, the man of one object is *the* man.

The italics are in the original. Sometimes in our conversation, we will say of so-and-so, "He is *the* man." We mean he is a man of one purpose, the man we admire and want to follow.

Such a man is *the* man.

After I shared some of these thoughts at our Men's Bible study, the Lord seemed to grant us a kind of holy introspection. One man later told his wife, "I've got some business to do with the Lord." Another man said, "I think we all have a divided heart."

That's why David prayed this prayer.
He looked within and saw his heart pulled in a hundred directions.

So he prayed, "Unite my heart, O Lord."

There is no prayer more appropriate and more needed in our day. Every honest man or woman must at times say, "My life is far from what I want it to be."

We marinate in hate.

We run low on love.
We find ourselves distracted, worried and easily confused.
We fall prey to little temptations that lead to bigger ones.
We marinate in hate.
We dawdle in our duties.
We make excuses for every failure.
We find ourselves both disagreeing and disagreeable.
We love the world more than we love God.
We live in unbelief instead of walking in faith.
We refuse to submit because our pride is at stake.

And so it goes, this struggle of the soul to find rest and peace.
No wonder we are frustrated.

When the heart is not united, nothing works right. Without God, we will be fragmented and torn and pulled and distracted.

A Prayer for a United Heart

We must do as David did. We must pray, “O Lord, take the scattered fragments of my heart and unite them so that I may praise you.” Only God can do this, but God can do it if we will come to him in humility and sincerity.

The hardest part is coming. Until you admit you need God’s help, you will be stuck exactly where you are.

So here is a prayer that may help us all:

We must do as David did.

Lord Jesus,
I need to hear these ancient words once again:
Unite my heart to fear your name.
I am so scattered, Lord.
Pulled in so many directions.
So easily distracted.
How quickly I forget who you are.
How quickly I forget your goodness to me.
Unite my heart, Lord.
Put it back together again.
Refocus my thoughts.
Clarify my purpose.
Grant that I should want you more than anything else.
Thank you for your many gifts, freely given.
Forgive me for loving your gifts more than I love you.
In confessing this I ask for forgiveness in Jesus’ name.
Here is my heart, Lord.
Come in and rearrange things.
Make me new from the inside out.
Thank you for loving me even when I seem to lose my way.
I love you, Lord. Do your work in me.
Unite my heart to fear your name.
Amen.

You might want to say that prayer aloud. Perhaps you should print it and post it somewhere so you can use it again when you need it.

These lines from [Come, Thou Fount](#) speak to our deepest need:

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

If the first two lines describe our need, then the last two lines describe our prayer. May God take our scattered hearts and unite them, seal them by his grace, that we might serve him with joy on earth as one day we will serve him in heaven.

Do it, Lord. Unite our hearts to fear your name. Amen.