



FOREWORD

Futurists claim that the world's knowledge has doubled in the past 20 years and that it will again double in the next few years. More is known today about medicine, science, technology, and every other field than ever before, and the information explosion continues.

But what have we learned about the God who created us, planned for our eternal salvation, and one day will judge us?

In this present climate of learning no subject should compel us more than delving deeper into the heart of God. Who is God? What is He like? And what can we reliably know about His inner heart and nature?

This book is grounded in the conviction that God not only exists but that He has revealed Himself to us. This is a study that looks for ways to see into the divine heart through the many great stories in Scripture. In each one of them something of God's heart is revealed.

Some years ago I was blessed to study under John Macquarrie at Oxford University. His insightful lectures on the nature of God led to numerous questions from the class. This man seemed to see God from a depth of understanding well beyond many of us. The class was stirred to ask countless questions of this brilliant, yet unassuming man. One afternoon these queries prompted him to say, "You ask many questions about God as though I somehow might answer all of them. You see, any God that I might fully explain would be no greater than me." Macquarrie went on to encourage lifelong study of God with the reminder that while we can learn a great deal; we can never in this life fully understand the great God of this universe.

This Scripture-based study takes up the task to which Macquarrie called us. It skillfully searches the text for insight into God's mind, heart, and ultimately His very being. Because Scripture is the inspired revelation of God, its pages inherently contain much insight. Only because God is self-revealing do we know Him at all. The fact that a magnificent God shares His being with us is beyond comprehension, and yet from His self-revelation we catch a view of the loving God who wants us to know Him.

Harold Shank brings fresh understanding of the divine heart out of the experiences of his life. He planted a church in Milwaukee and later helped begin six inner-city churches in Memphis and three congregations in Ukraine. For 20 years he served one of the great churches of this country, the Highland Street Church of Christ. In 1996 Dr. Shank became the national spokesperson for the Christian Child and Family Services Association. Today in the university classroom he calls students to look beyond the mundane into the divine.

This work challenges readers to revisit familiar passages and seek nuanced revelations of the One who knows and loves us most. From this study will come newer understanding that is both deeper and more profound. *Listening to His Heartbeat* is important because it calls us to listen to God and to yearn for those deeper, more profound experiences with Him.

This book is a call to listen. Listen to God's word, and through that word to listen more carefully to the heartbeat of God. In listening, we find Him in new and fresh ways.

This book reminds me of Jeremiah's encouragement, "*Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*" (*Jer 33:3*).

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