

WEEK SEVEN

**THE WALLS
WE BUILD**

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VIDEO NOTES: THE WALLS WE BUILD

“Hardened Heart”

“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

THE WALLS WE BUILD

“Hardened Heart”

What happens is, if we don't follow this sequence of forgiveness, if we don't allow God to remove the _____ out of our River of Life, it starts to get our heart in a place that it becomes hardened.

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

Proverbs 4:23 NIV

Jesus was talking about the disciples when he said, “for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened..” **Mark 6:52 NIV**

If you look “hardened” up in the dictionary it says to makes something harder, _____ or unfeeling, firmly established or unlikely to change (stubborn) toughened, rigid, unyielding. This is a condition that affects Christians and non-Christians.

Merriam-Webster defines “harden” as: “to confirm in _____, feelings, or action; especially: to make callous - hardened his heart.”

Have you ever worked so hard in your yard raking or gardening that you started getting blisters? You do it a couple days in a row and the next think you know you _____ everywhere.

Sometimes that can happen to our heart. Remember we're talking about our heart, that our humanness of who we are our heart and our soul. Our _____ man can harden.

God wants to give you a new _____, and get rid of that hardened _____ just like he did for Rock.

Ephesians 4:17-18 NIV says this, “So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Remember the story in the New Testament where Jesus was talking to the disciples:
Notes from that story:

Mark 8:16-18 NLT “At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn’t brought any bread. Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, “Why are you arguing about having no bread? Don’t you know or understand even yet? Are your hearts too hard to take it in? ‘You have eyes—can’t you see? You have ears—can’t you hear?”

What did the disciples not have that we have now? The _____ !

They couldn’t remember! Their hearts were _____. We think their hearts were hardened just from their lifestyle. Jesus was teaching them, moving them to get to a place in their _____ to remove their hardened hearts.

So, what can cause a hardened heart? Here is a list of a few things:

- _____

- _____

Psalm 17:10; Psalm 73:7; Hebrews 3:13

- _____

- _____.

Proverbs 28:14

- _____ or _____.

Zechariah 7:11-12

The Bible says in **Hebrews 3:7-8 NIV**, “So, as the Holy Spirit says “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness.”

In the wilderness they were seeing miracles. He is talking about the _____ when they were out of Egypt. They saw these amazing miracles of God, yet in the desert during their trials their true hearts or their true beings of what they wanted to do came out because they rebelled. They _____ against God. In Hebrews, God is referring to them and He says, “don’t be like their hardened hearts.” They let the _____ of life get their hearts beat down.

In **Jeremiah 5:23 NIV** he says, “But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts; they have turned aside and gone away.”

A stubborn and rebellious heart says, “I don’t _____ you. I got this.” It could even be a _____ who could be pretty good with everything in their life but this one area.

_____ shut out the voice of God. There can be a part of the hardened heart that blocks me from hearing the voice of God.

Psalms 95:8 NIV says, “Today, if only you would hear his voice, “Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness.”

There are consequences for allowing hearts to harden. There was a consequence to the Israelites and also the kings in the kingdoms of Israel when they _____ their hearts. Remember when Jesus sent out multitudes of disciples and several turned around and left. Their hearts were hardened.

God may be calling you to do something but you don’t feel you have the faith, the will power, the knowledge, the boldness, or whatever it takes to do that something. You might want to ask the Lord, “Is there an area of my heart that’s hardened?”

Psalms 95:10-11 NIV says, “For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.’ So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’”

HEART OF STONE

Heart of Stone is another part of “Hardened Hearts.” It’s a defense mechanism. Sometimes it’s a condition of the heart that shuts out God and others, but you build it because others have hurt you so badly. It keeps us from being _____ to getting hurt again. It’s a wall we build around our hearts and initially it is to protect us.

In **Ezekiel 36:26 NIV** it says, “I will give you a new heart. I will put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

A wounded heart can also be a learned _____. It allows the enemy to keep you from discovering or finding the 4th level of emotional development which is _____.

How do other people see this person?

- Heartless, _____ in behavior, and selfish
- Can _____ to others, but cannot receive ministry themselves.
- They refuse _____ and _____ in the agape way. They turn towards eros love.
- Always put _____ else’s gifts down. It’s a judgment.
- It destroys the _____ in the body of Christ. It causes division.
- They put a _____ up so that others feel they cannot get through.

How does this person with the hardened heart feel?

- _____, Isolated. No one really loves them. Cannot receive love. Feel unheard in relationships and separated.
- Stress, break down of the _____ _____, chronic fatigues, and other sickness.
- Can’t take _____, even if it’s given with love, or even if they asked for help.

How do I get healing?

1. Recognize that you have a hardened heart. (Area that is hardened)
2. Repent and confess
3. Ask for forgiveness
4. Replace the reasoning of the mind with the meditation on the Word
5. Prayer ministry, deliverance
6. Support of community during recovery for your spiritual heart surgery
7. Avoid self-condemnation and forgive yourself.
8. Enter into the Room of Grace - I am who God says I am.
9. Humility

WEEK SEVEN

WEEKLY REFLECTION: THE WALLS WE BUILD

“I will give you a new heart. I will put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

Ezekiel 36:26 NIV

THE WALLS WE BUILD

“Hardened Heart”

What happens if we aren't willing to forgive, if we don't allow God to remove the boulders from our River of Life, and if we don't increase in our knowledge of God? For some it allows our hearts to become hardened. Sometimes the pains and bruises of life can harden our hearts. Christians can have areas of their heart hardened because of the way they grew up. A Christian with a hardened heart is still going to Heaven, but the enemy will use that area to have legal ground to torment you while you're still here on earth. If you feel like something is holding you back from the fullness of all that God has for you, then maybe this week's session will touch your heart.

“Above all else,
guard your heart,
for everything
you do flows
from it.”

Proverbs 4:23 NIV

Write out **Mark 6:53**

“Hardened” is defined as:

- made hard or become harder
- pitiless; unfeeling
- firmly established or unlikely to change
- toughened
- rigid; unyielding

Merriam-Webster defines “harden” as: “to confirm in disposition, feelings, or action; to make callous - hardened his heart.”

Have you ever worked in your garden or raked leaves in your yard and got blisters on your hands. If you keep doing that kind of work, over time you develop calluses.



When guitar players start to learn to play the guitar, quite often they get very sore fingers from pressing on the steel strings. As time moves on, and after much practice, they can play all day long because their fingers have gotten calloused. Their fingertips have hardened. Sometimes that's what can happen to our hearts. Remember our heart is where the "soul-man" resides. It's our humanness, our emotions and feelings as well as our reasoning. You can have a hardening of the heart in certain areas and the rest of your heart be fine.

Are there areas of your heart that you feel may be calloused? If so, explain.

God isn't standing in judgment over your hardened heart, He just wants to give you a new heart. The enemy uses the areas where we have callous hearts to torment us and rob us of our joy of the Lord. Ultimately, it can rob us of a fulfillment of something we've been wanting to do for the Kingdom. So, we don't teach this with a condemnation mindset. Instead, just know that Father God wants to give you a new heart.

Write out **Ephesians 4:18**

This is what's going on in our country. There are so many people that grew up hearing about God and Jesus, but somewhere along the line, the bruises of life have calloused their hearts and they don't want to hear it. They question or don't understand the things of God. Many young people have grown up unchurched. They don't know who God is or have a relationship with Him. You may know someone like that.

Jesus reprimanded the disciples about the condition of their hearts in the story in **Mark 6:34-44**. A few days before, they had a huge group of 5,000 people where Jesus performed the miracle of feeding them from a basket of 5 loaves and 2 fish. They were preparing for another large gathering of 4,000 people. Once again, in a panic, they reported to Jesus, “We only have 7 loaves and a few small fish, how will we ever feed all these people?”

Jesus looks at the disciples and admonishes them in **Mark chapter 8** saying, “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don’t you remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand? How many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?”

What did the disciples not have that we have today? The Holy Spirit! So, they could only believe what they had seen. Only three days after seeing the first miracle they fell prey to their hardened hearts and these were Jesus’ chosen twelve. Their hearts were already hardened from their lifestyle before meeting Jesus but Jesus was teaching them and preparing their hearts for healing.

Have you ever had a moment where you were worried about something, and God answered in a miraculous way? A few days/weeks later you forgot it and began worrying about something similar to what God had answered previously? Write what happened.

So, what can cause a hardened heart? Here is a list of a few things:

- **Reasoning:** When people start getting into their own head and begin thinking they are so smart. Maybe they are overthinking things which can sometimes begin to diminish faith. When their hearts are hardened, they tend to reason with their own mind verses what the word of God says. Reasoning can keep a person from seeing the miracle or believing a miracle can happen. Faith is weakened when they choose to operate from the mind and reasoning.
- **Sin:** Sin is naturally going to harden a heart if left unresolved. **Psalm 17:10** says, “They close up their callous hearts and their mouths speak with arrogance.” **Psalm 73:7** says, “From their callous hearts comes iniquity; their evil imaginations have no limits.” Sin hardens the heart and silences the tugging/direction of the Holy Spirit. The spirit man begins to slumber in certain areas and stops whispering, “Hey, don’t do that or say that.” The writer of **Hebrews 3:13 - NKJV** puts it this way, “but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin..” In other words, the callousness of heart occurs when sin is allowed to operate daily in your life. After a while we just rationalize it away in our heads.
- **Pride:** Pride is the state of holding one’s self in high esteem. You know Lucifer was the king of pride, right? The spirit of Leviathan is a form of pride, the disrupter of communication. Pride is about “I don’t need anyone else, I know everything.” It’s heart is as hard as a rock, hard as millstone according to **Job 41:24** when he was talking about Leviathan.
- **Lack of the “Fear of the Lord”:** Can lead to a hardened heart. It’s where you don’t really understand, “How great is our God.” The Bible says in **Proverbs 28:14**, “Blessed is the one who always trembles before God but whoever hardened their hearts falls into trouble.” A hardened heart can take us away from that closeness and a deeper understanding of who God is. That’s what happened to Lucifer when he fell from Heaven. It happened to Adam and Eve in the garden. And if you look around in our culture, particularly in the United States, wealth and power have become the chosen “little g” gods verses God Almighty. “Little g” gods are gods that are not praised, worshiped and obeyed, but rather they are gods that we manipulate and control to make us feel good and serve our purposes.

- **Disobedience or Refusing to Listen to God:** There are many stories in the Old Testament where God told a prophet to do something and they didn't do it. The result was always that their life didn't go so well for a while. **Zechariah 7:11,12 (NLT)** says it this way, "But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was very angry."

Back then they couldn't connect personally with God because of their sin. They had to hear from God through God's priests and prophets. The priests were required to do all the sacrifices for the sins of the nation. It was really just "kicking the can" of consequences of sin all the way down the road until Jesus on the cross. God is always wanting to forgive. He's always calling you to himself through the gift of repentance, no matter what we've done. He continually says, "I love you just the way you are, but I love you enough not to leave you in that condition." You just need to be willing to ask for forgiveness and repent.

As you reflect on your life, have you ever let one or more of these five causes affect your heart? Have a few calluses formed on parts of your heart? Describe what that looks like and what happened in your life.

Hardened hearts can cause us to hold onto unforgiveness and that can lead to the sin of rebellion. In **1 Samuel** God says "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft."

Write out **Hebrews 3:7-8**

In **Hebrews 3:8-11** the unbelief of the Israelites, after seeing all the miracles while coming out of Egypt and into the desert, angers God. Their hardened hearts caused them to rebel and led them astray. The consequence of their hardened hearts resulted in that generation never getting to enter the promised land. The author of Hebrews is saying, “Don’t be like their hardened hearts.” Don’t let the trials of life harden your heart.

Write out **Jeremiah 5:23**

A stubborn and rebellious heart says, “I don’t need you, I got this.” It could be a Christian who could be pretty good with everything in their life but this one particular area.

For example: As a child you were very poor. Your father was ill and could not provide financially for you and your family. He was a great man and could not help that your family struggled and that you lived in poverty. Now, you are married - you’re good with God in every area but one. You can’t trust Him for finances and prosperity. You struggle in that area and your heart has become hardened. That’s a part of a heart area that God wants to set free. He wants to give you a new heart.

Have you ever had a stubborn or rebellious heart? Was it in a specific area?

Hardened hearts shut out the voice of God. Have you said something like, “I just can’t hear from God. God doesn’t speak to me?” The truth is, Father God wants everyone to hear from Him. Jesus died for everyone. When He did, He opened the door to the Father for everyone. If you struggle to hear from the Father, there may be a part of your heart that has hardened for whatever reason it’s blocked. You don’t need to condemn yourself for that, you just need to repent, ask the Lord to forgive you for allowing your heart to harden, and then ask the Father to heal that hardened part and give you a new heart.

Write out **Psalm 25, 17-18**

There are consequences for allowing our hearts to harden. There were consequences to the Israelites and even the kings of Israel when they hardened their hearts. Remember Jesus sent out an additional 70 disciples and after a period of time many of them left and returned home. Their hearts had hardened.

Write out **Psalm 95:10-11**

God may be calling you to do something for Him but you feel like something is blocking you from doing it. You may feel like you don't have the will power, the knowledge, the boldness or whatever it takes to accomplish what God is asking you to do. You may even feel frustrated that something is blocking you from hearing anything from Father God.

Like David said in the Psalm, "Show me your heart, Lord. Teach me your ways." I want to know if there is anything blocking me. If you hunger for more of God, seek Him and He will get you to your High Place. You'll be able to hear His voice and He will give you a new heart.

Lord, search Me and show Me!

Write out **Psalm 139:23-24**

HEART OF STONE

Heart of stone is another type of hardened heart that's developed as a defense mechanism. Early in life when we are emotionally or mentally hurt by people, organizations or even churches, we build walls around our heart to keep from getting hurt again. Whether harmful words are spoken to us, or actions taken to hurt us, our reactions many times is to say, "I'll never let that happen to me again or I'll never trust that person again."

We build walls around our hearts to keep us safe. Most of the time, it works. We don't let people get close enough to ever hurt us again. But then, the problem becomes one of isolation and loss of relationships because the walls we built keeps everyone out. It also keeps us from being able to express our own emotions to others.

Over time, people just stop trying to connect with us. As we get older, we tend to feel alone even in a crowd. We feel like we're on the outside looking in. In the spiritual realm, a person with a heart of stone feels like God doesn't hear their prayers. They struggle to believe that they can hear the voice of the Lord.

Write out **Ezekiel 36:26**

Remember when God came to Elijah. He was standing on the mountain and God wanted to reveal himself to him. It didn't come in the thunder, the lightning, the earthquakes and all those things. It came in the still small whisper or voice of the Lord.

Heart of stone usually develops early in life. There are documented stories of people who developed a heart of stone as early as in the womb. A wounded heart can also be a learned behavior. If a person is hurt enough times, they begin to make an inner vow which may lead to a heart of stone; "I'm never going to let myself be vulnerable again. I'll never open up to someone else because they will hurt me or leave me." The fear of being hurt or abandoned allows the enemy to keep them from discovering or experiencing the fourth level of emotional development which is intimacy.

How do other people see a person that has a heart of stone?

- They seem heartless, uncaring in behavior and selfish
- They willingly minister to others, but cannot or don't want to receive ministry for themselves.
- They are unable to receive agape love and intimacy and as a result they turn to eros love which is the world's artificial love. They can't seem to establish and maintain relationships and because of that, they turn to other things.
- They always put someone else's gifts down when they are operating in their gifts. When someone is recognized for their Kingdom work, this person tries to minimize it and critically judge it. This person may have gifts but is unable to operate in them.
- They destroy the unity in the body of Christ. They cause division. It breaks the heart of God because the heart of stone keeps this person from hearing God's direction.
- They put up a wall that others feel they can't get through.

How does a person with a heart of stone feel?

- They feel lonely, isolated, and that no one really loves them.
- They cannot receive love and even though many people are around them they feel like they are on an island by themselves.
- They feel unheard in relationships and that their voice doesn't matter.
- They feel stressed or anxious, which results in the breakdown of the immune system. Leads to chronic fatigue and other sicknesses.
- They can't take correction, even if given in love. Correction feels like rejection.

Do you or someone you know have these feelings or signs of a hardened heart or heart of stone? Explain

How do I get healing?

1. Recognize that you have a hardened heart or area that has become calloused
2. Repent and confess
3. Ask God to forgive you for allowing your heart to harden and forgive those that may have hurt you or contributed to the forming of walls to protect your heart
4. Replace the reasoning of the mind with meditation on the Word of God
5. Complete RTF prayer ministry and deliverance as needed
6. Invite support from the community of believers around you during your healing period
7. Avoid Self-Condensation
8. Find and enter the Room of Grace and come to believe that you are who God says you are. Be willing to accept your true identity
9. Learn to operate in humility which means dying to self and being totally surrendered to the Lord.

Would you be willing to trust a person in your small group or your small group leader by asking them to pray with you about what God is revealing to you?

A Prayer for Healing of a Hardened Heart

Dear God,

I acknowledge my sin to you and that I have hidden my hurts in my heart. I confess that I have blamed you and others for the hurtful things that have happened to me and caused me to feel unloved by you and the people around me. I have let my pride keep me from forgiving those that have trespassed against me. I repent for my uncaring and selfish behaviors. I ask you to forgive me for allowing my heart of stone to develop and thus living my life with a hardened heart.

I no longer want to feel loneliness and isolation in my life. I want to be able to receive your agape love and to love others with that love. Teach me to be able to receive instruction and ministry, to build up the body of Christ and not tear it down.

I open my hands to you right now, Father God. Touch my heart with your promise to me in **Ezekiel 36:26 NIV** that you “ will give me a new heart and put a new spirit within me, You will remove from me my heart of stone and give me a new heart of flesh.”

I receive right now that new heart of flesh. Fill my new heart today with the fruits of your spirit and lead me down the road to intimacy with you Father God and with others in my life. I ask that you surround me with a community of believers to love and encourage me. I thank you for healing me and for loving me. I give you praise, honor and glory as I ask all these things in the precious name of Jesus Christ. Amen

PERSONAL PRAYER

What is the Lord saying to you?

- Search me Lord. Do I have any hardened areas of my heart?
- Ask for a new heart and a new spirit.