

Be Tender Hearted Towards One Another

Pastor Barb & Vince

Scripture

“Be Kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as Christ forgave you.” Eph 4:32

Action Step

Recognize if you have a hard heart. Do you rarely celebrate the good or cry over the bad? Do you no longer have deep passion for your marriage? Does your relationship feel mechanical? If so, you may have a hard heart. Decide today to repent of anything that has caused your heart to grow hard. A soft heart cannot help but love your spouse while a hard heart is incapable, and the only cure for a hard heart is through repenting. Why? Because we need God to keep a tender heart and sin separates us from God. Repent first to God and then to your spouse. Get help if you need to. I had to reach out to some men and deal with the sins that were trying to destroy my marriage, my family, and my walk with God. Start to recognize the cost of sin and learn to hate it for what it is trying to do to you. And pray. My wife prayed Ezekiel 36:26 “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,” over me every day while I was gone on that five-week hitch. Decide right now you are going to make your life accountable to others. Make a fresh commitment to church, join a small group ... and do whatever you need to do to start rebuilding. I promise you – twenty-three years and four kids in – I can’t thank God enough for what he has done!!

Prayer

Lord I recognize that in some areas my heart are not as tender toward my spouse as it should be. I pray Ezekiel 36:26 over myself – take out my heart of stone and give me a heart of flesh. Help me to feel your presence again, to walk in your love so it can flow through me and I can be the spouse my partner deserves. In Jesus Name Amen.

P.S.

Hard hearted people are usually the last to recognize that they are hard hearted – just saying...

Day 5

Thought

In year five of our marriage, we hit a crisis. I was working out of town in the oilfield and Barbara was at home with our then three-year-old toddler and pregnant with our second child. It should have been an exciting time, but it wasn't. Truthfully, we did not know if we were going to make it to year six. There were a million factors that added up to our current state but at the heart of it all was one huge problem. I had become hard hearted. I will always remember the day that ultimately became the turning point for our marriage. I felt hollow and dead and as I looked at my beautiful wife, nine months pregnant, I realized that I was completely numb, and I spoke the words that shook us both. I said I was sorry, but I felt nothing for her at all – no anger, no bitterness, but also no love. My heart was as hard as a stone and I did not know how to change it or even if I wanted to change it. She was surprisingly calm as we both digested what I had just confessed and all we could do was stare at each other for what seemed like hours, but was only minutes. Finally, she broke the silence by asking me where we went from there. I said I did not know, and she replied that she did not want to leave a legacy of divorce for our children and that she would give me time to decide what I wanted. It should have been an easy decision, but when your heart is hard nothing is right. Just days after that conversation we gave birth to our second child and two weeks after that I went away to work again. During that time my wife prayed. And truthfully – I prayed too. I knew I was not living the life I was supposed to be living and was not walking out my faith with honesty and integrity. I knew I had to find my way back to God if I was ever going to find my way back to my wife.

Fortunately, God is faithful and full of mercy and is more committed to me than I was to him or to myself, and as I started reading my bible again, as I started praying again, I could feel my hard heart start to soften little by little. I was on a five-week hitch and by the time I went back home I knew something had changed in me – for the first time in months I felt God's presence and I felt like my heart had been cleansed, healed, and was actually feeling alive again. I got home late that night and instead of going into my bedroom I went into the nursery to see my seven-week-old baby. As I held his little body close to mine, any last bit of hardness crumbled away as I realized again what I had almost lost due to my sin and my unwillingness to make things right with God and with my wife. Hard heartedness comes when we will not allow God to deal with our sins, our pride and our arrogance. There is only one way to overcome a hard heart and it is on your knees in repentance and humility. A hard heart causes you to be callous with the hearts of those you should be treating with the most care.