

How to Keep from Getting a Hard Heart
Hebrews 4:12-16

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Dr. Steve Horn

Text Introduction: Do you remember the Holiday Inn commercials of a few years ago. The theme of this series of commercials was the value of getting a night's sleep at a Holiday Inn Express. In one such commercial, a man has fallen when another gentleman comes to his rescue. He examines him quickly and snaps his leg back into place. The injured person says, "Hey, thanks, are you a doctor?" The onlooker's reply is "No, but I did sleep at a Holiday Inn Express last night." In another commercial with the same kind of theme, people are surrounding a man who is need of medical attention. Somebody begins to yell, "Did anyone sleep at a Holiday Inn Express last night?" Someone from the crowd says, "I'm a doctor." Brushing the doctor aside, the first man continues to yell, "Did anyone sleep at a Holiday Inn Express last night."

Ah, if only one night of rest brought us that much good. There is something good about rest though, isn't it?

The context of our Scripture reading today is the promise of entering God's rest. It is implied that the Israelites had the opportunity to be at rest in the land of promise, but did not enter that rest because they hardened their hearts. The warning of this passage in Hebrews is that those receiving the letter to the Hebrews would not make that same mistake. The warning to us in this passage is that we not harden our hearts, but instead be diligent to enter into God's rest.

Text: ¹² For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as to divide soul, spirit, joints, and marrow; it is a judge of the ideas and thoughts of the heart. ¹³ No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

¹⁴ Therefore since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to the confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time.

INTRODUCTION

The key to understanding this text is to understand the meaning of rest. Rest, here, is more than just Heaven though it could include Heaven. The key to be where God wants me to be or put more simply...

REST ⇒ Being Right with God.

Then, there is a formula for being right with God and that formula is obedience.

FORMULA FOR REST ⇒ OBEDIENCE

Then, there is a formula for continuing in obedience.

FORMULA FOR OBEDIENCE ⇒ DO NOT HARDEN HEARTS

FORMULA FOR KEEPING HEART SOFT ...

STAY In GOD'S WORD. *Hebrews 4:12*

A. The Character of the Word of God

1. Living

The Bible is not a dead code, but one which has constant application to my life.

2. Active

The word here sounds like energy. Something can be living, but dormant. The Word of God by the Spirit of God should be active in your life. After you have read, after you have heard, the Word of God is active.

3. Sharp

Sharpened by the fact that the Word of God is just that God's Word, not man's word.

B. Confronting Nature of the Word of God

1. Reaches the whole person

Often we get one area under the authority of God and His Word and He reveals a new area.

2. Judges

C. Challenge of the Word of God

Do not rationalize that the Word of God is too hard. We must apply. We must allow every area of life to be brought into conformity with the Word of God.

STAY Open BEFORE THE LORD. *Hebrews 4:13*

➤ This verse points to the omniscience of God.

The omniscience of God is both a point of comfort and a point of confrontation. We cannot hide from God. What we cover, He will uncover. What we uncover, He will cover.

A. Recognize the Omniscience of God.

B. Respond to the Omniscience of God.

If we are in danger, we want to know that we are in danger.

STAY Down ON YOUR KNEES. *Hebrews 4:14-16*

A. Pray holding onto your Confession.

B. Pray with Confidence.