



HOAW Newsletter

*"Above all else, guard your heart for from it comes the wellspring of life."
Proverbs 4:23*

"...the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'" 1 Samuel 16:7

March 2021

HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

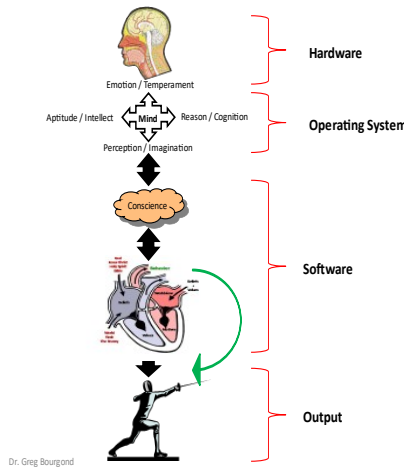
The Pathway

by Dr. Greg Bourgond

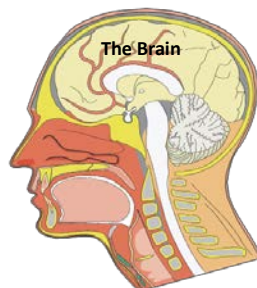
What is the pathway from receiving sensory inputs in the brain, comprehension by the mind, assessment by the conscience, and evaluation by the heart?

The **pathway** from sensory input to the *brain* and resultant behavior is a complex process that brings into play an array of faculties including *mind*, *conscience*, *heart*, *soul*, and *character*. Making any moral decision involves an interaction between them. In its simplest form the brain receives sensory input and forms patterns of recognition, the mind assesses and comprehends the input, the conscience evaluates the moral implications of the input, the heart weighs the moral import of the input and facilitates action upon it, the spirit, breathed into humans by God, infuses the input with eternal ramifications, and the soul is the seat

of all that makes us human and distinguishes us from animals.



The Brain



Sophisticated purposeful control of behavior based on complex sensory input requires the information integration capabilities of a centralized **brain**. The brain also exerts centralized control over the other organs of the body. Generating patterns of muscle activity and the secretion of body chemicals is a function of the brain.

In its simplest the brain is an information processing system. Sensory inputs via eyes, ears, smell, and touch are received by the brain. Perceiving, motor control, memory storage, and learning are functions of the brain. As someone has put it, the brain and head provide us with a number of stock images for the mind and its functions.

Once the brain receives sensory input it forms a comprehension as to what the input means and how the body should respond. If the brain is injured, any further processing by the mind, conscience, and heart is impaired, corrupted, or stopped altogether. Mind altering drugs or

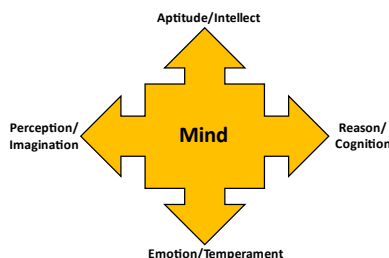
alcohol abuse create the same types of interference. Think of someone you know or perhaps yourself who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Their judgment is impaired, moral constraint is diminished, and the likelihood of engaging in destructive moral or physical activity increases proportionately. Mental illness due to chemical imbalance, physical defect, or injury produces the same loss of control.

The brain then is the repository of the mind and acts as the first receptor of stimuli coming from the external world or internal consciousness. The brain does the first analysis of the sensory data but makes no moral evaluation.

The brain receives, orders the data into comprehensible patterns, compares the patterns with those already stored in memory, produces a recognizable framework for those patterns, determines bodily responses (secretion of adrenaline or other body chemicals) and, in effect passes on this information to the mind.

I realize this is a rather basic and simple description of a very complex organ scientists are still trying to figure out. For our purposes this elementary description will be helpful to the reader in understanding the connection between it and the other faculties mentioned.

The Mind



The **mind**¹ is the part of a person that thinks and reasons. The mind is the operating system of the brain while the brain is the hardware. As a refresher, the mind is the control center of the heart. It is the gateway to our heart. It is the gate-keeper of our soul. It is the mind that decides what will pass through to the heart. In the Bible, in particular the New Testament, 'mind' is usually used in reference to the cognitive, rational, and purposive functions of a person. In many instances in Scripture the mind is used interchangeably with heart and soul, and in some cases the spirit of man.

More specifically, the mind is a gift from God animated when he breathed his spirit into our life when humankind was created by him. The mind is where thought, emotion, and will or volition resides. Within the mind is the exercise and expression of intellect and intellectual understanding, perception, the seat of remembrance or memory, conception, abstraction, judgment, reasoning, comprehension beyond

simple recognition, association, causation, imagination, comparison, classification, judgment, reflection, sense of direction, and discernment.

The mind possesses knowledge and wisdom² and our innermost thoughts and secrets are found in the mind.³ The mind searches out wisdom and the scheme of things,⁴ can be fickle,⁵ vacillate between different opinions,⁶ overshadowed by doubts,⁷ dulled,⁸ blinded by the god of this age,⁹ and subject to troubling thoughts and confusion,¹⁰ Paul, the Apostle, said the mind can resist the knowledge of God.

The Hebrew Old testament does not have one term that refers to 'mind.' Most instances of 'mind' are translated as 'heart,' a comprehensive term for the integrative center of a person's emotional, volitional, and intellectual life.¹¹ The mind is the seat of reason and comprehension as evidenced extensively in Scriptural wisdom texts such as Solomon being given a "wise and discerning mind"¹² enabling him to distinguish between right and wrong.

The mind is also the seat of intention and direction as well as disposition, attitude, and inclination. According to Bandstra and Stuart, the mind is the faculty that makes choices and is responsible for a person's course of life. The mind plans but ultimately God determines the way.¹³ The directing function of a person's life is

¹ Several resources were consulted to provide information on the mind including Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary (1986), Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (1998), McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia (2006), and the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (1979).

² Proverbs 18:15; 22:17; 23:12; Ecclesiastes 1:13, 17; 7:25; 8:16

³ Judges 16:17

⁴ Ecclesiastes 7:25

⁵ 1 Samuel 15:29

⁶ 1 Kings 18:21

⁷ Luke 24:38

⁸ 2 Corinthians 3:14

⁹ 2 Corinthians 4:4

¹⁰ Genesis 41:18

¹¹ B. Bandstra and S.S. Stuart, *The Mind*, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1979.

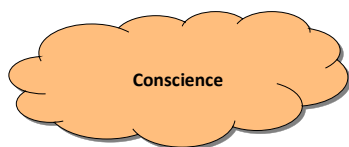
¹² 1 Kings 3:12

¹³ Proverbs 16:9; 19:21

often called the 'heart and mind.'¹⁴ The Bible also suggests that the mind can be perverse, obstinate, stubborn, and headstrong.¹⁵ In some translations, Revised Standard Version in particular, the text uses mind to translate terms for the cognitive, reasoning, and purposive parts of human personhood. The Bible also speaks of the renewing of the mind.¹⁶ The Spirit of God helps Christians know the mind of Christ. As believers conform to his will, they have the mind of Christ.

In summary the mind processes the sensory input the brain receives. This processing covers a wide spectrum of activity of thought, emotion, and will yielding reason and direction. Besides our God-given aptitude and intellect, the mind houses our emotions, personality temperament, reason and cognition, perception and imagination. Unless informed and conditioned by the heart, the mind is susceptible to the influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The mind can be swayed easily over time unless an 'authority' presides over its operation.

The Conscience



Dictionary.com defines the **conscience** as the aptitude, faculty, intuition, or judgment of the intellect that distinguishes right from wrong. The complex of ethical and moral principles that controls or inhibits the actions or thoughts of an individual—the inner sense of what is right or wrong in one's conduct or motives impelling one toward right action: to follow the dictates of conscience.

"Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them."¹⁷ When God breather His Spirit into man and created him in His image He imparted a conscience to him. Biblical scholarship makes a clear case for the conscience.¹⁸

The awareness that a proposed act is or is not conformable to one's ideal of right and manifesting itself in the feeling of obligation or duty. The OT usually expresses the idea as "having something on the heart".¹⁹ Conscience is not so much a distinct faculty of the mind, like perception, memory, etc., as an exercise of the judgment and the power of feeling, as employed with reference to moral truth. It implies the moral sense "to discern good and evil"²⁰ and a feeling,

more or less strong, of responsibility. Thus, it will appear to be wrong to name conscience "the voice of God," although it is true that the testimony of conscience certainly rests on the foundation of a divine law in man, the existence of which, its claims and judgments, are removed from his subjective control.

If a man knows his doing to be in harmony with this law his conscience is good,²¹ pure,²² and void of offense. If what he does is evil, so also is his conscience, inasmuch as it is conscious of such evil;²³ it is defiled²⁴ when it is stained by evil deeds; or seared with a branding iron²⁵ when it is branded with its evil deeds, or cauterized, i.e., made insensible to all feeling. Paul lays down the law that a man should follow his own conscience, even though it be weak; otherwise, moral personality would be destroyed.²⁶

Nelson Bible Dictionary describes the conscience and its influence as follows.

A person's inner awareness of conforming to the will of God or departing from it, resulting in either a sense of approval or condemnation. The term does not appear in the Old Testament but the concept does. David, for example, was smitten in his heart because of his lack of trust in the power of God.²⁷ But his guilt turned to joy when he sought the Lord's forgiveness.²⁸

¹⁴ 1 Samuel 2:35; 1 Kings 8:48; 1 Chronicles 22:19; 28:9; 2 Chronicles 6:38
¹⁵ Proverbs 11:20; 12:8; 17:20; 23:23
¹⁶ Romans 12:2
¹⁷ Romans 2:14-16
¹⁸ C. A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament*, Studies in Biblical Theology 15 (1955); W. Lillie, *Studies in New Testament Ethics* (1961); J. G. McKenzie,

Guilt: Its Meaning and Significance (1962), pp. 21-54, 138-58; R. H. Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self* (1963); H. Thieliicke, *Theological Ethics: Foundations* (1966), pp. 298-358. Unger Bible Dictionary (1988).
¹⁹ Genesis 20:5-6; 1 Samuel 25:31; Job 27:6
²⁰ Hebrews 5:14

²¹ Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:5,19; Hebrew 13:18; 1 Peter 3:16, 21
²² 1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3
²³ Hebrews 10:22
²⁴ Titus 1:15; 1 Corinthians 8:7
²⁵ 1 Timothy 4:2
²⁶ 1 Corinthians 8:10-13; 10:29
²⁷ 2 Samuel 24:10
²⁸ Psalm 32

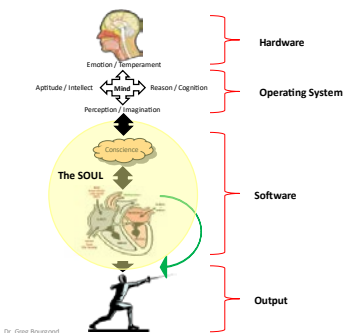
In the New Testament the term conscience is found most frequently in the writings of the apostle Paul. Some people argue erroneously that conscience takes the place of the external law in the Old Testament. However, the conscience is not the ultimate standard of moral goodness.²⁹ Under both the old covenant and the new covenant the conscience must be formed by the will of God. The law given to Israel was inscribed on the hearts of believers;³⁰ so the sensitized conscience is able to discern God's judgment against sin.³¹

The conscience of the believer has been cleansed by the work of Jesus Christ; it no longer accuses and condemns.³² Believers are to work to maintain pure consciences. They also must be careful not to encourage others to act against their consciences. To act contrary to the urging of one's conscience is wrong, for actions that go against the conscience cannot arise out of faith.³³

In summary, the conscience is that faculty of the mind, or inborn sense of right and wrong, by which we judge the moral character of human conduct. It is common to all mankind but perverted by the Fall.³⁴ Our conscience can be defiled³⁵ and seared.³⁶ A "conscience void of offense" is to be sought and cultivated.³⁷ The conscience is malleable and can be shaped by our experiences and our will and influenced by circumstances, events,

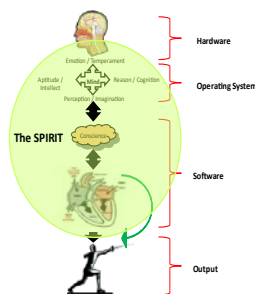
and other people if not guarded and informed by the word of God and the Holy Spirit.³⁸

The Soul



The **soul** refers to our inner life, seat of our emotions, the center of our personality, the seat of feelings, desires, affections and aversions, and the entire nature of a person. We became a living soul when God first breathed life into us.³⁹ Biblical writings describe the soul as the seat of emotions and desires, love, longing for God, rejoicing, knowing, and memory.⁴⁰ Soul is frequently used interchangeably with the biblical metaphor heart. The soul is designed by its Creator for everlasting life.⁴¹

The Spirit



Dr. Greg Bourgond

One Biblical resource puts it this way. "The "**spirit**" is the out breathing of God into the creature, the life-principle derived from God. The "soul" is man's individual possession, that which distinguishes one man from another and from inanimate nature...God's spirit made me, the soul called into being, and the breath of the Almighty animates me."⁴² The soul is the core of our beingness, the animating principle originally derived from God Himself and breathed into us creating a living being.⁴³ We are body, soul, and spirit.

- It is the soul that is regenerated at conversion, renewed during sanctification, and glorified when we leave this earth for heaven.
- It is the soul that outlives the body and returns to its Maker.
- It is the soul so often referred to as the heart that enjoys eternal life or eternal damnation.
- It is the soul that separates us from animals and distinguishes us from all of creation including angels.
- It is the soul that matters to god and therefore should matter to us.
- It is the soul we are to protect and guard against the evil one.
- It is the soul that is redeemed and revitalized and transformed

²⁹ 1 Corinthians 4:4

³⁰ Hebrews 8:10; 10:16

³¹ Romans 2:14-15

³² Hebrews 9:14; 10:22

³³ 1 Corinthians 8; 10:23-33

³⁴ John 16:2; Acts 26:9, Romans 2:15

³⁵ Titus 1:15

³⁶ 1 Timothy 4:2

³⁷ Acts 24:16; Romans 9:1; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 1 Timothy 1:5, 19; 1 Peter 3:21

³⁸ Easton's Bible Dictionary (2006).

³⁹ Genesis 2:7

⁴⁰ Deuteronomy 12:20-21, Song 1:7; Psalm 63:1, Ecclesiastes 3:10-11; Psalm 86:4; 139:14; Lamentations 3:20

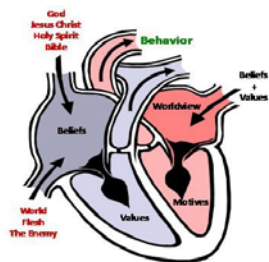
⁴¹ 3 John 2; Hebrews 13:17; James 1:21; 5:20; 1 Peter 1:9

⁴² International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (2006)

⁴³ Genesis 2:7

through the work of the Holy Spirit and the person of Christ.

The Heart



Found over 800 times in the Bible the **heart**, as defined earlier, refers to the inner being of person, the core and essence of who we are; the unvarnished receptacle of our being, the irreducible minimum. It is where the impetus for our actions arises. It is the repository of what we truly trust in, rely on and cling to. It is the filter through which we process all life's decisions. It is the lens through which we make judgments regarding our observations of the world around us. It is what moves us to action. It is worth guarding, it must be guarded. It is what makes us tick.

God looks at the heart of man rather than our actions. Man looks at appearances but God looks at our hearts.⁴⁴ In many ways, the heart is our soul. It informs and conditions our conscience. It influences our mind, for good or bad. From it flow the “wellsprings” of our life.⁴⁵ Other versions of the Bible give added clarity regarding “wellsprings.” Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life (NASU). Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life (ASV). Keep and guard your

heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life (AMP). Above all else, guard your affections. For they influence everything else in your life (TLB). Keep vigilant watch over your heart; that's where life starts (The Message). Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it are the sources of life (NET). Above everything else, guard your heart. It is where your life comes from (NIRV). Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life (NLT). Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it (TNIV).

Our true emotions flow from the heart—joy, fear, courage, despair, sadness, trust, and anger.⁴⁶ With regard to the will, the heart not only thinks and feels, remembers and desires, but also chooses a course of action and stimulates our behavior.⁴⁷ Our heart is the seat of our conscience and can be wicked or good, honorable or dishonorable, courageous or cowardly, godly or ungodly all depending on our relationship with God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The heart can be hardened through making mini-compromises with our faith. If not checked the hardening of our hearts can lead to ignorance of what we have known to be the truth, a darkening of understanding we once had, a separation from God and the things of God over time, a loss of sensitivity of what we once were acutely sensitive of, and a giving over to sensuality—what only our senses can experience, and ultimately an indulgence in every kind of impurity with a continual lust for more.⁴⁸

“Hardness of heart evidences itself by light views of sin; partial acknowledgment and confession of it; pride and conceit; ingratitude; unconcern about the word and ordinances of God; inattention to divine providences; stifling convictions of conscience; shunning reproof; presumption, and general ignorance of divine things.”⁴⁹

As Paul reminds us, however, “You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind

⁴⁴ 1 Samuel 16:1-7

⁴⁵ Proverbs 4:23

⁴⁶ Exodus 4:14; Leviticus 19:17; Deuteronomy 1:28; Psalm 27:3; Deuteronomy 28:65; Psalm 28:7; Psalm 29:3

⁴⁷ Mark 7:20-23

⁴⁸ Ephesians 4:17-19

⁴⁹ Easton's Bible Dictionary (2006). 29:3

and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”⁵⁰

The brain, the mind, the conscience, and the heart act and react to one another determining the health and wellbeing the soul first animated by the breath of God. According to Scripture the heart may think, understand, imagine, remember, be wise, speak to itself, make decisions, be purposeful, be intentional, or be mature or rebellious.⁵¹ The heart is the true character of an individual and God knows the heart of each person.⁵² The heart can be pure or evil.⁵³ The heart is the reservoir of the entire power of life, the center of the rational and spiritual nature of individuals, the center of moral life, and the dwelling place of Christ in us.⁵⁴

In the Bible the heart is never ascribed to animals. On the heart is written God’s law and it is where the work of grace is performed and renewed by that grace. Why? Because the heart is also the seat of sin.⁵⁵ The heart can even be considered the place where the soul resides. It is the heart that governs the intellectual, emotive, volitional, and physical dimensions of the inner person. It is the moral and ethical center of our lives. Integrity and authenticity find their home in the heart. The fruit of the Spirit lives in our hearts waiting to be cultivated to

produce the character of Christ in thought word and deed.⁵⁶

We can choose what will establish, inform, condition the heart and thereby determine the outcome of our behavior. Only God can open or illuminate the heart to bring a person to faith. Only God can redeem and restore the heart. Only God can quicken and inspire the heart. Only God can see the heart for what is really there. Only God fully knows our heart. God looks at the heart and judges the motives of our heart.

Horace Greeley said “Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, and riches take wings. Only one thing, endures, and that is character.”⁵⁷ My friend, Erwin McManus, profoundly observes “The shape of your character is the shape of your future.”⁵⁸

All of the preceding discussion regarding the brain, mind, conscience, heart, and soul comes together in what we refer to as the **character** of a person-- the combination of natural and acquired features and traits that constitute a person’s nature or fundamental disposition, from which specific moral responses issue. Character is what people see about us and what they perceive is us.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines character as one of the attributes or features that make up or distinguish an individual; the complex of mental and ethical traits marking and often

individualizing a person, group, or nation; main or essential nature especially as strongly marked and serving to distinguish moral excellence and firmness. One writer states that character “will reflect either the traits of the sinful nature being influenced by the world or the traits of the divine nature being influenced by the word of God. Character is the sum total of all the negative and positive qualities in a person’s life, exemplified by one’s thoughts, values, motivations, attitudes, feelings and actions. Even as the character of the world becomes more corrupt, the Lord is causing the character of the church to be matured.”⁵⁹

Our character is marked by the morality we hold. Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (2007) and other luminaries define morality as “the relation of conformity or nonconformity to the moral standard or rule; quality of an intention, a character, an action, a principle, or a sentiment, when tried by the standard of right. The morality of an action is founded in the freedom of that principle, by virtue of which it is in the agent’s power, having all things ready and requisite to the performance of an action, either to perform or not perform it; the quality of an action which renders it good; the conformity of an act to the accepted standard of right; the doctrines or rules of moral duties, or the duties of men in their social

⁵⁰ Ephesians 4:20-32

⁵¹ Esther 6:6; Job 38:36; Jeremiah 9:14; Deuteronomy 4:9; Proverbs 2:10; Deuteronomy 7:17; Acts 11:23; Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:6; Psalm 101:2; Jeremiah 5:23

⁵² 1 Samuel 16:7

⁵³ Jeremiah 3:17; Matthew 5:8

⁵⁴ Ephesians 3:17

⁵⁵ Romans 2:15; Acts 15:9, Ezekiel 36:26; Genesis 6:5; 8:21

⁵⁶ Galatians 5:22-24

⁵⁷ Horace Greeley, quoted in the Memphis Commercial Appeal.

⁵⁸ Erwin McManus, *Uprising: The Revolutions of the Soul*, Thomas Nelson, 2003, 39.

⁵⁹ Frank Damazio, *The Making of a Leader: Biblical Leadership Principles for Today’s Leaders*, City Bible Publishing, 1988, 106-108.

character; the practice of the moral duties; rectitude of life; conformity to the standard of right; virtue; as, we often admire the politeness of men whose morality we question.

Our Christian faith modifies and develops our character. The moral qualities we embrace are elevated, strengthened and purified by our faith. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit gives us a solid foundation for Christian character. We partner with God to have Christ formed in us but the source of this transformation is under the sole ownership of the Holy Spirit. If we are to have the character of Christ, as Scripture asserts, we must submit to the gradual work of the Lord in us.⁶⁰ By partnering I mean we must make choices and decisions that will facilitate the transformation.⁶¹

We must be known as having the character of Christ if we are to have any influence in facilitating God's redemptive purposes in the world. So, character matters. Once again, the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—must be observable in our life. The fruit of the Spirit dramatically impacts our character bringing us into closer and closer congruence with the character of Christ.

Our character reflects the status and health of the heart. It is an outward expression of an inward transformation.

OTHER NEWS



Heart of a Warrior Ministries offers four journeys you can take to become who God created you to be.

The Foundation (Ground Zero) helps establish strong biblical foundations for the battles ahead.

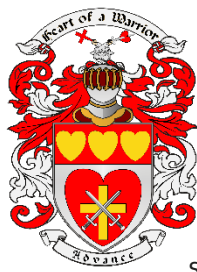
The Compass (Phase I) calibrates a warrior's heart and tunes that heart to the heart of God. I am currently leading 45 at Calvary Church WBL Campus on this journey.

The Map (Phase II) helps men focus on what matters in accordance with their unique divine wiring.

The Guide (Phase III) develops the spiritual discipline of being mentored and mentoring others.

Go to our website for more details.
www.heartofawarrior.org/journeys/

If you would like to contact me directly, email me at HOAWMinistries.com.



Donations

Please consider giving to Heart of a Warrior Ministries. HOAW Ministries needs your financial support. Our ability to help men live God-honoring lives depends on the resources we can use to that end. Simply go to the donations tab on heartofawarrior.org. Thank you for being a subscriber.

Check out **The Store** on our website (www.heartofawarrior.org). There are downloadable resources you can use to lead a group through Phases I, II, or III, Foundations of a Warrior, and Bible Study Guidelines.

NOTE: Throughout the course of the year, I will be adding helpful and

informative resources to Heartofawarrior.org. They may be found on the **RESOURCES** page of the website.

Websites for Men

Heart of a Warrior Ministries
www.Heartofawarrior.org

Legacy Minded Men
www.legacymindedmen.org

Church for Men
<http://churchformen.com/>

Resolute
<https://beresolute.org/>

Life Way Men
<https://blog.lifeway.com/leadingmen/>

Men's Fraternity
<http://www.mensfraternity.com/>

Man in the Mirror
<http://maninthemirror.org/>

Men with No Regrets
<http://www.menwithnoregrets.org/>

National Collision of Men's Ministries
<http://ncmm.org/>

Every Man's Battle
<https://newlife.com/emb/>

Iron Sharpens Iron
<http://ironsharpensiron.net/>

Ransomed Heart Ministries
<http://www.ransomedheart.com/>

Band of Brothers
www.bandofbrothers.org/

Man Up God's Way
<http://www.manupgodsway.org/>

Iron Works
<http://www.ironworksmen.com/>

⁶⁰ 2 Corinthians 3:18

⁶¹ Titus 2:11-14