

Sacred 4-Letter Words: WILL

Study Guide for Small Group Discussion and Personal Application
Lynn Haven UMC – February 14, 2021 – Pastor Craig Carter

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In this sermon series we are looking at four-letter English words that help us live as God intends us to live. In recent weeks we have been encouraged to be PURE in heart and transform our MIND. This week we will consider our hearts and our WILL.

Consider today that the image most associated with Valentine's Day is the heart. The word heart appears in the Bible some 700-800 times, and God is very interested in our hearts. Today we will explore the Biblical concept of the "heart" and why it is important to God.

For the eyes of the Lord roam throughout the earth, so that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. - 2 Chronicles 16:9a NASB

1) What is our "heart?"

In the Bible the heart represents the inner life of person, the essence of who we are. It includes our emotions, our spiritual center, and – most importantly – our WILL. The heart is the deciding place that determines our actions and whether we chose right or wrong, God's way or our own way.

King David was called "*a man after God's own heart*" - 1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22

While we tend to emphasize the outward attributes of an individual, God is much more concerned with a person's inner heart condition.

The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." - 1 Samuel 16:7 NLT

2) Why does God want our "heart?"

Never forget that God's greatest desire for us as His people is to be HOLY. This begins in our MIND and leads to having a PURE heart and a PURE life.

If God has our heart, He has us. This is not an emotional capturing of our heart, but a conscious decision to follow God and give Him our heart.

3) How do we give God our “heart?”

Giving God our heart is partly about our emotions and our thinking, but mostly it is a matter of our WILL. To give God our heart means that we are willing to submit to Him in obedience.

And I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their stony, stubborn heart and give them a tender, responsive heart, so they will obey my decrees and regulations. Then they will truly be my people, and I will be their God.
- Ezekiel 11:19-20 NLT

When we first give our heart to God through faith in Jesus Christ, He gives us a new heart that is FULL of the Holy Spirit and allows us to be obedient and teachable. That is just the beginning of our Christian life. Once we have accepted Jesus as our Savior, we then must make Him our Lord (our King and Ruler). To our saving faith we add a willingness to obey.

“Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” - Luke 22:42 ESV

A day must come for every believer when we give up all our rights to ourselves and submit our will to God. That one-time decision is then revealed through daily decisions.

“The battle of the will is the greatest battle a person will ever face. Surrender is not easy, nor painless. Rebellion, however, is more painful.” - Holy Is a Four-Letter Word

Conclusion

⇒ Have you ever watched a strong-willed child battle with his/her parents? What does the parent have in mind? How is the child reacting? How do you as an observer recognize that the parent has good in mind for the child, but the child is unteachable? Do you see this same stubbornness in yourself with regard to God?

⇒ Have you completely surrendered your WILL and given your heart completely to God? Once upon a time, or today and every day?

⇒ What does God want you to do for Him today? Where does He want you to go? How does He want you to obey?