

"SKG: Guard Your Heart" Hebrews 3:7-19

- **Symptoms of a hard heart**

- Preoccupation with obstacles
- Absence of gratitude
- Suspicion of others' motives
- Comparison of circumstances

"We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic..."

—Numbers 11:5

"...we sat by the pots of meat, [and] we ate bread to the full..."

—Exodus 16:3

- Rebellion against authority
- Seared conscience
- Refusal to exercise faith

- **Consequences of a hard heart**

- ✓ No partnership
- ✓ No peace
- ✓ Collateral damage

Study Questions: Hebrews 3:7-19

1. Read Numbers 13:25-14:25 (see also Exodus 16:1-21 and Exodus 17). What lessons can we learn from the experience of the Israelites? What do we learn about God's personality from these events?

2. Why did God choose such a difficult route from Egypt toward the Promised Land for His chosen people? Why did God test them time after time with thirst, hunger and powerful enemies?
3. What is a "hard heart"? Can you think of any Old Testament or New Testament illustrations of people who hardened their hearts toward God? What were the consequences?
4. Can you think of any Old Testament or New Testament illustrations of people who kept their hearts soft toward God in the face of difficult circumstances? How were they able to remain soft?
5. What symptoms of a hardening heart have you personally experienced?
6. What types of circumstances have caused you to grow hard toward the Lord or toward other people?
7. What perspectives and practices have you cultivated to keep your heart soft before the Lord?
8. Read Psalm 95. What is the relationship between verses 1-7a and verses 7b-11?
9. In Hebrews 3:7-8 the author writes, "Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness....'" Notice that he indicates that the Spirit is speaking today, although he is quoting a psalm that was 1000 years old at the time of writing (and 3000 years old today). Does the Holy Spirit in fact speak to us today? If so, how? If not, why not?
10. What are the consequences, present and future, of hardening our hearts toward God?
11. Define "rest" in the context of Hebrews 3-4. Is it a free gift, or is it reward earned through obedience? What clues can you gather from the context of Hebrews 3-4? What clues can you gather from the context of the Old Testament historical events that form the background of the exposition in Hebrews? Look particularly for conditional and/or unconditional promises (e.g. Num. 14:8).
12. The author to the Hebrews says that the cause of a hard heart is being deceived by sin ("But encourage one another day after day, as

long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Hebrews 3:13). Why are we susceptible to being deceived? How can we protect ourselves from sin's deceit?