



# *Seven Attributes of* *a* **HARDENED** **HEART**

Just as Pharaoh trusted in self (Exodus 7:11), hard hearts confess righteousness despite sin (Isaiah 5:21; John 9:41). They believe they can make it on their own and do not need to cower to another. This disposition is worse than fools (Proverbs 26:12). Cessation of confession and repentance manifest a hardened heart bound for destruction (Hebrews 6:4-6). Solomon wrote “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13). Fourth, a hard heart does not genuinely turn away from sinful behavior.

### **It Continues to Sin (Exodus 9:34).**

Moses records that Pharaoh “sinned yet more.” Pharaoh’s sin increased and he continued to defy God. He was willfully rebellious.

Hard hearts turn small sins into big sins. Eventually righteousness becomes the exception (Genesis 6:5). The lack of watchfulness, confession, and godliness prompts greater sin. Hard hearts that are not pricked at sin are like the sheep that wonder slowly from the shepherd. The wilderness does not look too bad because of their continuous dwelling there. They do not observe the warnings and do not see the danger. Despite knowing the good they need to do, they refuse to do it (James 4:17) because they do not seem too big of a problem to abstain anymore.

Every sin is a little more dangerous than the next. Solomon wrote, “He, that being often reprov’d hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Proverbs 29:1). Fifth, hard hearts continue to sin despite the warning signs.

### **It Does not Appreciate God’s Goodness.**

Pharaoh was given grace. Pharaoh was given mercy. Pharaoh was endowed with blessings from God from the beginning. His pride and hard heart did not appreciate them. It has been said that the same sun that melts the ice hardens clay. The problem is not with the sun, but with the substance. Pharaoh could not bring himself to appreciate God’s wondrous blessings. Every time God took away a plague, Pharaoh hardened his heart. God

gave Pharaoh opportunities to return but he would not do it.

People must be reminded of God’s present blessings and not to forget His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering. Hearts must not forget their past so as to harm their future. Hearts should be thankful (1 Thessalonians 5:18) and content (Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:6). Sixth, a hard heart rejects what God has done.

### **It Will Be Destroyed (Exodus 14:27).**

The ten plagues took Israel out of Egypt, but they did not stop Egypt from coming after Israel. Despite all that God had done, Pharaoh decided to pursue further (Exodus 14:5-8). His “repentance” did not last long. His decision proved costly as God overthrew the Egyptians in the Red Sea.

When God’s crying (cf. 2 Peter 3:9) turns to laughing (Psalm 2:4) it should cause one to fear. There is a point when God gives men over to their sin (Romans 1:24, 26, 28) and lets them be destroyed. There is also a point of no return. While often untraceable, common characteristics are rejecting the Gospel and refusing to repent. Ultimately, these dispositions treasure wrath for themselves (Romans 2:5) and can never be forgiven because of their persistent sin (Hebrews 10:26). If one worries that he is at this point, then he is not be there, for it is a disposition that could not care less about God. One who resists the truth will not prosper like the Egyptian magicians Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 3:8). Eventually God has enough, and like with Pharaoh, He will destroy everyone who continues to defy Him and seek the upper hand. Seventh, hard hearts will be destroyed.

Do you have a hard heart?

#### **Endnotes**

[1]The words “waxed gross” are one word in the Greek and it means fat.

[2]<https://gbntv.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Textual/2-Winton-Exodus.pdf>

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The Bible uses the word “heart” 833 times. The most common Hebrew word is *leb* and the most frequent Greek word is *kardia*. While there are many different types of hearts described in the Bible, the worst one is the hardened heart.

Egyptian history is forever sealed with disaster because of a hard heart. Pharaoh king of Egypt did not know that his hard heart would cost him his pride, resources, and own son! God told Moses that he would harden his heart (Exodus 4:21), but it was Pharaoh who hardened it himself when confronted with God’s mighty actions. In just eight chapters, Moses’ record in Exodus displays the destruction a hard heart can bring (Proverbs 28:14).

#### **It Begins with Ignorance (Exodus 5:2).**

Hardened hearts are first ignorant hearts. Ignorant of law, religion, and morality. Hard hearts do not begin as stones, but as clay, being able to be molded by its owner. Pharaoh was ignorant of God which led to his hardness toward Him.

Pharaoh was an idolater. There were hundreds of gods in the Egyptian Pantheon, but Jehovah was not one of them. His ancestors knew of God (Genesis 41-50), but it must not have been passed down through the generations. When confronted with Moses’ directive, Pharaoh became alarmed. He assumed God was a nobody and that he was more powerful, both of which were wrong. Ignorance leads men to practice what they do know, even if it is wrong (Romans 10:3). When confronted with something one does not know and when it is pushed upon them, they become alarmed, confused, and sometimes refuse the thing they do not know, and cling to what they do. Such a challenge by Moses tested Pharaoh’s pride, which pushed him down the hill of hard heartedness.

Ignorance can destroy (Hosea 4:6). It is not good to be without knowledge (Proverbs 19:2). First, a hard heart is first an ignorant heart.

#### **It is Not Touched (Exodus 7:23).**

Injuries get worse if left untreated. Ignorance of God did

not urge Pharaoh to seek out God, instead it grew stonier by the day. Little by little, plague by plague, and word by word, God hardened Pharaoh’s heart only as he let Him.

After Moses and Aaron turn their staffs into snakes and the Nile River into blood, it was said that Pharaoh’s heart was not moved. Despite the messages from the Lord, Pharaoh chose to show:

*Indifference toward Israel* (Exodus 5:5-19; 8:29).

It was not essential that Pharaoh command this new directive. Ignorance turned to abuse as he chose to increase Israel’s labor. Human frailty and sanctity do not matter to a hardened heart and neither does keeping one’s word.

*Indifference toward Egypt* (Exodus 7-10). A soft heart would have repented at the first directive. A harder heart would have repented during the plagues. Pharaoh’s heart was worse. Despite the problems in the land Pharaoh kept challenging the Creator. He showed a lack of care for his own people! Despite the problems the plagues caused, none of these inflicted the heart of Pharaoh.

*Indifference toward his family* (Exodus 11).

Ultimately, his hard heart led to the death of his firstborn.

Hardened hearts are untouched hearts. It decides not to be touched (Matthew 13:15[1]). Hearts grow worse if they do not grow better (cf. 2 Timothy 3:13). Peter recognized that men could have a worse state than the first (2 Peter 2:20-21). Little by little consciences are left seared (1 Timothy 4:2), leaving sin without the hot feeling or pricking mark. Ultimately hard-hearted people believe lies (2 Thessalonians 2:11). With every action subsided, the heart grows calloused. Like Pharaoh, many today cannot feel the sharp prick of sin (Ephesians 4:19). Someone said that “If you live in a graveyard too long you stop crying when someone dies.” Second, hard hearts are often not touched.

#### **It Refuses to Listen to Those Closest to It (Exodus 8:19).**

Some hearts listen only to their own beat. Blinded by pride and deceived by dissonance, hard hearts fail to

listen to the sound of others. Amidst the pouring of the plagues, Pharaoh’s magicians affirmed that the plagues were from God, yet Pharaoh did not listen. Even those with whom he trusted to perform mighty deeds in the past would not even convince his arrogant heart.

Parents, preachers, mentors, siblings, friends, and distant relatives mean little to an arrogant heart. Evidence, research, fact, and proof does nothing to a hard heart that believes it to be right and everyone else wrong. Hard hearted individuals have their ears dull of hearing (Matthew 13:15) and covered (Acts 7:57). When the Word ceases to be the pricking sword (Hebrews 4:12), a man is in a very dangerous state. Individuals who travel the path of selfishness and egotism ultimately travel down the path of destructiveness (Proverbs 14:12). Third, a hard heart does not listen to anyone, even those closest to him.

#### **It Does not Genuinely Confess and Repent of Sin (Exodus 9:27, 10:16).**

Hard hearts confess sin for the relieving of punishment but not for the acknowledgement of personal guilt. Pharaoh said, “I have sinned this time,” indicating he had been innocent up until this point.[2] While some may argue his genuineness, had his confession and repentance been honest, he would not have “sinned yet more” (9:34). He would confess again in 10:16 that he had sinned, but this too was short-lived for he returned to his prideful state.

Hard hearts confess cognitively, not emotionally. Hard hearts cannot be pierced with the feeling of guilt, but the brain is soft and often “confesses” guilt for other reasons like consequence, embarrassment, or fear. These hearts also like to make general confessions instead of specific ones. Instead of acknowledging specific areas of growth or detailed sinful actions, they say “if I have sinned,” “I need to work on that,” or “yeah I could be better.” They do not realize the pain they cause nor do they care. In order to confess and repent, hearts must recognize faults and errors. They must not make excuses for choices and suppresses the danger of their angers with “well, I’m growing,” or “it was just a mistake.”