

What's In Your Heart?

February brings renewed attention to things of the heart. February 14 has become an opportunity for businesses such as florists, restaurants, jewelry, candy, and the like, to make a substantial profit on people who want to display affection and love on someone dear to their heart. The focus of the holiday is always positive with expressions of romance and commitment to each other along with gratitude and renewed vows of unconditional love. It reminds us that real love forgives, protects and never stops. In spite of the bumps in the road, we declare that our love supersedes those things in the past. We say, "I love you, and I want to be with you always." Even if you no longer require lavish, personal gifts to proclaim or celebrate your love for another, the holiday does not pass without at least a \$5.00 card to someone you love. A valentine is meant to be an outward expression of what is in our heart.



Real love isn't bound by what happens on Valentine's Day. It is validated by the day-to-day acts of kindness, concern, appreciation and commitment to our loved ones. It is founded on trust and obedience.

In Deuteronomy 8:2 Moses reminds the children of Israel of the good things God has done for them in the wilderness: *"And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no."*

Some people passed the test with flying colors. God found them faithful, and in spite of the hardships and setbacks of the journey they continued to trust God and follow Him in obedience, no matter how long it took. The miraculous protections, provisions, deliverance – all were the result of God's grace, that they would know they could trust Him and serve Him. Others, who could only focus on the end promise, fell short with grumbling and complaining at their situation. Their hypocrisy and infidelity broke their communion with God.

In verse 6 Moses exhorts his people to continue to cling to obedience as they take the new land in which God would now bring them. God has proven that there is joy and blessing in obedience.

What if God tests us to know what is in our hearts? Are we serving God because of the promises of what we can get from Him, or would we obediently serve in the wilderness never knowing if we would be the recipients of the prize? If it took us forty years of waiting for a promise, would we be faithful and obedient, no matter what?