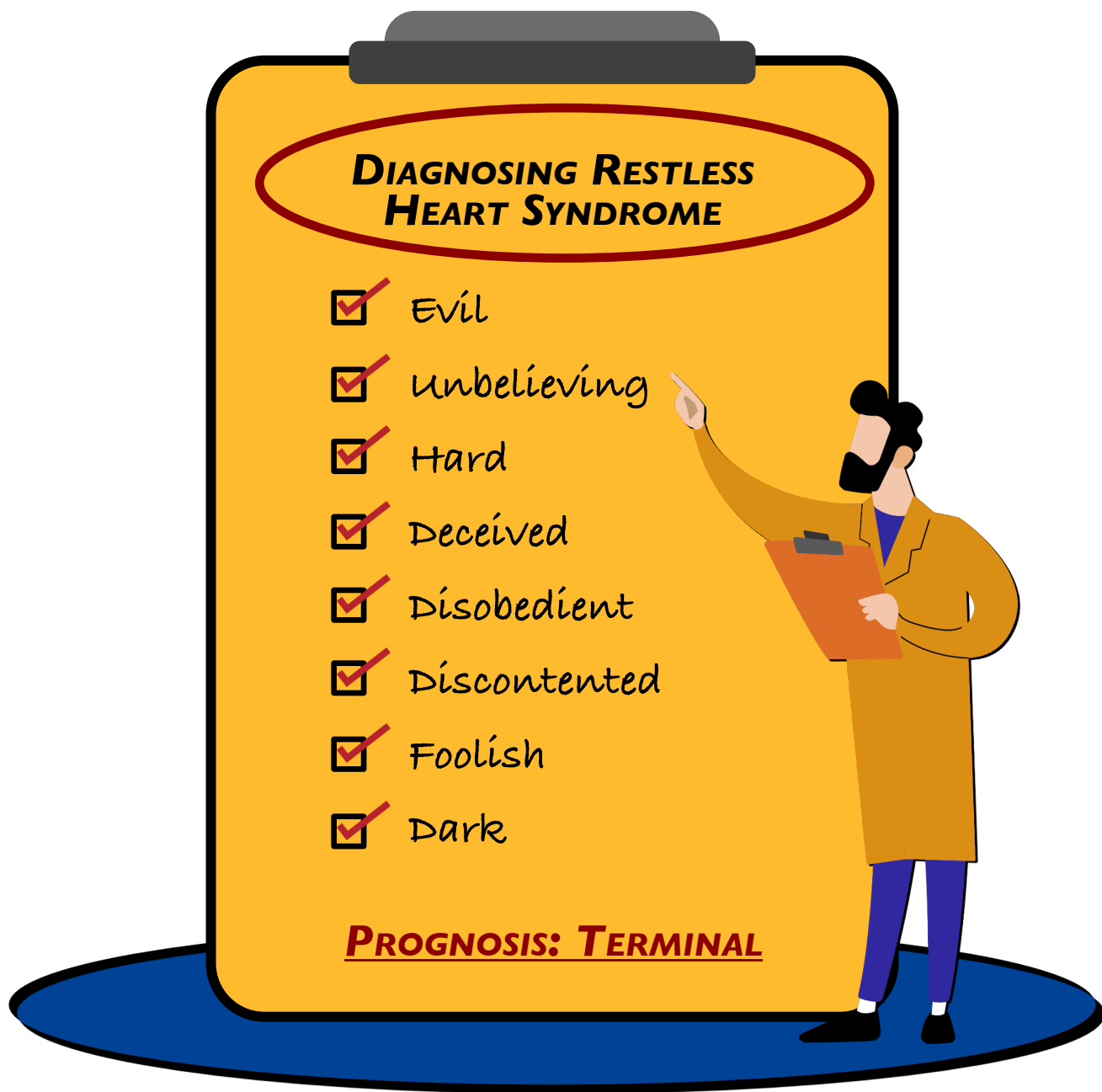


FINDING THE REAL ME

—DISCOVERING THE WRETCHED MAN (OR WOMAN) INSIDE—



SURGERY REQUIRED ASAP

1. THE GOAL: To be diligent to enter God's rest and as much as is possible help others to enter, 4:11.

- (Hebrews 4:11 LSB) Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall into the same example of disobedience.
- **Better ...** (Hebrews 4:11 ESV) Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

To be diligent is ... to strive, to be eager; to exert one's self; to have or show keen interest, intense desire.

A. The battle is between **believing God** and entering his rest (salvation) and **not believing God** and not entering his rest (damnation).

- (Hebrews 4:3a LSB) For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, **THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.**"

B. The battle for the believer is ongoing as we must be diligent in hearing and believing God and diligent in turning away from our human religions, philosophies and traditions.

C. As previously exhorted we are to be diligent in paying much closer attention, 2:1.

- (Hebrews 2:1 ESV) Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

D. The urgency and necessity to hear God and believe him now (today) cannot be overemphasized.

E. We can identify several perilous tendencies of the person who refuses to hear God's voice **today**.

- (Hebrews 3:7-11 ESV) Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "**Today**, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. 10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' 11 As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.' "

THE PERSON WHO REFUSES TO HEAR GOD TODAY ...

hardens his heart, puts God to the test, goes further astray in his heart, doesn't know the ways of God, does not enter God's rest, becomes increasingly disobedient and unable to believe God and ultimately rejects the gospel.

- (Hebrews 3:15,19 ESV) As it is said, "**Today**, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." ... 19 **So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.**
- (Hebrews 4:6-7 ESV) Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news **failed to enter because of disobedience**, 7 again he appoints a certain day, "**Today**," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "**Today**, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

F. The person who refuses to hear God's voice today has an evil, unbelieving heart that continues to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

- (Hebrews 3:12-13 ESV) Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you **an evil, unbelieving heart**, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," **that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.**

i. This person has a foolish heart that grows darker and a mind that becomes more futile daily.

- (Romans 1:21 LSB) For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they **became futile in their thoughts**, and **their foolish heart was darkened**.

ii. He is alienated from the life of God because of a hard heart.

- (Ephesians 4:18 LSB) Being **darkened in their mind, alienated from the life of God** because of the ignorance that is in them, **because of the hardness of their heart.**

iii. He removes his heart far from God while deceiving himself further with superficial acts of devotion and service.

- (Isaiah 29:13 LSB) Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their mouth And honor Me with their lips, **But they remove their hearts far from Me**, And their fear of Me is in the command of men learned by rote."

iv. He has a stubborn heart that is far from righteousness.

- (Isaiah 46:12 LSB) Hear Me, you stubborn of heart, Who are far from righteousness.

2. THE MEANS: Submitting to the sharp incisions into my innermost being by the word of God is how I see who I am and avoid “the same sort of disobedience” as the ancient Israelites, 4:12.

- (Hebrews 4:12 LSB) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, **and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

- **Judge ...** [*kritikos*] ... means to able to judge or discern; critique; characterized by careful evaluation and judgment (of someone or something).

A. The purpose of God’s word is to thoroughly examine us with the intent of showing us who we are.

B. The word of God piercing our evil, unbelieving hearts is the only way to accurately diagnose and judge our innermost thoughts and desires.

C. Our only hope is for the Holy Spirit of God to use the word of God as his scalpel to cut through the hardened layers of the deceitfulness of sin.

- (Jeremiah 17:9–10a NLT) **The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? 10 But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives.**

3. THE METHOD: The piercing work of the word of God exposes the thoughts and intentions of my heart and is comprehensive, exhaustive and effective at the highest level of accountability, 4:13.

- (Hebrews 4:13 LSB) And there is **no creature hidden from His sight**, but **all things are uncovered and laid bare** to the eyes of **Him to whom we have an account to give.**

A. **Comprehensive:** No one is hidden from his sight.

Comprehensive: complete and including everything that is necessary; all-embracing; of large scope; inclusive; having an extended mental range or grasp.

B. **Exhaustive:** All things are uncovered (literally “naked”) and laid bare in the sight of God Almighty.

Exhaustive: including all possibilities; thorough; treating all parts or aspects without omission; complete and including everything; examining, including, or considering all elements or aspects.

C. **Effective:** This happens at the highest level of accountability so the judgment will stand.

Effective: producing a decided, decisive, or desired

effect; achieving the results that are hoped for, intended or expected.

D. We can be confident that the comprehensive, exhaustive, effective nature of this judgment at the highest level of accountability will finally and completely reveal to us who we truly are in the eyes of God.

E. Remember: The ultimate intent of the deep, sharp incisions of the word is to produce hearing with faith which keeps us from falling into the same example of disobedience as the ancient Israelites.

F. The person who consequently accepts God’s evaluation and then receives the good news with faith will be blessed with superabounding assurance as to his right standing before God Almighty.

- (Romans 8:31, 33–34 LSB) **What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ... 33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died**, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

G. This person will be naked but not afraid as Adam and Eve were because he is covered by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

- (Genesis 3:10 LSB) And he said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, **and I was afraid because I was naked**; so I hid.”

- (2 Corinthians 5:21 LSB) He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

- (Psalm 32:1–2 LSB) **How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!** 2 How blessed is the man whose iniquity Yahweh will not take into account, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!

- (Psalm 32:5 LSB) **I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not cover up**; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to Yahweh;” **And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.** Selah.

Think about it! For the one who has been washed by the blood of the Lamb and covered in Christ’s righteousness ... the restlessness and discontent of the human soul that began in the Garden of Eden is gone forever.



4. THE SHOCKING CONCLUSION: My heart surgery was an astounding success, and I now am able to not only enter God's rest but also with confidence I enter the holy places of God.

- (Hebrews 10:19–20 ESV) Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.

How dramatically things have changed in my life. Before I was alienated from God with no hope and denied access to his rest. But now I enter the holy places of God with confidence.

A. I have heard the good news with faith.

B. I have obeyed and believed in Jesus Christ.

- (1 John 3:23a LSB) And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

C. The good news (*the gospel*) has been bearing fruit and changing my life from day one.

- (Colossians 1:6 NLT) This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

D. I have a new heart and a new spirit.

- (Ezekiel 36:26a LSB) Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.

BOOM!
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I FIND ME AND BELIEVE GOD!

POW!
IF GOD IS FOR ME WHO CAN BE AGAINST ME!

E. I am a new person in Christ.

- (2 Corinthians 5:17 LSB) Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

F. My new heart is wholly true to the LORD.

- (Hebrews 10:22a ESV) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.
- (1 Kings 8:61 ESV) Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.
- Wholly ... [shalem] ... complete, safe, peaceful, perfect, whole, full, at peace; perfect; finished; safe, unharmed.

5. TOTAL VICTORY: Those who find themselves naked and wretched before God but as a result hear the good news with faith enter God's rest and enjoy total victory in the Jesus Christ.

- (Romans 7:24 ESV) Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
- 1 Corinthians 15:57 ESV) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- (1 John 5:4–5 LSB) For everything that has been born of God overcomes the world; and this is the overcoming that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
- (Romans 8:37 LSB) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

VICTORY IN JESUS