

Amos Part 9 Is Your Heart Receptive? 7:10-17

Community Group Questions

1. Do you find yourself blaming others for your own sin?
2. Are there areas of sin in your life in which you are living in denial?
3. What responsibilities have you not been fulfilling to the best of your abilities?
4. Have you ever committed a sin that affected the people around you?

In life there are times when we have to do heart evaluation. Many times we are unaware that we need to do so until something happens to us or someone tells us. In this next section Amos the Prophet calls out the sin of Israel to the King and the high priest because they are their leaders. Needless to say...it did not go well. Their hearts were not receptive.

So going alone with our big idea “where is your heart?” the question we will deal with is “Is your heart receptive?” *...able or willing to receive something.*

Today we are going to see that a receptive heart DOES NOT blame others, live in denial or avoid responsibilities. But when our hearts are unreceptive it affects the people around us.

A receptive heart does not blame others. Vrs 10-11 When Amaziah the priest heard what Amos had to say he shifted the blame from what the people of Israel were doing wrong to accusing Amos of being a trouble maker.

Blame shifting-*the act of transferring responsibility for an error or problem to another* The most popular example of this is in Genesis 3:12 when Adam blamed Eve. *“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”*

This is very common because it is not easy to admit when we are wrong or something needs to change. Our hearts are unreceptive so we say things like.

- I get angry because you make me angry
- I get drunk because all my friends drink around me...or the infamous saying your parents may have said "you kids drive me to drink"
- I steel from work because they don't pay me enough
- I cheat on my taxes because the government wastes money
- I would be a better parent but my kids are disobedient
- I would be a better spouse but my spouse is annoying
- I only lust because I am inundated with images every where I look
- I only gossip because the people around me give me so much material

When something is brought to our attention that needs to be worked on, we need to have a receptive heart and not blame others for our sin.

Many times it has to do with the temptation.

There are always going to be things temp you to sin but remember when Jesus was temped? He didn't blame Satan or His situation he turned to the Scriptures.

Remember what Paul said in 1 Cor 10:13 about temptation?

Don't shift the blame take the blame and admit your sin. Remember our salvation started when we admitted we are sinners...GOSPEL you could can not be saved unless you admit your sin.

Maybe it is not a blame game for you, but maybe like the King Jeroboam you want to ignore the sin and live in denial.

A receptive heart does not live in denial. Vrs 12-13 Jeroboam the king apparently was behind this, but it was the priest Amaziah that told Amos to hit the road.

Israel, as we have seen had big sin problems and the two highest authorities wanted to ignore the problems they were in denial. A huge flaw in leadership can be leaders ignoring problems, one of the

things that our leadership council here at the church is committed to is not ignoring problems but doing the best that we can to figure the problems out. Obviously there are not always great resolutions to every problem but realizing things need attention, is important.

But what about you, are there issues and problems that you tend to ignore or are living in denial? If so your heart is not receptive to working those issues, problems or sins out. So if there is someone in your life that reminds you of those issues and problems, you steer clear and avoid them. You say hit the road like Amaziah did.

It's **Denial** *George R. Martin said "Most men would rather deny a hard truth than face it."*

Or it may not be someone like in the case of Israel...it maybe something like a Christian discipline.

That may be...

-Attending worship because you hear the Word and are convicted by your sin issues.

-Reading the Bible -Praying -Serving

When our hearts are unreceptive we fall into the trap of ignoring our Christian disciplines that bring us closer to Christ.

Some people have said to me...well how can I do these things if my heart is not in it? Would that be hypocritical? My answer is...you do these things because you know you should and the Lord uses these things to change your heart and make it receptive. How else would we wake up out of your denial?

A receptive heart does not avoid responsibilities. Vrs 14-15

Amos' response was like "hey I didn't ask for this I was shepherd herding sheep and God said "Go bring this message"

But the point is his heart was receptive so he listened to the Lord and faced the sin problem and not only that, his life was in danger for being the bearer of the bad news of judgment. Although it was difficult his heart was receptive to the responsibility God wanted him to do.

How about you? Do you avoid facing responsibilities because they are difficult?

Do you realize that avoiding those responsibilities does not make them go away? Often times it makes things worse. If your heart is not receptive you will not step up and fulfill your responsibilities. It's called avoidance.

So what are your responsibilities?

As a Christian....As a parent...as a spouse...as a grandparent...a child...an employee...employer...a friend...a student.

A receptive heart takes their responsibilities seriously even if they are difficult.

Abe Lincoln said "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

What if you are guilty of blaming others for your sin, living in denial or avoiding responsibilities? Your heart is not receptive.

The result of an unreceptive heart . Vrs 16-17 based on this passage we see that it **affects the people around us**. Here is how it works.

When you are not receptive to the fact that you need to...

- Step up your parenting...it impacts your children
- Take better care of yourself...it impacts your health, which impacts your family
- Be a better worker...no raise provide less or bad work conditions for other workers

-Be a better spouse...bad marriage unhappy spouse

These are illustrations of the affects the people around us may experience if our hearts are not receptive.

Is that how we want the people around us to see us? Do we want them to associate negative feelings toward us?

Have you ever noticed that the negative things about a person or negative events that happen, you seem to remember? There is a reason for that

An Article in the New York Times by Alina Tugend helps us to understand why negative experiences stand out so much. *Clifford Nass, a professor of communication at Stanford University. said "Some people do have a more positive outlook, but almost everyone remembers negative things more strongly and in more detail.*

The reason is "The brain handles positive and negative information in different hemispheres," Negative emotions generally involve more thinking, and the information is processed more thoroughly than positive ones, he said. Thus, we tend to ruminate more about unpleasant events — and use stronger words to describe the negative experiences.

In an experiment in which participants gained or lost the same amount of money, for instance, the distress participants expressed over losing the money was greater than the joy that accompanied the gain.

In addition, bad events wear off more slowly than good ones.

So don't let your heart be unreceptive it will not only hinder your spiritual life it will negatively affect the people around you.