
Changing The Heart (Transforming A Hard Heart)

Transformational Love

Pastor Wil Nichols

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Victorious Praise Fellowship Church of God in Christ

2116 Page Rd. Durham NC 27703

WEBSITE: www.VictoriousPraise.org

EMAIL: PastorWil@VictoriousPraise.org, Info@VictoriousPraise.org

PHONE: (919) 957-7500

Sermon: Transformational Love: Changing The Heart (Transforming A Hard Heart)

Lesson Text

Ezekiel 36:26 (KJV)²⁶ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Psalms 51:8–10 (KJV)⁸ Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice. ⁹ Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Introduction

Today we will begin a new series on Love, specifically the process of being transformed by it.

- 2 Corinthians 5: ¹⁷ Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
- Romans 12: ² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

God's love was never intended merely to comfort us—it was designed to transform us. When we truly experience the love of God, it changes the way we think, speak, live, and relate to others. It's more than a change in destination; it is a change in disposition.

The evidence that we belong to Christ is not perfection, but transformation.

One of the greatest miracles God performs is not opening blind eyes, raising the dead, or calming storms. The greatest miracle is changing our hearts.

The Bible teaches that the heart is the control center of our lives. Everything we do flows from it. Our attitudes, decisions, relationships, words, worship, and even our response to God are all determined by the condition of our hearts.

- Proverbs 4: ²³ Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.
 - (Extra Credit Homework: Philippians 4:7 says God's peace will keep our Hearts. So are we to protect our hearts or God?)
- Proverbs 23: ⁷ For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee.
- Luke 6: ⁴⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Many people try to change their behavior without ever allowing God to change their hearts. They stop certain habits, modify their language, attend church, and even become religious—but inwardly they remain the same. Christianity is not merely behavior modification; it is heart transformation.

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That is why Ezekiel 36 is such a powerful promise. Israel had repeatedly failed God. They had broken His covenant, worshipped idols, and hardened their hearts. Yet instead of simply giving them another set of rules, God promised something far greater.

"I will give you a new heart."

God understood that lasting change never begins with better habits. It begins with a better heart.

Religion says, "Try harder." God says, "Let Me change you."

The evidence that God's love is transforming us is not merely that we know more Scripture, attend more services, or become more religious. The evidence is that our hearts become softer, more compassionate, more obedient, and more like the heart of Jesus.

Today we'll discover what transformational love does to the human heart.

How does God's love transform our hearts?

God's transformational love replaces our hard hearts with hearts that reflect His character and respond to His Spirit.

Next week we'll discover that transformational love not only changes our hearts—it also **changes our minds**. But today, let's discover changing our hearts!

Series and Sermon: Transformational Love: Changing The Heart (Transforming A Hard Heart)

(Overcoming a Resistant Heart, A Sinful Heart, and a Self-Centered Heart)

I. God's Love Softens Our Hearts (*From Resistant to Responsive*)

Ezekiel 36:26 (KJV)²⁶ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Before God changes our actions, He changes our attitude.

The Bible describes the natural heart as "stony." A stony heart is hard, cold, insensitive, and resistant. It refuses to be corrected. It ignores conviction. It becomes comfortable with sin.

A hardened heart doesn't happen overnight.

Disappointments harden hearts. Betrayal hardens hearts. Unforgiveness hardens hearts. Pride hardens hearts. Repeated disobedience hardens hearts.

Eventually people become emotionally numb—not only toward people, but toward God Himself.

- Matthew 19: ⁷ They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? ⁸ He saith unto them, **Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.**
 - Jesus connects relational breakdown with hardness of heart.

- Hebrews 3: ⁷ Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:
 - God had delivered them from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, provided manna, given them water, and demonstrated His presence repeatedly. Yet they continued to respond with **unbelief, complaining, rebellion, and disobedience**.

That is why some people can hear powerful preaching without conviction, witness miracles without faith, or experience God's blessings without gratitude. The issue isn't that God isn't speaking. The issue is that the heart has become hard.

God cannot mold what refuses to become soft.

Isaiah 64: ⁸ But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father; we *are* the clay, and thou our potter; and we all *are* the work of thy hand.

Clay must remain soft and pliable in the potter's hands to be shaped. Likewise, our hearts must remain tender and yielded in God's hands for Him to transform us.

God's love does something amazing. His love melts what life has frozen. He softens hearts that pain has hardened. He restores sensitivity where bitterness has created calluses.

When God replaces a heart of stone with a heart of flesh, we begin responding differently.

We become quicker to repent. Quicker to forgive. Quicker to worship. Quicker to obey.

A transformed heart is a tender heart.

II. God's Love Sanctifies Our Hearts (*From Sinful to Holy*)

Ezekiel 36: ²⁶ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

God doesn't simply make us nicer. He makes us holier.

When He gives us a new heart, He also places a new spirit within us. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit begins changing our desires from the inside out.

Before salvation, we often loved what God hated. After transformation, we begin loving what God loves.

The things that once attracted us begin losing their grip. The things that once convicted us begin drawing us closer to Christ. Holiness becomes the natural fruit of a transformed heart.

The Pharisees tried to clean the outside while neglecting the inside. Jesus continually emphasized that the real problem was the heart.

If the heart changes, life follows. Transformation is not external pressure. Transformation is internal power.

God doesn't merely command righteousness. He creates it within us.

God doesn't improve the old heart—He replaces it with a new one.

Psalms 51: ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Matthew 5: ⁸ **Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**

2 Corinthians 5: ¹⁷ Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Philippians 2: ¹³ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

III. God's Love Sends Our Hearts (*From Self-Centered to Christ-Centered*)

Ezekiel 36: ²⁶ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

A transformed heart never remains self-focused or self-centered, God's love causes it to become Christ-Centered

When God's love fills our hearts, it begins flowing toward others.

The greatest evidence that our hearts have changed is not merely how we worship God. It is how we love people.

A hard heart asks: "What can people do for me?" A transformed heart asks: "How can I serve someone else?"

The more we experience God's love, the more we become conduits of His love.

We forgive because we've been forgiven. We show mercy because we've received mercy. We give grace because we've experienced grace.

Love was never intended to terminate with us. It was meant to flow through us.

God transforms our hearts so that He can transform someone else's life through us.

A changed heart always changes the way we treat people.

John 13: ³⁴ **A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵ By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.**

Romans 5: ⁵ And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

1 John 4: ⁷ Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸ He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Matthew 5: ¹⁶ **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**

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Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Changing The Heart (Transforming A Hard Heart))

Lesson Text

- Ezekiel 36:26, Psalm 51:8–10

Sermon Outline

- I. God's Love Softens Our Hearts (From Resistant to Responsive)*
- II. God's Love Sanctifies Our Hearts (From Sinful to Holy)*
- III. God's Love Sends Our Hearts (From Self-Centered to Christ-Centered)*

Questions: (What was your main takeaway from this message?)

I. Getting To Know “Me”

1. What are you best at?
2. What song always puts you in a good mood?

II. Into The Bible

1. Read Psalm 51:10, Proverbs 23:7, and Luke 6:45. How are the heart, mind, and mouth connected?
2. Looking at these three Scriptures, where does true transformation begin, and how can we tell when transformation has taken place? What scripture(s) support your answer?

III. Life Application

1. What do you think keeps some people from allowing their heart to be softened?
2. Describe how you can tell that your heart is moving from self-centered to Christ-centered.