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The Heart
The Heart of the Matter

Chapter I

of the Matter
It happened unexpectedly.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPERIENCE THE FULLNESS OF GOD’S LOVE? In this little book I want to get to the heart of the matter—the condition of your heart. You will experience the fullness of God’s love when you have exchanged your “old heart,” full of self and things that keep God’s love from flowing into your heart and life—for a “new heart.” This exchange will be a heart transplant that brings total spiritual transformation.

So stop trying to fix the old—let God give you something new. I want to show you the steps to your own heart transformation by letting you see how God showed me my own need for a new heart.

It happened unexpectedly. I knew that I was saved—born and raised in the church for that matter. I had grown up in the ministry and then moved on into my own full-time ministry, so I was used to the routine. Certain things were just part of my personality...had been for many years. I didn’t realize it at that moment, but it was time for a change.

Right before we held the Chicago Summit in May of 2000, we had held a summit in Pensacola, Florida—which did not turn out the way that I thought it should have. We had rented a ten-thousand-seat auditorium, and only about
six to seven thousand attendees showed up. But it wasn’t just the attendance; across the board the conference did not turn out the way that I had hoped. Immediately after that conference, I started carrying a burden—Pensacola had been unsuccessful.

As the date approached for the Chicago Summit, the Lord began to get my attention. We were planning to have the event in a beautiful church that seated forty-five hundred people. It was going to be impressive. You see, I was determined, because of what had “happened” in Pensacola, that I was going to make the Chicago Summit go over the top—everything was going to be just right.

Then I was hit with the unexpected. One day just as I pulled up to my garage, the phone rang. My assistant, Tonya, explained that we were not going to be able to use the “beautiful” facility and that we had to switch to another facility. It was not as big and was more difficult for the people to get to. When she was finished, I hung up and began to weep.

As the tears rolled down my face, God said, “You are thinking like man. You are always concerned about the outward appearance. You are always trying to make that outward image look acceptable.” He continued, “Jesus made Himself of no reputation, yet it is your reputation
that has become most important to you. You are thinking about all that you are doing, the major platforms where you are able to speak, and all the exposure that you are getting. But what is the condition of your heart toward Me and toward My people?’’

I sat there in my driveway, confused, and said to the Lord, “My heart? You know that everything I am doing I am doing to please You.”

He responded, “You are not doing what you can to please Me. You are doing what you can to please people. You are doing what you can to be accepted by people.”

Then He began to show me how my burden for the Pensacola Summit was not really about whether the people
had or had not been blessed. They were blessed. But the truth was that I had left that conference wondering, *What are people going to say because the auditorium was not filled? What are people going to say because this or that thing was not right? What are people going to say because the flyers looked homemade?*

God said, “Let Me show you some little things,” and He started surfacing things about my personality, things I had reasoned were “just me”—but really, they were errors in my heart. He said, “The sad thing is, you are so far away from Me. You are nowhere near Me though you think that you are.”

A person who maintains the reins of his heart and controls the patterns of his mind impresses God.

He took me to Ephesians 2:8, which says that we are not saved “by works.” Then He continued, “You need to
accept the fact that I am making you the ‘righteousness of God.’ You have been working under the assumption that all of your works have impressed Me, and I am not impressed by any of it.”

Finally He said, “The reason that I am not impressed is because you are so far away from the goal that I have set for you. You are racing, trying to ‘make it happen’ on a big scale in auditoriums and all of that. But what about the little, everyday people whom I put on your heart to be a blessing to? You have ignored that because you think nobody can see it.”

God dealt with me as I sat there in my driveway. He said, “I want to give you a new heart.”

“A new heart?” I asked. “But I already feel like I am saved.”

“Your salvation is according to the salvation of the traditional church,” He responded. “Now I want to save you for real.”

Many of God’s people think the way I thought. We assume that we operate from our personalities, that we have a certain style—a modus operandi—when really, it is a much deeper matter. In actuality, our preconceived thought patterns move us far away from God’s character and from what He expects from us as His children.
So many of us want to concentrate our efforts on our “overt” walk with the Lord, one where we are more interested in what others think than we are with what God thinks about us. We constantly try to “fix up” what people see about us.

**A Real Conversion? A True Salvation?**

I was not expecting to receive a “new heart” message. I felt that I had given my heart to God when I was converted, but somewhere along the way it had gone into a dormant state. I knew that I had accepted Christ as my personal Savior. My spirit man, or my heart, was converted, and I began to get into the Word. You see, I wanted to transform my mind so that my life could begin to experience what had happened in my heart. Then somewhere along the line, I started reading the Word of God to prepare me to preach the gospel—not to convert my own mind.

When I began doing this, even though I was preaching a powerful gospel, I was having difficulties and struggles in my personal life, constantly warring against the flesh. My mind warred against my heart, and my heart warred against my mind. I could never seem to bring my thoughts and emotions under subjection to my converted heart.

My ministry became my career, and even though I
knew that I had been called to preach, I believe it was God’s compassion for His people that kept me there. Hear me. When God’s people cried out in the Old Testament, He would supply what they needed because He had heard their cry. His heart is tender toward His people. So when I said to Him that I was willing to “go,” and there was a cry from His people, He anointed me and used me in His work.

Yet God loved me so much that He said, “While you are preaching to others, I do not want to forget about you.”

**The True Heart Revealed**

The Lord took me to Jeremiah 17:9–10, where He said:
The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly pernicious and corrupt and severely, mortally sick! Who can know it [perceive, understand, be acquainted with his own heart and mind]? I the Lord search the mind, I try the heart, even to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.

God had tried my heart, and I had failed the test. As a result, in all the good that I was doing, my heart still wore the core of wickedness.

If we are not careful, we can be doing a religious work and still be backslidden in our hearts. We can do this without realizing it, either because our works are so wonderful or because the responses our works are getting are so wonderful. We may even feel God’s anointing and presence upon our works, which can, in itself, become a deception. How? Our works can be so “good” that we never stop to recheck our heart to see if it is found in right standing with God.

So how can this “old heart,” which was “born in sin” and “shaped in iniquity,” love God? Real love cannot come out of this heart. Only a phileo kind of love (which means the natural human affection, with its strong feeling, or sentiment) can come from a wicked heart. Agape love
(unconditional and eternal) is never found in our “old hearts.” The only way that you can truly love God is to love Him with the same love that He has given to you.

Loving God brings about a commitment to Him. When you love somebody, you are committed to him in every way. There is nothing that you will not do for someone you love. You would be willing to lay down your life for your loved one. So when you say, “I love You, Lord,” but still walk in your own ways, then you do not really love the Lord. You are still going about in your “religious affairs,” and you do not have a real relationship with Him, which will bring about a change of character and a change in the way you walk. A real relationship with Him enables you to walk in His commandments.

If you do not have a real relationship with Him, then you merely “appreciate” Him for the life and breath that He has given you. You are grateful for the way He makes for you out of no way and for all the things He permits you to have. But you are still operating from a materialistic standpoint—and that is not real love. It cannot become real until you become committed and submitted to His ways.