

## Does Saying “God Knows My Heart” Excuse Sin?

When confronted with their sins, it's not uncommon to hear people say, “Yeah, but God knows my heart.” Does this mean, “What I'm doing might be wrong, but in my heart, I'm a good person. God knows that. So I don't think He will hold me accountable for my actions.”? These folks obviously believe in God and believe in sin, but they seem to believe that having a “good heart” is justification for their sin. God says that's not true.



Your Sins Proceed from Your Heart. According to Jesus, no one sins in spite of having a clean heart. On the contrary, our sins are evidence of the impurity of our heart. Jesus said, “What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart...out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander” (Matthew 15:18-19). In other words, you can't use profanity and – when someone calls you on it – say, “Well, God knows my heart.” Your heart is the place from which that profanity came forth. If you're living with someone you're not married to, the excuse that God knows your heart won't cut it. Sexual immorality is the product of an unclean heart. You don't sin in spite of having a clean heart; you sin because there is something wrong in your heart.

Your Heart is Hidden from Man, but Not from God. The realization that “God knows our heart” should humble us to repent, not embolden us to continue in sin. You can hide your heart from the world. You can appear righteous and godly to others, even if your heart is rotten to the core, but God knows the truth. He sees your heart. The Pharisees wanted people to believe they were righteous, when really many were evil. What they were was not evident to the people because the people couldn't see their hearts, but God could. Jesus said they were like cups that were clean on the outside, but filthy on the inside (Matthew 23:25-26). He said they were like, “whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness” (Matthew 23:27). Jesus could see what others could not. He could see their hearts.

No Matter How Bad Your Life Is, Your Heart is Worse. All of this should teach us that our heart is not better than our life, it is almost always worse. There are things lurking in the darkness of our hearts that have not yet manifested themselves outwardly. But God knows all dirty little secrets. He knows our greed, our lust, our selfishness, our pride, and our bitterness. He knows our life as well. He knows the things we've said, the people we've hurt, the places we've gone, and the good deeds we've failed to do. He knows all of it.

The Cross, Not Your Heart, Is Where You'll Find Justification. When I think about the fact that God knows my heart, it drives me to my knees and makes me pray, as David did: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin...Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit” (Psalm 51:1-2,10-12). The realization that God knows my heart makes me realize what a wretch I am. It makes me so thankful for the blood of Jesus. It makes me look – not to my heart for justification – but to the cross for justification. I have sinned outwardly and I have sinned inwardly. The only hope I have is Jesus!

So I beg you to realize that God will hold you accountable for the sins of your mouth, the sins of your hands, and the sins of your heart unless you repent and allow Him to wash you clean in the blood of Jesus Christ: “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you” (James 4:8-10).

### James 4:8-10

*“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”*

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