

Follow Me Part 5—A Tender Heart
Dave Patterson
12.5.2020

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon
and some discussion questions for you to use to facilitate a discussion.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group.
For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is not to get through the
questions, but to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships.
Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

TRUE DISCIPLES CULTIVATE AND MAINTAIN A TENDER HEART

***A callous starts as protection from a deeper wound, but it's also
one step toward a hardened heart.***

[Isaiah 53:3-8, TPT]

He was despised and rejected by men,

a man of **deep** sorrows

who was no stranger to suffering and grief.

We hid our faces from him in disgust

and considered him a nobody, not worthy of respect.

⁴Yet he was the one who carried our sicknesses

and endured the torment of our sufferings.

We viewed him as one who was being punished

for something he himself had done,

as one who was struck down by God and brought low.

⁵ But it was because of our rebellious deeds that he was pierced
and because of our sins that he was crushed.

He endured the punishment that made us completely whole,
and in his wounding we found our healing.

⁶ Like wayward sheep, we have all wandered astray.

Each of us has turned from God's paths and chosen our own
way; even so, Yahweh laid the guilt of our every sin upon him.

⁷ He was oppressed and harshly mistreated;

still he humbly submitted, refusing to defend himself.

He was brought like a **gentle** lamb to be slaughtered.

Like a silent sheep before his shearers,

he didn't even open his mouth.

⁸ By coercion and with a perversion of justice

he was taken away.

And who could have imagined his future?

He was cut down in the prime of life;

for the rebellion of his own people,

he was struck down **in their place**.

[Proverbs 4:23, TPT]

So above all, guard the affections of your heart,
for they affect all that you are.

Pay attention to the welfare of your innermost being,

for from there flows the wellspring of life.

"For everything you do flows from it" (NIV)

"For it determines the course of your life" (NLT)

***Every destroyed relationship begins with a hardened heart. It
doesn't happen overnight; it's subtle.***

[Colossians 3:12]

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, **you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy**, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

[Ephesians 4:17-18]

Live no longer as the Gentiles (pagans) do, for **they are hopelessly confused**. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and **hardened their hearts against him**.

TOP 3 CONTRIBUTORS TO A HARDENED HEART

1. Ignored Conviction

[Hebrews 3:7-10, NLT]

⁷ That is why the Holy Spirit says,

“Today when you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts
as Israel did when they rebelled,
when they tested me in the wilderness.

There your ancestors tested and tried my patience,
even though they saw my miracles for forty years. So I was angry
with them, and I said,

‘Their hearts always turn away from me.
They refuse to do what I tell them.’

***Conviction is an invitation to turn away from what you’re doing.
It is the sweet thing that comes and calls you to turn away from
your sin.***

RESOURCE: [**The Bait of Satan**](#) by John Bevere

TOP 3 CONTRIBUTORS TO A HARDENED HEART

2. Unresolved Offense

[Hebrews 12:15]

¹⁵ Watch over each other to make sure that no one misses the revelation of God's grace. And make sure no one lives with a root of bitterness sprouting within them which will only **cause trouble and poison the hearts of many**.

[Hebrews 12:14]

Work at living in peace with everyone...

An offended heart will eventually become a hardened heart.

TOP 3 CONTRIBUTORS TO A HARDENED HEART

3. Isolation (lack of accountability and community)

[Proverbs 18:1]

A man who isolates himself seeks his own desires;
He rages against all wisdom.

THE HEART TESTS OF A DISCIPLE

- Will you bring your betrayed heart back to the cross for healing?
- Will you bring your offended heart to Jesus to receive and release forgiveness again?
- Will you bring your hardened heart back to His presence to be watered and softened again?
- Will your trust God through disappointment and delay?
- Will you turn the vengeance over to the Lord and trust him to repay?

Isolated disciples develop twisted theology.

TOP 3 KEYS TO A CULTIVATING A TENDER HEART

1. **Be quick to forgive.**

Forgive even before the emotions catch up to the act of faith.

[Ephesians 4:31-32]

Lay aside bitter words, temper tantrums, revenge, profanity, and insults. But instead be kind and affectionate toward one another.

Has God graciously forgiven you? Then graciously forgive one another **just as God through Christ has forgiven you.**

TOP 3 KEYS TO A CULTIVATING A TENDER HEART

2. **Check-in for frequent heart examinations with the Lord.**

(and with each other)

[Psalm 139:23-24, TPT]

God, I invite your searching gaze into my heart.

Examine me through and through;

find out everything that may be hidden within me.

Put me to the test and sift through all my anxious cares.

²⁴ See if there is any path of pain I'm walking on,
and lead me back to your glorious, everlasting ways—
the path that brings me back to you.

TOP 3 KEYS TO A CULTIVATING A TENDER HEART

3. **Continually tenderize your heart in His Presence.**

Take time to let the rain of His presence fall on you. Saturate your heart. He'll ask you to do some things by yourself that He won't ask you to do in public.

[Acts 3:19, AMP]

So repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking] and return to God [seek His purpose for your life], so that your sins may be wiped away [blotted out, completely erased], so that **times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.**

[Ezekiel 36:26, NLT]

And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. **I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.**

[Psalm 51:10, NLT]

Create in me a clean heart, O God.
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

FOR MONDAY—

1. Reflect on what it was like to first fall in love with Jesus.
2. Spend time in God's Word and in His presence, letting your heart be examined.

TALK IT THROUGH

1. What can happen when love and affection are rejected? What are some of natural, human reactions to that?
2. How did Jesus suffer rejection, and how did He overcome it? How does His example show intention and not passivity?
[Isaiah 53:3-8]

3. When you first fell in love with Jesus, what did your relationship with Him look like? How did the newness motivate you to action?
4. How do we maintain a tender heart toward the Lord and others? [Colossians 3.12] How is your current heart condition?
5. Why does conviction become faint over time when not applied? How do we combat the contributors to a hardened heart?
6. Where does the root that causes bitterness come from?
7. How do the heart tests of a disciple keep us tender and trusting in God?
8. Who are some people that help to keep your heart in check?
9. Which of the three ways to cultivate a tender heart do you personally need to apply this week?
10. How does continual repentance and asking for a new heart help keep us close to God's heart?