

Published based on [A Picture of My Heart](#)

# **A Picture of My Heart**



Did you ever draw a picture of your heart when you were younger – perhaps on a piece of paper designed to give to your sweetheart? Did you draw it big and red? Maybe with Cupid's arrow through it? Or maybe you drew it broken or bleeding?

What would it look like today if you drew a picture of your heart?

God has so much to say about our hearts. Many times God's Word talks about "hard hearts".

Last night I was thinking about what it means to have a hard heart. I guess I've always had an idea in my mind of what this might mean, but at this moment I see something new. Instead of a mental picture of someone whose face is hardened, who is cursing and openly rejecting God, I see a picture of me.

Now don't throw up a religious reaction and try to reassure me that I have never been hard hearted. I have. And probably, (alright, definitely), so have you.

Oh, perhaps I would never openly harden my heart and you might say the same thing. So what does it look like if our hearts become hardened or to use another term, calloused? How does that happen?

To be calloused means to be hard; hardened; insensitive; indifferent, unsympathetic; it can speak of a part of the skin which has become thickened due to friction or pressure. It also can mean to become emotionally hardened; unfeeling.

Calluses on our heart do the same thing that calluses on our physical skin do. They protect us from feeling. They allow us to do things that could potentially be sensitive or painful or even dangerous without feeling the full impact of those things.

When life puts a lot of pressure on us or we endure a lot of emotional friction, sometimes we develop emotionally "thick" skin. Problem is, the "thick" skin that keeps bad things out, also keeps God and others out, too.

Interestingly, Jesus said in Matthew 13 that a hard or calloused heart keeps us from seeing, hearing, understanding, being healed (emotionally, spiritually, and maybe, at times, physically) and being blessed.

In this passage, Jesus talks about understanding with the heart. Ah, understanding with the heart as opposed to understanding with the mind. I don't mean being senseless or mindless but I am speaking of what Proverbs 3 terms "Leaning not on your own understanding".

How do we understand with our hearts?

It seems life is a journey of growing in our ability to understand with our hearts. We all have "filters" which cause us to see ourselves, others, and God through "lens" that are somewhat faulty and at times, extremely faulty.

Proverbs 4:23 tells us to "Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it flows the issues of life". I can't tell you how many times I've quoted that verse. I think I understood guarding my heart from evil; from negative influences; but today I am thinking that this "guarding" or "keeping" of our hearts is also like the "tending" Jesus taught us about. Like tending a garden.

When I was young, I had mandatory garden duty. I hated it. Getting my hands into the dirt has never been therapeutic for me! But nonetheless, I had garden duty. Hoeing and digging around the plants was necessary for

them to continue to grow. This “tenderizing” of the ground was as important as the pulling of the weeds. It seems that in the “natural” world, plants don’t grow well when the ground is hard. Their roots can’t freely extend deeper into the ground. They can’t absorb the water and nutrients as well.

I guess I am just thinking this morning that although I’ve been a great “weed-puller” through the years, keeping all the evil stuff away, I’m not sure how much tenderizing the ground that I have allowed. And yes, I know that the Holy Spirit does this work in us, but truthfully, the work he does is always by invitation. He is a beautiful gentleman, who never forces us, but woos us with his words of love.

Just as I have, at times, had calluses on my hands from physical work, I think I have had some calluses on my heart, many of which have been there since I was a child. Calluses which have served the purpose of protecting my heart from too much pressure or friction. It is painful for me to see that those methods of protecting my heart have also kept out some of the water and nutrients I need in order to thrive.

So I imagine that this “understanding with our hearts” is part of God’s master plan when He looks at the true picture of our heart. Knowing that our faulty understanding hinders us in our relationship with Him and with others, God is faithful to speak to us about our hearts. To our own disadvantage, we don’t always hear Him.

Jesus quoted the words of Isaiah in Matthew 13.

“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;  
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.  
For this people's heart has become calloused;  
they hardly hear with their ears,  
and they have closed their eyes.  
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear...”

I know that Jesus was not speaking of his followers at that moment, but one of the beautiful things about the Word is that it is living. We can’t just manipulate it to mean whatever we want, but it can apply in many circumstances and become personal instruction for us.

So today for me, the question is “God, how would you draw a picture of my heart as it currently is?”

It’s a personal invitation from God Himself to each of us.

Hear and understand with your heart. See and perceive. Matthew 13

Today if you hear My voice, don’t harden your heart. Hebrews 4:7

One thing I have learned is that it doesn’t matter where the calluses come from, whether they are our own fault or they are ours because of what life has brought our way, we, ourselves, have to open our own hearts and hands and allow God to heal them so that we can experience Him fully and fully experience the love of others and be able and willing to also give that full expression of love.

So sensing God handing me a picture of my heart, I feel much the same as I did as a little girl when my boyfriend passed a note to me and I paused before I opened it. But today, I unfold the picture.

You can also find this article published on [A Picture of My Heart](#), and on the tag pages [calluses](#), [heart](#), [love](#).