



## **AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE: *The Shape of Your Heart***

*Heavenly Father, we come to you now to reflect on our lives and how our hearts, while filled with original glory, are sometimes tainted with human choices that do not shine your goodness. Be with us as we examine our consciences and prepare to fully unite with your heavenly glory, mercy and forgiveness.*

What shape is your heart in?

*What sort of heart do you bring before God right now?*

**Do we fill our hearts with things that are of God? Are we able to be joyful? How would you describe your heart?**

Is it bruised? Is it broken?

**Are we able to forgive ourselves? Are we too hard on ourselves and set unreasonable expectations? Are we able to forgive others? Do we need to forgive someone, but are holding back our forgiveness because of pride? And when we do forgive someone, do we truly forgive, or do we hold what they did to hurt us over them, and use it against them?**

What shape is your heart in? Is it full of uncertainty? Of impatience?

**Are we too quick to respond negatively to someone, when it compromises our time? Would we describe ourselves as a patient person? Do we realize that even with all our planning, that God is ultimately the owner of our time? Do we give**

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**into uncertainty or do we recognize it as an opportunity to more deeply seek God?**

What shape is your heart in? *Is there a wall around it---or an open gate?*

**Do we not open our hearts, our selves, to people we don't like? Do we shut people out of our lives for no reason or for a silly reason? Do we allow the wrong people to come into our hearts? People who do not bring goodness into our lives? Do we allow too many people into our hearts? Not allowing us to give each person our proper attention and care? Do we limit who comes into our lives to a select group of people? Are we afraid of what other people might say to us because it would be challenging and different than what we are comfortable with?**

What shape is your heart in? *Is it worn out in places? Is it flat? Is it cold? Has it been stretched thin?*

**Are we fully aware of our actions, or do we just go through the motions? Do we excuse away our sins, thinking they aren't really sinful because they are so much a part of us? Do we sometimes give in to despair? Do we know when to say "no" to added responsibilities and commitments when we really don't have the energy or the time? Do we neglect to take care of ourselves, either intellectually, spiritually or physically?**

What shape is your heart in? *Is it hard in some places? Is it a harbor for anger?*

**How do we respond to our emotions? Knowing that emotions themselves are not sins, do we give into them and then sin as a result? Do we take out our bad days on others? Can we say, "I am a happy person?" Do I let past hurts resurface to affect my daily life and affect the way I view myself? Can I let go of the negative things I have done in the past and move forward with God's grace?**

What shape is your heart in? *Where does it need mending or healing?*

**Where are we in most of need of God's forgiveness? What words do we need to hear in order for our hearts to be mended or to be healed?**

What shape is your heart in?

**Create in Me a Clean Heart by Joyce Rupp**

*Create in me a clean heart*, open and receptive, so that I may embrace the many ways you choose to visit my life.

*Create in me a clean heart*, cleared of all the refuse of old battles with others and opposition with myself.

*Create in me a clean heart*, purified through the daily disruptions and the life encounters that take me beyond my grasping control and ego-centeredness.

*Create in me a clean heart*, freed from the clutter of cultural enticements, so that I can enjoy the beauty of life's simple things and relish the gifts I easily take for granted.

*Create in me a clean heart*, bathed from harsh thoughts, shame, and perfectionistic tendencies, warmly welcoming others with the embrace of nonjudgment.

*Create in me a clean heart*, brushed free of frantic busyness, so that I will have time to dwell with you in the listening space of solitude and silence.

*Create in me a clean heart*, rinsed of the residue of false messages about my identity, enabling my inner goodness and light to shine through all I am and do.

*Create in me a clean heart*, cleansed of anxiety and lack of trust, restoring in me an enduring faith in your abiding presence and unconditional love.

*Create in me a clean heart*, scrubbed of racism and prejudice, drawing me toward all as my sisters and brothers.

*Create in me a clean heart*, washed with your mercy and strengthened by your love, helping me move beyond whatever keeps me from union with you.

*Create in me a clean heart*, God. Dust off the unmindful activity that constantly collects there. De-clutter my heart from harsh judgments and all negativity. Wash away my resistance to working through difficult relationships. Rinse off my un-loving so the beauty of my generous and kind heart can shine forth. Remove whatever keeps me from following your compassionate footsteps and help me to continue to uncover my original glory.

Amen.

