

3. Walking with the Spirit

In the book of Romans Paul gives us examples of what it looks like to walk with that new Spirit in you.

Romans 6:12-13 NLT - 12 Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. 13 Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.

Romans 8:5-6 NLT - 5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. 6 So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.

What does this passage tell us we can control? What are some common examples of choices we make to give God control? What will the rewards of that be?

WRAP-UP

When we receive a new heart and a new Spirit from God we must nurture and protect it. This means we stay in constant communication with God through prayer, and when we pray, expect a response. Don't merely think about doing what God desires of you, act on it. Look for the places you can gather, give, and grow with other believers who love God and love one another. And finally, make choices that give God control and don't surrender to the old sinful nature, so that you will walk in step with His Spirit and the new heartbeat He has given you.

MEMORY VERSE

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

- Ezekiel 36:26 NIV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

Challenge – We will be joining in unified prayer during Lent. You can receive daily prayer prompts by texting PRAYER to 805 979-2003.

Living with a New Heart

Stone to Flesh #3

INTRODUCTION

In this series we have seen that God wants to give us something new; a new Spirit and a new heart. But we make choices every day that can either harden our hearts or allow them to be replaced with a heart softened by God's Spirit. As we conclude this series, we are looking at how to live with the new heart God gives us. How do we recognize a life empowered by the heartbeat of God? And how do we prevent "transplant rejection"?

Ice Breaker

Have you or anyone you know, experienced a joint or organ replacement? How did the recovery go?

Key Passage

Romans 6:4 NLT - 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Post-Transplant Life

When God puts a new heart and new Spirit in us, we discover that our attitudes change. The dominant characteristic of a new heart is that we love God and love others. But just as a transplant patient must take care to nurture their new organ, we must also pay attention to our new heart so that we don't experience "transplant rejection". There are some simple practices you can do to guard your new heart.

Ephesians 6:18 NLT - 18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

Constant communication with God is foundational in nurturing your new heart. This doesn't mean we have our head bowed and eyes closed at all times. What do you think it means to pray in the Spirit at all times? What do you typically include in your prayers? Share some ideas in your group of ways you can increase your communication with God by different styles and types of prayers.

As we are "exercising" our new heart we need to do more than think about doing God's will, we need to take action.

Matthew tells us the proof of a new heart is demonstrated in the way we live, not merely in the thoughts we think. In the parable of the two sons, just saying you will obey God doesn't mean you have been obedient. When we sense God is directing us, we need to act on what He is telling us to do. The more you are in communication with God, the more attuned you will be to His voice and the easier this will become.

Matthew 3:8 NLT - 8 Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.

Matthew 21:30-31a NLT - 30 Then the father told the other son, 'You go,' and he said, 'Yes, sir, I will.' But he didn't go. 31 "Which of the two obeyed his father?" They replied, "The first." ...

Your prayers are not a one-way street. When you speak to God, you should expect that God will reply to you. How do you prepare to be directed, shaped, and transformed by God? Do you keep a prayer journal? Do you have a prayer partner? What is one area that you feel God is working on in your life? What actions are you pursuing in response?

Another important step in protecting your new heart is to provide a healthy environment for it to grow. God wants to continue to pour His Spirit in you, but you need to position yourself to receive Him. This might mean finding a place without distractions where you are focused on God. Consider also how you might approach these Spiritual Disciplines* so that you create space for God to increasingly transform you.

Read Scripture • Observe a Sabbath's Rest • Gather to Worship • Fast
**If you aren't familiar with Spiritual disciplines read Soul Feast by Marjorie J Thompson*

2. Taking Action Together

There are three areas where you can see your transformation as a result of a new heart. As part of a new way of living with your new heart ask yourself how you are doing in these areas.

- **Gather-**

- *Hebrews 10:25 NLT - 25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

Living with the new heart God puts in us means we love God and love people. As we find in Hebrews, we should meet together to encourage another. When you don't join with others you are short-changing the body of Christ. We all play a unique role, and the church is not complete without all of its parts in place.

Where and when do you regularly gather in community with the people of God?

- **Give-**

- *1 Corinthians 12:7 NLT - 7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.*
- *Acts 2:44-45 NLT - 44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.*

Our new heart has an outward focus, caring about the needs of others. This means we will find ways to share what God has given for the good of all. Do you know your Spiritual Gifting? If not, others in your group might help you identify it. How is your gift benefitting others? In Acts the community of believers demonstrated their love for those in need by sharing whatever they had. Are there particular areas you feel called to support through your giving?

- **Grow-**

- *Acts 2:42 NLT - 42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.*

Simply put- we need one another to grow. In Acts 2:42 we see 4 things that were essential to healthy spiritual growth: they studied what had been taught by the Apostles, they spent time in the company of their friends, they participated in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and they prayed. What do you see as the benefits of doing these things with other believers rather than alone? Which of these areas do you regularly participate in other believers?