

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

1415 Big Bethel Road | Hampton, Virginia 23666

Dr. Christopher C. Carter, Sr., Pastor

MATTERS

OF

Heart

BIBLE STUDY

February 2026

FROM THE HEART OF THE PASTOR

Dr. Christopher C. Carter, Sr.

Dear Church Family,

As we begin this study on *Matters of the Heart*, I want to encourage you to pause and reflect on just how central the heart is in every area of our lives. Scripture reminds us in Proverbs 4:23, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” The heart is not merely the seat of our emotions—it is the wellspring of our thoughts, our decisions, our attitudes, our relationships, and our faith.

What lives in the heart eventually shows up in our words.
What takes root in the heart eventually shapes our actions.
What we treasure in the heart ultimately determines the direction of our lives.

God has always been concerned with the condition of the heart. While people may look at outward appearance, the Lord looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). We can appear faithful on the outside yet struggle privately within. We can perform religious duties while harboring bitterness, fear, pride, or doubt. But God, in His mercy, invites us to bring our whole hearts before Him—honestly, humbly, and expectantly.

The good news is that God does not merely point out heart issues—He heals them. He promises in Ezekiel 36:26, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.” Through Christ, our hearts are renewed. Through the Holy Spirit, they are softened. Through God’s Word, they are shaped and transformed.

In every area of life—our marriages, our families, our friendships, our work, our service, and our witness—the heart is at the center. A guarded heart protects us from spiritual harm. A surrendered heart invites God’s direction. A grateful heart cultivates joy. A forgiving heart reflects Christ. A steadfast heart endures trials. A loving heart displays the very character of God.

As you engage in this Bible study, I encourage you not simply to gain information, but to allow the Lord to perform transformation. Ask Him:

- What is the true condition of my heart?
- Are there places where it has grown cold, distracted, or divided?
- What needs healing, surrender, or renewal?

May this be a season where we allow God to search us, refine us, and draw us closer to Him. When our hearts are aligned with His, everything else in our lives begins to fall into proper order.

Join me in being more intentional and purposeful in self-examination as it relates to the Matters of The Heart. As we grow in God’s grace and love we can bring a greater impact to The Kingdom of God, because we choose to live our lives with purity in our hearts.



MATTERS OF THE HEART

OVERVIEW

The heart in Scripture is not just emotions — it is the control center of the will, thoughts, motives, faith, and desires.

If God gets your heart, He gets everything else.

- The heart determines:
 - How you respond
 - What you pursue
 - Who you become
 - What you believe
 - What you say
- You don't act out of your situation — *you act out of your heart condition*

“Getting to the root of what really drives us”

Proverbs 4:23 — “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

This verse shows the heart as the **source** of life's direction — what controls the heart controls the person.

LESSON 1 ~ THE HEART: GOD'S CONTROL CENTER

Consider the thought of “**the heart as God's control center**”. In Scripture, the **heart** represents the core of a person — the control center of thoughts, will, emotions, character, and spiritual life.

In the Bible, the heart is more than emotions. It includes:

- **Mind (thoughts & understanding)**
 - **Will (decisions & choices)**
 - **Emotions (love, fear, sorrow, joy)**
 - **Conscience & spiritual sensitivity**
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THE HEART DIRECTS THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS

Luke 6:45 | “For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”

Matthew 15:19 | “For out of the heart come evil thoughts...”

It’s the **spiritual command center** of behavior.

GOD LOOKS AT THE HEART FIRST

1 Samuel 16:7 | “People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

God evaluates:

- Motives
- Intentions
- Sincerity
- Loyalty

Jeremiah 17:10 | “I the Lord search the heart...”

Your heart is important because it governs everything else.

THE HEART CAN BE HARDENED

When the heart resists God, it becomes spiritually insensitive.

Hebrews 3:15 | “Do not harden your hearts...”

A hardened heart:

- Ignores conviction
 - Resists correction
 - Becomes spiritually dull
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GOD WANTS TO TRANSFORM THE HEART

The good news: God doesn't just modify behavior — He transforms the heart.

Ezekiel 36:26 | “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.”

Psalms 51:10 | “Create in me a pure heart, O God.”

When God controls the heart:

- Desires change
 - Attitudes soften
 - Obedience becomes natural
 - Peace replaces turmoil
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SURRENDERING THE CONTROL CENTER TO GOD

Proverbs 3:5 | “Trust in the Lord with all your heart...”

Matthew 22:37 | “Love the Lord your God with all your heart...”

A fully surrendered heart becomes:

- Aligned with God's will
- Guided by His Spirit
- Anchored in truth
- Sensitive to conviction

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES

Proverbs 27:19

Luke 6:45

FOR PRAYER AND MEDITATION

Since life is shaped by what lives in your heart, guard the issues and matters of your heart.

What are specific things that I need God to remove from my heart?

HEART HEALTH TIPS

- Eat healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts.
- Move your body every day (walking, playing, dancing, sports).
- Drink plenty of water.
- Try not to eat too much junk food, salty snacks, or sugary drinks.
- Stay away from smoking and secondhand smoke.
- Learn ways to relax and manage stress (deep breathing, talking to someone, listening to music).
- Visit a doctor for **regular checkups**.
- Aim for at least 150 minutes of exercise per week (like brisk walking).
- Choose heart-healthy foods (lean proteins, whole grains, healthy fats like olive oil).
- Limit salt, sugar, and processed foods.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Check blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar regularly.
- Avoid smoking and limit alcohol.
- Practice stress relief (deep breathing, exercise, hobbies, time outdoors).
- Get 7–9 hours of sleep each night.

FACTS ABOUT THE HUMAN HEART

- The heart is a **muscle** about the size of your fist.
- It sits slightly to the **left side of your chest**.
- Your heart **pumps blood** all around your body.
- It beats about **60–100 times per minute** when you're resting.
- That's about **100,000 beats a day!**
- The heart has **4 chambers** (2 top, 2 bottom).
- The right side pumps blood to the **lungs** to get oxygen.
- The left side pumps oxygen-rich blood to the **rest of the body**.
- Your heart never rests — it works **24/7 your whole life**.
- An adult heart pumps about **2,000 gallons (7,500 liters) of blood per day**.
- If you laid all your blood vessels in a line, they would stretch about 60,000 miles — that's around the Earth more than **two** times.
- Your heart can beat faster when you watch a scary movie.
- Laughing is **good** for your heart — it helps blood flow better.
- Slow, deep breathing can help your heart calm down.
- When you run, your heart beats faster to send more oxygen to your muscles.
- Sometimes your heartbeat can match the rhythm of music you're listening to.
- Your heart creates its **own electrical signals** to keep beating.
- The heart can keep beating **even when it's outside the body** (if it has oxygen).
- A baby's heart beats **faster** than an adult's heart.
- Your heart beats about **2.5 to 3 billion times** in an average lifetime.
- Your heart rate can change when you feel **happy, scared, excited, or nervous**.
- The heart is one of the **hardest-working muscles** in your body.

T E G G B E C O M E F Y I C D
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ALIGNMENT

BELIEVE

DECISIONS

GUIDED

INTENTIONS

MOTIVES

PEACE

PURSUE

SEAT

TRUTH

BECOME

CONVICTION

DESIRES

HARDENED

LIFE

OBEDIENCE

PEACE

RESPOND

SPIRIT

WILL

BELIEF

CORRECTION

EMOTIONS

IGNORES

MIND

OF

PURE

SAY

TRUST

LESSON 2 ~ A DIVIDED HEART

OVERVIEW OF A DIVIDED HEART

- A divided heart is a heart torn between God and competing desires, loyalties, fears, or sins.
- A divided heart tries to hold on to God while refusing to let go of something else.
- A heart that is pulled in two directions will **never** be fully aligned with God.
- God desires wholehearted devotion, not partial allegiance.

A divided heart looks like:

- Loving God but trusting money
- Serving God but pleasing people
- Praying for change but holding on to control

Scriptures:

- **1 Kings 18:21** – “How long will you falter between two opinions?”
- **James 1:8** – “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”
- **Matthew 6:24** – “No one can serve two masters.”
- **Psalm 86:11** – “Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.”

Discussion:

What does spiritual “double-mindedness” look like in everyday life?

SYMPTOMS OF A DIVIDED HEART

1. Spiritual Inconsistency – James 1:6–8

- Strong one week, distant the next.
- Selective obedience.

2. Competing Priorities – Matthew 22:37

- God is important, but not first.

3. Fear Over Faith – Matthew 14:30

- Trusting God verbally but acting out of fear.

4. Hidden or Rationalized Sin – Psalm 66:18

- Justifying behaviors instead of surrendering them.
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CAUSES OF A DIVIDED HEART

A. Love of the World – 1 John 2:15–17

When temporary desires compete with eternal priorities.

B. Idolatry – Ezekiel 14:3

Anything that captures our affection more than God.

Examples:

- Success
- Approval
- Comfort
- Control
- Relationships

C. Fear and Anxiety – Proverbs 3:5-6

Fear fractures trust and divides attention.

D. Unresolved Hurt or Disappointment – Hebrews 12:15

Sometimes division comes from discouragement with God.

THE DANGER OF A DIVIDED HEART

1. Spiritual Instability – James 1:8

2. Lukewarm Faith – Revelation 3:15–16

3. Ineffective Witness – Divided devotion weakens spiritual authority.

Compromise rarely happens instantly—it grows slowly.

Reflection Question:

- Where might spiritual drift be occurring in my life?
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GOD'S DESIRE: AN UNDIVIDED HEART

Deuteronomy 6:5 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart...”

Ezekiel 11:19 “I will give them one heart...”

Psalms 119:10 “With my whole heart I have sought You...”

Key Insight: Undivided does not mean perfect—it means surrendered.

HEALING A DIVIDED HEART

1. Ask God to Search You – Psalm 139:23–24
2. Repent and Return – Psalm 51:10
3. Reorder Your Priorities – Matthew 6:33
4. Practice Daily Surrender – Luke 9:23

FOR REFLECTION AND MEDITATION

- What competes most for my heart?

- Is there something I have refused to fully surrender?

- What one step can I take this week toward wholehearted devotion?

Prayer Focus: "Lord, give me an undivided heart."

"Lord, unite my heart. Remove divided loyalties. Help me love You fully, trust You completely, and obey You wholeheartedly."

Additional Scriptures

- James 1:8
 - Matthew 6:24
 - Psalm 86:11
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LESSON 3 ~ A WOUNDED HEART

OVERVIEW OF A WOUNDED HEART

God sees, heals, and restores the wounded heart.

Psalm 147:3 – *“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”*

A wounded heart is a heart that has been hurt by loss, betrayal, disappointment, rejection, abuse, failure, or unmet expectations.

Wounds may be:

- Emotional (grief, betrayal, rejection)
- Spiritual (church hurt, disappointment with God)
- Relational (family conflict, divorce, broken trust)
- Internal (shame, guilt, regret)
- Proverbs 13:12 – “Hope deferred makes the heart sick.”
- Psalm 34:18 – “The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart.”

Pain that is not healed becomes:

- Anger
- Withdrawal
- Mistrust
- Hardness

What are common sources of heart wounds in today’s world?

THE REALITY OF HEART WOUNDS IN SCRIPTURE

*Being wounded does not mean being weak.
Even faithful believers experience heart pain.*

1. David – Betrayal and Grief – *Psalm 55:12-14*

Even a man after God’s own heart experienced deep relational wounds.

2. Hannah – Silent Pain – *1 Samuel 1:10*

Bitterness of soul led her to pour her heart out before the Lord.

3. Jesus – Rejection and Abandonment – *Isaiah 53:3*

Jesus understands wounded hearts personally.

SYMPTOMS OF A WOUNDED HEART

1. Guardedness

Withdrawing emotionally to avoid further hurt.

2. Bitterness

Hebrews 12:15 – A root that grows and defiles.

3. Distrust

Difficulty trusting others—or even God.

4. Shame and Self-Blame

Psalm 38:4 – Overwhelmed by guilt.

How do wounded hearts typically respond—fight, flight, freeze, or faith?

THE DANGER OF AN UNHEALED WOUND

Ephesians 4:31–32

1. Hardened Heart

Pain can turn into spiritual numbness.

2. Broken Relationships

Unresolved hurt often spills into other relationships.

3. Spiritual Distance

Pain can cause withdrawal from prayer and worship.

GOD'S RESPONSE TO A WOUNDED HEART

Psalm 34:18

1. God Draws Near

He does not avoid brokenness—He moves toward it.

2. God Heals - Psalm 147:3

Healing may be gradual, but it is promised.

3. God Restores Joy – Psalm 51:12

Healing is not just survival—it's restoration.

4. God Uses Wounds for Purpose - 2 Corinthians 1:3–4

Our pain can become ministry to others.

STEPS TOWARD HEALING

1. Acknowledge the Wound - Healing begins with honesty.

Psalm 62:8 – “Pour out your heart before Him.”

2. Release Bitterness Forgiveness is not excusing—it is releasing.

Colossians 3:13

3. Invite God Into the Pain - Pray specifically over the area of hurt.

Jeremiah 30:17 – “I will restore health to you...”

4. Renew Your Mind - Replace lies with truth:

- “I am rejected” → “I am chosen.”
- “I am forgotten” → “I am seen.”
- “I am unworthy” → “I am redeemed.”

➤ **Romans 12:2**

Additional Scriptures

- **Psalm 147:3**
 - **Proverbs 18:14**
 - **Luke 4:18**
-

FOR REFLECTION AND MEDITATION

*You can't move forward while living from past pain.
Unhealed wounds create unhealthy reactions.*

1. What wound am I still carrying?

2. Have I truly given it to God?

3. Is there someone I need to forgive?

4. What truth from Scripture speaks directly to my pain?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do people sometimes resist healing?
 2. What is the difference between healing and pretending the pain isn't there?
 3. How can the church become a safe place for wounded hearts?
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Prayer Focus

“Lord, You see every hidden wound. Heal what is broken, soften what has hardened, and restore what has been lost. Teach us to trust You with our pain.”

BLACK HISTORY FACTS: MATTERS OF THE HEART CONTRIBUTIONS, COURAGE, AND CARDIOVASCULAR IMPACT

Dr. Daniel Hale Williams (1856–1931)

- Performed one of the first successful open-heart surgeries in 1893.
- Founded Provident Hospital in Chicago — the first interracial hospital in the U.S.
- Created training opportunities for Black medical professionals during segregation.

Heart Connection: He literally helped pioneer surgery on the human heart when it was considered impossible.

Dr. Charles R. Drew (1904–1950)

- Developed large-scale blood plasma preservation techniques.
- Organized blood banks during World War II.
- Protested racial segregation in blood donation practices.

Heart Connection: His work made life-saving transfusions and cardiac surgeries far more successful.

Heart Disease & the Black Community

Important Health Facts

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States.
- African Americans have higher rates of:
 - High blood pressure
 - Stroke
 - Heart failure
- Black adults are more likely to develop hypertension earlier in life.

Contributing Factors May Include:

- Limited access to healthcare
- Food deserts
- Chronic stress
- Economic inequality
- Generational trauma

Spiritual Tie-In:

Stress, injustice, and systemic burdens don't just affect the mind—they affect the physical heart.

The Emotional & Spiritual Heart in Black History

A Heart of Endurance

Throughout slavery, segregation, and civil rights struggles, the Black community demonstrated remarkable resilience of heart. Ezekiel 36:26 – “I will give you a new heart...”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

- Preached love over hate.
- Taught nonviolence from a heart rooted in Christ.
- Led with moral courage.
 - His message centered on transforming the heart of a nation.

Stress, Faith, and the Heart

Studies show that chronic stress increases:

- Blood pressure
- Risk of heart attack
- Inflammation

Historically, African Americans have endured:

- Racial trauma
- Economic hardship
- Discrimination-related stress
 - Yet faith communities have been a protective factor.

The Black Church & Heart Health

The Black church has historically:

- Provided emotional healing
- Offered community support
- Promoted health awareness initiatives
- Encouraged prayer, worship, and resilience
 - Proverbs 17:22 – “A merry heart does good like medicine.”

Modern Contributions to Cardiology

Dr. Patricia Bath (1942–2019)

Though known for ophthalmology innovations, Dr. Bath broke racial and gender barriers in medicine, opening doors in specialized medical fields, including cardiovascular research access.

Celebrating the Work of Contemporary Black Cardiologists in Virginia & North Carolina

- Increasing representation in heart surgery and cardiovascular research.
- Lead studies on hypertension in African American populations.
- Advocates for culturally competent healthcare.

Dr. Cleve Francis, MD (*Inova Health System / Mount Vernon area*)

- Celebrated as a longtime Black cardiologist in the region and featured in local Black History Month spotlights for his contributions to cardiovascular medicine.

Dr. Keith H. Newby Sr., MD (*Norfolk, VA*)

- Board-certified cardiologist specializing in heart care and electrophysiology, accepting patients in the Hampton Roads area

Dr. Sandy Charles (*Atrium Health/Novant Health - Charlotte*)

- Board-certified in cardiovascular disease, Dr. Charles focuses on echocardiography, nuclear cardiology, arrhythmia, and women's heart health. She was recognized as a "Top Doctor" by SouthPark Magazine and received the Equity of Care Physician Award.

Dr. Monique Anderson Starks (*Duke Health - Durham*)

- Cardiologist in the Duke Health system, Dr. Starks has extensive experience in cardiovascular medicine and is part of the Duke physician network serving the region.