



SELFIES IN THE DESERT, PART 4: PROUD OWNER OF A HARD HEART

We often think of a “hard heart” as something only villains in the Bible had—like Pharaoh. But the truth is, a hardened heart can happen to any of us. Every time we know what God wants us to do but refuse to do it, our hearts grow a little harder. Pharaoh’s story in Exodus reveals a dangerous progression: stubbornness, pride, and resistance to God lead to devastating consequences. The good news is that God longs to soften our hearts and give us a new spirit. The question is—are we willing to let Him?

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 on your smartphone and gotten lost? How did that turn out?
2. What’s something you’ve been really stubborn about, even when you knew you were wrong?
3. With your Bible or Bible App, [read Exodus 4:21](#).

And the LORD told Moses, “When you arrive back in Egypt, go to Pharaoh and perform all the miracles I have empowered you to do. But I will harden his heart so he will refuse to let the people go.

[Exodus 4:21 \(NLT\)](#)

4. Why do you think Pharaoh’s heart became hardened even after seeing God’s power? What role did his own pride play?
5. *Read about the following plagues in Exodus 7:22, 8:15, 9:12, 9:34, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27.* 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.

6. Which one of these 10 plagues would have caused you to give in to God?
7. With your Bible or Bible App, [read Exodus 7:13 and Exodus 7:22-23](#).

Pharaoh’s heart, however, remained hard. He still refused to listen, just as the LORD had predicted.

[Exodus 7:13 \(NLT\)](#)

²² *But again the magicians of Egypt used their magic, and they, too, turned water into blood. So Pharaoh’s heart remained hard. He refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had predicted.* ²³ *Pharaoh returned to his palace and put the whole thing out of his mind.*

[Exodus 7:22-23 \(NLT\)](#)

8. Pharaoh “put the whole thing out of his mind.” What happens when we ignore God’s warnings or conviction?
9. With your Bible or Bible App, [read Exodus 8:15-19, 22](#).

¹⁵ *But when Pharaoh saw that relief had come, he became stubborn. He refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had predicted.* ¹⁶ *So the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Raise your staff and strike the ground. The dust will turn into swarms of gnats throughout the land of Egypt.’”* ¹⁷ *So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded them. When Aaron raised his hand and struck the ground with his staff, gnats infested the entire land, covering the Egyptians and their animals. All the dust in the land of Egypt turned into gnats.* ¹⁸ *Pharaoh’s magicians tried to do the same thing with their secret arts, but this time they failed. And the gnats covered everyone, people and animals alike.* ¹⁹ *“This is the finger of God!” the magicians exclaimed to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh’s heart remained hard. He wouldn’t listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted.* ²² *But this time I will spare the region of Goshen, where my people live. No flies will be found there. Then you will know that I am the LORD and that I am present even in the heart of your land.*

[Exodus 8:15-19, 22 \(NLT\)](#)

10. Pharaoh asked for relief from the frogs but delayed obedience until “tomorrow.” What does this reveal about procrastination and pride? How do we do the same in our spiritual lives?
11. Even Pharaoh’s magicians recognized “the finger of God,” but Pharaoh still refused to listen. Why is it sometimes easier to deny God’s work than to submit to it?
12. 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? What does this reveal about God’s presence and protection? How does He show that in our lives today?
13. According to Exodus 8:22, why did God send these plagues?
14. 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

15. 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?

16. Kim said, “When good things become God things, they become toxic in our lives.” What does that mean to you?
17. 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!”
18. *With your Bible or Bible App, [read Hebrews 3:13 & 15](#).*

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](#)

19. How can you guard your own heart from being hardened towards God or other people?
20. God gave Pharaoh 10 chances to change and soften his heart. What does that tell you about God’s character?
21. How are you like Pharaoh? What would make you bend or break?
22. What is the condition of your heart? Is your heart toward God soft as putty? Firm and cautious? Or rock hard? Why?
23. Kim said that “*Our heart becomes hardened when we know what to do but choose not to do it.*” Do you understand that delayed obedience is disobedience? What areas in your life are you delaying obedience?

THINK ABOUT IT

Where do you sense your heart might be getting hardened toward God? What’s one step you can take this week to soften your heart—through obedience, humility, or repentance?

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](#)