



# onechurch

## bigIdea



The hardened heart of Pharaoh was responsible for putting the people of Egypt through ten devastating plagues as he resisted letting the Israelites leave their place of slavery. A hardened heart isn't something that happens to just villains of biblical proportions like Pharaoh. A hardened heart can happen to any of us—even the most devoted followers of God. Even to people like you and me. Are you allowing plague after self-inflicted plague to come upon your life by choosing to continually challenge or reject God's plan? Is it possible that your stubbornness and rebellion and hard heart might keep you from realizing God's amazing grace? If a sinful, human heart

doesn't respond by humble faith to God's Word, it cannot be transformed by God's grace. Coming to God on his terms means starting to live the kind of good life God desires for you.

**BIG IDEA:** Our heart becomes hardened when we know what to do but don't do it.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever ignored directions or your GPS? How did that end for you?
2. When are you *most* stubborn?
3. Why do you think Pharaoh was so stubborn?
4. *Read Hebrews 12:1.* The writer compares our Christian life to the *Momentum* of a race. What is the difference between a hindrance and a sin? What does sin do?
5. *Read Exodus 9:8-13.* The Egyptian magicians—probably enabled by demonic powers—were able to duplicate the first few miracles of Moses, but weren't able to fix the problem. What does that tell you about Satan's power? His ability to fix situations?
6. Which one of these 10 plagues would have caused you to give in to God?
7. How did God distinguish between His people and the Egyptians during these plagues? How would you have felt if you were regular Joe Egyptian watching all of this happen?
8. *Read Exodus 7:22, 8:15, 9:12, 9:34, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27.* All of these verses deal with the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. What do you notice in these verses about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart? What caused it? What were the results?

The idea of *hardening Pharaoh's heart* happens 20 times in the book of Exodus. 10 times it says that he hardened his own heart, and 10 times it says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart.

9. *Read Exodus 8:22.* Why did God send these plagues?
10. How do you see the progression of sin, hardened heart, and rebellion with these 10 plagues? Do any of these plagues build upon another?
11. What are some things that cause people to harden their hearts today? What are the results when people harden their hearts toward others or towards God?

*We are either in the process of resisting God's truth, or we are in the process of being shaped by it. There is no middle ground. You are either walking towards Him or away from Him. --Charles Stanley*



12. Each of these 10 plagues have a direct correlation to 10 gods that the people in Egypt would be worshipping.

PLAGUE	GOD or GODDESS	RESPONSE
Blood	Isis - Nile	Ignored
Frogs	Heqet - birth	Conditional
Gnats	Set - desert	Refusal
Flies	Uatchit - Fly	Go sacrifice
Livestock Dies	Hathor - Cow	Refusal
Boils	Sekhmet - Disease	Refusal
Hail	Nut - Sky	Conditional
Locusts	Osiris - Crops	Limited
Darkness	Ra - Sun	Limited
Firstborn	Pharaoh himself	GO!

**God sends plagues to dethrone other gods.** What gods need to be dethroned with the average American? What gods need to be dethroned in your life?

13. Chris said, “When good things become God things, the become toxic in our lives.” What does that mean to you?
14. God is saying, “Even the good things this morning—I want to be your priority! I want to be the center! Don’t let anything get in the way of you and Me!”
- 15.
16. *Read Hebrews 3:13.* How can you guard your own heart from being hardened towards God or other people?
17. *Read Romans 9:14-24.* What do you learn about the providence of God and human responsibility from these verses? How does this give you hope in light of your choices and at the same time help you have trust in God’s providence?
18. God gave Pharaoh 10 chances to change and soften his heart. What does that tell you about God’s character?
19. How are you like Pharaoh? What would make you bend or break?
20. What is the condition of your heart? Is your heart toward God soft as putty? Firm and cautious? Or rock hard? Why?
21. Chris said that ***Our heart becomes hardened when we know what to do but don’t do it.*** Do you understand that delayed obedience is disobedience? What areas in your life are you delaying obedience?
22. Chris said, “When sin starts out, it is weak—like a spider’s web. But then it becomes as strong as an iron chain.” How have you seen this in other people’s lives? In your life?

#### MOVING FORWARD

“When sin starts out, it is weak—like a spider’s web. But then it becomes as strong as an iron chain.” What areas do you need to clean out the cobwebs of your soul before they turn into something more? *The longer you harden your heart, the more difficult it is to let God’s light break through.* Is there anything you need to do to encourage one another, challenge one another, confess to one another, pray for one another as a result of this discussion?

#### CHANGING YOUR MIND

*But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.* Hebrews 3:13, 15

