

Courageous Hearts
“With All My Heart, I Will Love you”
Session Five
“Against All Odds”

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer” – Psalms 19:14

Read the following paragraph and draw a line under the facts, put an “x” through any actions, and draw a circle around any emotions.

Steve and I were getting ready for church. He was looking for his check book. I started looking too, because I hated to be late. I went upstairs and downstairs. Ten minutes went by and I was still looking everywhere when I realized that no one else was in the house. I panicked. I ran outside and he was just sitting in the car waiting for me to come out. I “ROCKed”! I was so angry. I was downright furious. I blasted him, telling him I didn’t appreciate that he left the house and didn’t bother to tell me he left (our imaginary boat was full of water, about to sink and I didn’t care).

Christ not only came that we could know God, but that we could know how to live and to love. In the Garden of Gethsemane, just before the soldiers arrested him, He demonstrated how all three parts of his soul were engaged and surrendered in obedience to God.

Intellectually in the garden, he was engaged. He knew what was to take place. Emotionally, He was engaged as He sweat great drops of blood. Then He engaged His will when He prayed, *“Not my will, but Yours be done” – Luke 22:42.*

He spent His life showing us how to live and love. In the garden His mind, will and emotions were engaged and actively working in His life for the Glory and purpose of God. On the cross, He showed us how to forgive. While they were in the process of murdering Him, He prayed, *“Father forgive them, for they do not know not what they are doing” – Luke 23:34.*

Christ’s example on the cross showed us that sin requires payment. He taught us how to forgive. He paid the price for all the sins in the world. Even the sins done against us. He did His part and now He commands us to forgive others as He forgave us.

Forgiveness creates changes in us. We all know how to ask for forgiveness when we have sinned. We understand the importance of doing this. But complete transformation can only occur when we forgive each offender from the heart. It is so important to us to do this that God commands it. *“But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.” – Matthew 6:15*

When we are finally able to love through healed hearts, all of our relationships are suddenly different.

A formula to fix things goes like this: “Do this and this and this... and you will get these results. Just follow the plan and you can succeed.” In fact, it really doesn’t matter if this plan works or not. Because it is being done without God’s help, it is sin because you are in charge and you alone are getting it done. You will get the credit for the success of the plan or the blame in case of failure. It is a flesh pattern because you are doing it.

Heart transformation is biblical and the right plan for change. You get to decide who you will obey, and who will be in charge of your heart. If you choose Christ, Jesus does all the rest. It’s a transformation, not a formula, and Jesus does it all. He forgives. He takes back the stronghold. He fills that area of our heart

with His Holy Spirit, and He alone makes the enemy go away. He gets all the credit for our relationships because He loves through our healed heart. Once you have surrendered each area of your heart to Jesus, You can effectively love others through Him. That is what it means to be in Christ and Christ in us.

Ways to locate strongholds:

1. If you recognize a flesh pattern in your life, ask, “Why am I doing that?” Ask God to show you why you react the way you do and what is in your heart causing it.
2. Take an offense against you that you know about (e.g. one of the rocks in your canning jar) and either journey into your heart or have a friend ask you questions until you are in your heart. Once in your heart, pray the forgiveness prayer.
3. When in an argument, redirect your anger toward the enemy, not the other person. Try to relax and calmly talk about the argument, always looking into your own heart to understand your actions or response. When have you felt that way before? What is in your heart keeping you from loving the other person right now? Keep seeking and ask Jesus (out loud) to make the enemy go away. Questions should lead you to a stronghold.
4. In the opening paragraph, I had you underline all the facts, cross-out all the actions and circle all the emotions. The facts and actions are not nearly as important as the emotions. Only the emotions are important in caring about someone’s heart and in finding a stronghold. Facts and actions should only be used to help give you clues on how to formulate your questions in order to care about their heart.
5. Sometimes if a friend ask us a question and we smirk, smile, or laugh while denying something, it often means they are very close to a core issue in our heart. Just relax and don’t be afraid to go there with God.
6. Just relax and ask God to reveal what is in your heart. He can reveal even those things we don’t remember.

Courageous Hearts Assignment

Try to talk to each member of your family. You might say something like this,

“I’m taking a class on how to love like Christ and I realized that I don’t do that very well. I want to completely be able to love you the way I should. I just want you to know, I’m learning and growing. I’d like to ask you a question. Please feel free to be honest with me, so I will have a beginning point. Do you feel loved by me a lot? That means we get along great, you feel like I’m on your team and you aren’t alone, we can talk about anything and you know I will listen, that kind of stuff. So do you feel that way a little or a lot? On a scale from 0 to 100%, how much of the time do you feel loved by me (e.g. 20%)? I’d like to ask you to hang in there and be patient with me while I continue to learn to love you better. Would you like me to love you 80% better?”

Group Discussion

1. Why is forgiving others so important?
2. Discuss what it means to “love others through Christ.”