

The Axis of Evil Within

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will direct your paths. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the LORD and turn your back on evil.
--Proverbs 3:5-7 (NLT)**

"Follow your heart," the world says. "That's how to find yourself, your purpose, and your fulfillment -- just follow your heart."

I haven't found that to be very good advice in my life. In fact, in the search for wisdom, I've found my heart to be a highly *unreliable* source of guidance. No one can deceive me and mislead me like I can. Because my heart always seems right to me, even though it's often dead wrong.

The human heart (if I may steal a phrase from a presidential speechwriter) is an axis of evil. Everything the fleshly heart desires revolves around things that are contrary to the ways of God. "The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" (Jeremiah 17:9) The heart can be so convincing when it argues within us that we are an exception to the rule set forth in the Bible, and we can be so easily deceived.

Thankfully, the Lord has given us a way to conquer the "axis of evil" within us: Don't follow your heart, but force your heart to follow Him, fully trusting Him to steer you rightly and never to fail to map out the best way for you.

Let's look briefly at a few practical examples of how this might apply to your life:

1) Your heart is fully capable of falling deeply in love with someone the Scriptures forbid you to marry. (Perhaps because you're already married to someone else, or the object of your affection is married. Or maybe you're both single, but you're a believer and the person you want to be with isn't.) If that happens, what will you do? Will you lay your heart's desires at the foot of the cross and follow God's will, or will you abandon what the Word says, being deceived by the overwhelming desires of your heart? (Or maybe you're in a difficult marriage, and your heart believes divorce is an option for you, though God forbids it. What will you do then?)

2) Your heart can be so wounded or angered by what someone did to you that it is fully convinced that revenge is justified, or that speaking bitterly about the offending person to others is all right in this particular circumstance. If that happens, what will you do? Will you follow your heart, or will you obey the Lord's command to forgive others for their sins against you?

3) When tragedy strikes, or things don't go your way, your heart will be prone to becoming angry at God, or to believing that He doesn't really care and can't be trusted to protect you and provide for you. If that happens, what will you do? Will you follow your heart and drift away from the Lord, or will you determine that you are going to cry out TO

God, not AGAINST Him, believing that all of God's promises are true, and that they all apply to you?

4) You may have been called to do something that requires God's enabling and provision to accomplish, and your heart, looking at circumstances, might say it isn't going to work. If that happens, what will you do? Will you believe the fleeting message from your heart that it's time to give up, or will you trust in God and persevere until He brings you to the place He has said you are to go in life?

The list could go on. And on. Chances are, you are facing a situation in some area of your life today that requires you to make a decision about what you'll believe and what you'll do. Don't make the mistake of following your deceitful, self-centered, faithless, fearful heart. Look to God alone. Trust Him with all your heart, not relying on your own understanding. And do everything He says.