



Life Group Study Notes

Entropy of the Heart

Ps. Daniel Stephens - May 21, 2017

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- Who fixes things in your home when they break? Are they good at it?
- Do you have an old article of clothing that is special to you? What is it?
- Have you ever had your car break down? Where were you?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Jeremiah 5:21-23 ESV *"Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not. Do you not fear me? declares the Lord. Do you not tremble before me? I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it. But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away."*

Hard, Stubborn, Rebellious Hearts.

We all experience times when our hearts become hard, stubborn, and rebellious.

1. What does God look at when he sees us?

- 1 Samuel 16:6-7 ESV *When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord 's anointed is before him." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."*
- God looks upon our hearts. He sees us for who we truly are.

2. What does God say about the heart?

- Jeremiah 17:9 ESV *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"*
- Ephesians 4:18 ESV *They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.*

3. How can we get a new heart?
 - Ezekiel 36:26-27 ESV *“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”*
 - God promised to do a fresh, creative work in the hearts of people.
 - Acts 15:8-9 ESV *“And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.”*
 - Through faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit transforms our hearts.
4. Why do I still experience hardness after believing in Jesus?
 - We drift toward hardness of heart when we neglect Jesus' teaching. If we neglect and disobey his teachings and commands, entropy will set in to our hearts.
 - Unforgiveness and not confessing our sins contributes to this entropy, as do other bad practices which ignore or neglect Jesus' teaching.
5. How can I keep my heart tender and right before God?
 - The commands and teachings of Jesus are critical to not only changing our hearts, but to also keeping them tender before God. As we obey Jesus, the Holy Spirit keeps our hearts soft.
 - We need to forgive others and do what we can to reconcile with others.
 - We need to confess our sins to one another and pray for one another.
 - We have to practice Jesus' teaching and commands every day to keep our hearts soft. It never stops in this life. We don't ever "win" in the sense of being done with it all. It's not until we depart to be with Jesus and are fully transformed into his image, that this daily battle will cease.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- If you have experienced a spiritual conversion, how did it affect your "heart"?
- Have you ever experienced a gradual hardening of your heart? What caused it? Did you get back to having a soft heart?
- What are the practical steps you took (or think we should take) to restore a hard heart to one that is tender?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- If you've hardened your heart, ask God for forgiveness for the choices you've made that resulted in your present condition.
- Ask God to refresh and renew your heart through the Holy Spirit.
- Ask God to clearly identify any particular commands or teachings that would be especially important for you at this time to put into practice in order to keep your heart tender.