



Foundations of Christian Spiritual Formation

Lesson 2 *Guilt, Shame, and the Fall of Man*

The Heart

*The Bible often talks about the heart, using it to describe the core of a person, the true self, the center of the will, emotions, and identity.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

—Mark 12:30

As water reflects a face,
so a man's heart reflects the man.

—Proverbs 27:19

*The heart is the source of our life and directs our actions.

Above all else, guard your heart,
for it is the wellspring of life.

—Proverbs 4:23

*The heart is also the source of our sinful desires.

But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

—Matthew 15:18–19

*The heart is deeply damaged and complex. We stuff our dark side, our physical and emotional hurts, and our insecurities down into the deepest layers to hide them from others and ourselves. Theologians call these deepest layers the hidden heart.

The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?
"I the LORD search the heart . . .

—Jeremiah 17:9–10a

An Apple and a Great Fall

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

—Genesis 3:6–7

*Original Sin, and the act we know as the Fall, damaged the human heart beyond the point of self-repair.

*Original Sin brings with it several major implications on the human experience:

- Death—We now face both physical and spiritual death as a reality of our existence.

- Guilt—We are now born into a state of guilt. We are born with a sin nature that is rooted in the core of our being, our heart.

- Shame—The overwhelming sense of guilt drives us to cover and hide our brokenness.

- Fear—Since our guilt subjects us to punishment, we instinctively fear the judgment of God. In fact, we are afraid to be in the presence of God.

*Salvation through Jesus Christ alone removes the guilty verdict from our lives and begins the Spirit-driven process of healing these deeply damaging results of Original Sin.

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

—Titus 3:4–7

Reflections

♣ What does it mean to fully open your heart to God?

♣ In what ways do you experience guilt, shame, and fear in your spiritual life? How do these feelings drive your actions?

♣ Pray David's prayer in Psalm 139:23–24 and journal your thoughts in the space below:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is nay offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*