

Courageous Hearts
“With All My Heart, I Will Love you”
Session Three
“Show Me My Heart, Lord”

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” – Psalms 51:10

Sin primarily comes from one of four sources:

1. Generational sin passed down to us from our parents and theirs.
 2. From sin done against us without our permission.
 3. Sin we choose to cultivate and participate in.
 4. Accidents, natural disasters, war, death, etc. The event itself is usually not sin, but just life.
- However, sin emerges in how we respond to one of these events – i.e. bad attitude or unforgiveness.

Ephesians 4: 26-27 “Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.” NASB

The NIV uses the word toehold instead of opportunity. I have also seen words used like “toehold,” “foothold” or “stronghold.” In this study, “stronghold” is used most often. Regardless of the word used, the enemy is given ground in our heart when we hold onto unresolved anger, hurt, bitterness and refuse to forgive or even deal with the stuff buried in our heart.

Because of the sin committed in the Garden of Eden, we all must deal with the consequences of sin in our lives. Unfortunately, as small children we are not equipped to handle emotional trauma, abuse, anger, pressure or rejection or the many other painful sins that are so often dumped on children and young adults. This is when a majority of strongholds are formed.

Because we live in a fallen world, it is only natural to try to deal with the struggles in our lives with our flesh patterns. They become our comfort zone. And, without realizing it, when we react “naturally” like this, we allow the enemy to have influence in our lives through our strongholds. He gets a toehold early on and, throughout our life, continues to influence us and steer our behavior.

Reacting Off the Chart Kicks (ROCKS). When a person **ROCKS**, it is because someone got too close to their hidden pain and they reacted without thinking. Their reaction is not proportional to the offense. They will know they are reacting off the chart because the offense triggers a response out of their stronghold and that response is usually much larger than what would be “normal.” This doesn’t imply that the reaction has to be loud and obvious – quite the contrary. Sometimes a person just locks up and shuts down.

Matthew 15:16-18 “Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’

Proverbs 4:23 “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

Psalms 86:11-12 “Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And will glorify Your name forever.”
“Unite my heart” means to have undivided reverence.

Ezekiel 36:26 “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

Forgive or you won’t be forgiven

Jesus came that He would eventually die on the cross for our sins, even though we didn’t deserve to be forgiven. He set the example. But just in case we forgot or didn’t understand that we are also to be Christ-

like and forgive others, God made it very clear in his word.

Matthew 6:14-15 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

Courageous Hearts Assignment:

When we won't allow God to transform us to be like Christ, we allow Satan to influence us through our hidden pain, generational sin and our own sin. We try to improve, survive and cope with our lives by using our own unique flesh patterns.

1. *Look at the words you recorded in your notebook about your family members. Highlight each word used to describe them. Words like gentle, kind, harsh, mean, unforgiving, angry etc.*
2. *Circle each word that you highlighted that would describe yourself.*

When we slow down and examine our life in this way we can see our own shortcomings. We can see and admit that our best efforts have failed and that we just can't be like Jesus in our own strength.

"Jesus, Will you help me see my need for your help? Break through any pride I may have and convict me of any sins in my life. Will you continue to show me what is in my heart and give me a passion to obey you? Amen."

Group Discussion

1. What are strongholds? Where do they come from?
2. Do we see our own and other people's strongholds or the behavior caused by the strongholds?
3. How does the enemy use strongholds to influence us?
4. What does it mean: "to **R.O.C.K.**?"