

Undivided Hearts

"Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name."— Psalm 86:11

There are few prayers in Scripture that are as challenging as Psalm 86:11. David's request for an *"undivided heart"* gets to the very centre of what worship is all about.

Whether we are leading worship, serving in church, or simply following Jesus in everyday life, God is ultimately after our hearts. As 1 Samuel 16:7 reminds us, *"People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* Likewise, Proverbs 4:23 urges us, *"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."*

Worship begins long before we sing. It begins with a heart fully devoted to God.

What Does the Bible Mean When It Talks About Our Hearts?

In Scripture, the heart is far more than a physical blood pumping organ in your chest, or a shape drawn on the front of a Valentine's Day card. It is the centre of our whole being. It is where we think, where we feel, and where we make our deepest decisions.

To love God with all our heart means loving him with every part of who we are—our minds, our emotions, our desires, and our choices. As A.W. Tozer wrote, *"We must never rest until everything inside us worships God."*

An undivided heart is one whose deepest allegiance belongs to Jesus.

The Grace of God

The good news is that Psalm 86 isn't a command—it's a prayer.

David wasn't claiming to have a perfect heart. He was asking God to transform it.

That's encouraging because none of us has a perfectly undivided heart. We all know what it is to wrestle with pride, distraction, sin, or divided loyalties. Yet through Jesus Christ we come to a God who delights to forgive, restore, and change us.

As Titus 2 reminds us, God's grace doesn't just save us; it teaches us to say 'no' to sin and live lives that increasingly honour him. Wholehearted worship isn't something we manufacture—it is something God graciously grows in us by his Spirit.

How Can We Guard Our Hearts?

Proverbs tells us to guard our hearts because everything flows from them. Three practices help us pursue an undivided heart.

1. Abide in the Gospel of Grace

We never move beyond the gospel. Every day we need to remember that we are accepted because of Jesus, not our performance. His grace frees us from pride, legalism, and self-reliance, continually drawing our hearts back to him.

2. Abide in Church Community

Following Jesus was never meant to be a solo pursuit. God uses church community to encourage us, challenge us, and lovingly expose the blind spots that can divide our hearts. We need one another if we're going to keep our eyes fixed on Christ.

3. Abide with the Shepherd

Jesus is the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. As we remain close to him through prayer, Scripture, and daily obedience, he leads us, protects us, and gently shapes our hearts to become more like his.

A Simple Prayer

The invitation of Psalm 86 is wonderfully simple. We don't come pretending to have it all together. We come asking God to do what only he can do.

May this become our prayer:

"Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name."

As we abide in the gospel of grace, remain rooted in church community, and stay close to our Good Shepherd, may God continue to shape us into wholehearted worshippers whose lives bring glory to him.