



HEART
from
STONE

DEVO WEEK 1

HEART =from= STONE

WEEK 1 DEVO

INTRO

If someone asked you these questions, how would you respond?

- Why does Christianity make people so mean and miserable?
- How would you respond to a person who fell out of the habit of coming to church during covid and is finding it hard to return?
- Why does it seem that some people outside of the church who do not practice Christianity seem happier and healthier than some of those who go to church?

How do these questions make you feel?

DEFINITIONS

Read: Exodus 20:1-8, Exodus 20:18-21

Read and Discuss these definitions of heart and law.

HEART

The essence of a person where conscious and unconscious choices are made based on the things we value, the patterns of our thoughts and the things we love. The heart is the essence of who we are and will determine who we will ultimately become.

The heart is the avenue of relationships.

LAW

A set of rules outside a person that are needed when the goodness and relationships of people breakdown because too many of our hearts are sick, evil, toxic, unhealthy.

Discussion Questions:

- What about these two definitions resonate with you?
- What part of these two definitions do not make sense or are not clear?
- Do you agree with the following statement?
 - Good people with healthy relationship don't need much law.
 - Nothing will make you more miserable and mean than trying to follow a set of rules when your heart is not in it.

THE PROMISE

Read Matt 5:17-20; John 14:15-17; 25

How does Jesus' promise in these verse fulfill the promise in the verse above in Ezekiel 11:19-20, Ezekiel 36:26-27?

Do you agree with the following statement?

The promise of Jesus is to move the cold law written on stone unto our living heart through a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

If this statement is true...

- What would it change about your practice of Christianity?
- How important is a relationship with the Holy Spirit?
- What role is the Spirit supposed to play in your life?

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read Matthew 22:36-40

How does Jesus' teaching change the first four commandments away from a list of rules to relationships?

How is your love relationship with God the Father and His Son Jesus through the Holy Spirit? Circle the below statement that most accurately describes your relationship with the Spirit.

- I don't know the Father, Jesus or the Holy Spirit
- My time and connection with God is distant and infrequent
- An occasional awareness but not central to my life
- An infrequent reconnection when I am overwhelmed.
- Usually, a plea for help from desperation
- A daily connection that defines my life and priority
- A regular source of strength and comfort
- A powerful source of challenge and transformation
- A teacher who regularly opens the scripture to me in a way that is changing me
- A truth teller who regularly points out areas of sin and leads me back to God
- A person who speaks to me about my identity, my calling and the challenge to love the people in my life

WHO
IS THE
SPIRIT
TO ME?

How does this statement challenge you?

LISTEN TO THIS DEVO



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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a chisel, carving a piece of light-colored stone. The chisel is positioned vertically, and the stone is being carved into a curved shape. The background is dark and out of focus.

HEART *from* STONE

DEVO WEEK 2

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WEEK 2 DEVO GOLDEN RULE

MOTIVATIONS

What motivates your spiritual decisions?

- Do you think you are trying to earn God's favor? If so, in what ways?
- Do you think you ever try to force others to earn God's favor or earn your favor? If so, in what ways?
- Why do you think it is so difficult for us to believe God loves us unconditionally?
- What hardens your heart toward God? Others?

How do these questions make you feel?

FAITH EXPRESSED THROUGH LOVE

Read Galatians 5:1-6

- Why do you think we tend to add things that need to be done to "earn or be worthy of" salvation?
- What do you think it would look like to really embrace the end of verse 6? (Faith expressing itself through love)

Read Galatians 5:13-14 and Romans 5:20-6:2

- If grace leads to freedom, why do you think we struggle so much with returning to habitual sins?
- How does sin get in the way of loving others as yourself?
- Why is the "what" that motivates us to love God and love others so important?

SOURCE OF POWER TO EXPRESS FAITH THROUGH LOVE

Read John 14:15-17

- Why is the Holy Spirit so essential to freedom in Christ and loving others and God?
- What do you think it looks like to be "in step" with the Spirit?
- Why is a deeper, experiential knowledge of God so important to loving God and loving others and how do we get that deeper knowledge?

HOW WE TREAT OTHERS

Do you agree with the following statement?

The promise of Jesus is to move the cold law written on stone unto our living heart through a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

If the statement is true?

- What would it change about the way we interact with people?
- How important is a relationship with the Holy Spirit to how we interact with others?
- What role is the Spirit supposed to play in your life, particularly in the context of how we relate to others?

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

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DEVO WEEK 3

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WEEK 3 DEVO HONOR FAMILY

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

If someone asked you these questions; how would you respond?

- My family was a mess. Do you think it is wise for me to get married?
- With the world as it is, do you think it is responsible to have Children?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Take some time to pray for all the leaders in the JW Family Team.

- Anne Brooks, Family Pastor
- Danielle Johnson, Preschool & Nursery Director
- Ethan Martin, Family Team Admin
- Grace Subiaga, Middle School Pastor
- Hailey Martin, Elementary Ministry Director
- Jordan Hurlburt, High School Pastor
- Nicole Dorwin, Preschool Team Leader
- Tauna Stibor, Families Care Associate

Pray for the volunteers who minister to our families each week.

Ask God if you should volunteer in JW Kids and/or JW Students.

Take time to pray for members of your family.

THE CHRISTIAN COVENANT OF MARRIAGE

We Believe the Christian Covenant of Marriage, by which one man and one woman establish a lifelong union for the protection and wellbeing of the spouses, and the procreation and bringing up of offspring in a godly manner, is to be honored as holy. This covenant should only be entered into by two professing followers of Jesus Christ. This is a binding covenant between the man, the woman, and God.

Jacob's Well Church believes that the Bible clearly instructs that sexual activity is to be enjoyed exclusively between a man and a woman that have been joined together in holy matrimony. All other sexual activity violates the biblical standard for Christians.

This covenant may only be broken in the extreme cases of marital infidelity, abuse, or abandonment. The spouse who was abused, abandoned, or treated with infidelity is free from the obligation of the covenant. However, on occasion, reconciliation may be possible even after times of deep hurt and betrayal. Divorce is a painful experience, and those who go through divorce will be loved and supported as they seek the Lord for healing and forgiveness to live a whole and healthy life.

We acknowledge and celebrate that some are called to singleness for a season or for their entire life. The calling to singleness is a call to celibacy and considered a gift from God.

What are your thoughts, questions & concerns about this statement.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

The scriptures this week are taken from our Statement of Faith under the article: The Christian Covenant of Marriage.

As you read this week's scriptures think about what they teach about the roles of marriage, parenting, singleness and family in general.

DAY ONE

Exodus 20:12, Exodus 20:17, Romans 13:9-10

- How can you honor your parents even if they were not perfect?
- How can we as a church honor parenting in general?

DAY TWO

Galatians 5:18-26

- How does life in the Spirit make the law unnecessary?
- How is love inconsistent with sexual immorality?

DAY THREE

Genesis 1:26-28

- What does this verse say about the importance of marriage and family?

DAY FOUR

Colossians 3:18-21

- What stands out to you from this passage?

DAY FIVE

Leviticus 18:1-30, Matthew 5:27-32

- What changes if we make sexual Immorality an issue of the heart and not just an outward act?

DAY SIX

I Corinthians 6:9-11, I Timothy 1:8-11, Jude 1:3-4

- Read again the Christian Covenant of Marriage.
- How would you define sexual immorality?

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

In one paragraph describe what it was like growing up in your family. What was hard, and what was positive? If you are in a group, allow time for each person to take a few minutes to describe the family in which they grew up.

- Do you have a Philosophy of Family? What is it?
- If you are a parent, how well are you partnering with JW Families?
- Which of the tools offered by JW Families do you find most helpful?

FOR GROUP LEADERS

1. Take time before group to look over the devotions and the questions.
2. Open the group with prayer, asking God to give everyone a spirit of openness and humility.
3. Begin by asking everyone who is willing to share a little about the family in which they grew up.
4. Read: Genesis 1:26-28, Exodus 20:12 Matthew 5:27-32
5. Read the Christian Covenant of Marriage
 - What is challenging to you about this statement?
 - What is challenging to our church in our current culture and environment?
 - Consider asking any of the other questions for this weeks devotional guide.
6. What do you think the church means when we say, "We want to equip parents to be the Spiritual Champions in their kids' lives"
7. Take time to pray for our Family Team and ask God if He would have anyone begin to serve in JW Kids or JW Students?

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HEART
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DEVO WEEK 4

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WEEK 4 DEVO The War of Wants

DAILY PRAYER

Holy Spirit, help me to walk with you this week as I consider the question "What do I want?" Help me to see those desires that are disordered. In humility help me to see those things I have set my affections upon that are bringing chaos to my life. Turn my heart towards a real desire to Love the Father and to love people. Help me to see that this is what my heart most deeply desires. For it is in Jesus names we pray. Amen.

This week work through these scriptures and questions at your own pace. Do a little every day. Ask the questions deeply and honestly. You may want to go through this a few times or with a friend or family member.

READ EXODUS 20:17

Covet: A desire, want, obsession, focus, wish, longing or craving. A yearning to possess or have something. That for which we hold affection or love.

- What do you think of this definition of Coveting?
- If coveting is an issue of what we truly want in our inner life...
 - What do I want?
 - What are my deepest desires?

Augustine said: "The essence of sin is disordered love/desires".

- What do you think he meant by that definition?
- Are any of your desires "disordered"?

READ JAMES 4:1-3

What does James say disorder desires Create?

Do you ever feel that there is a war with in you? What desires are warring in you?

READ ROMANS 7:6-8

In this passage Paul looks in his heart and finds all kinds of covetousness.

- Have you ever been honest about all the things you desire?
- Why is Covetousness a sin that is hard to hide or deny?

“OUR TRUEST AND DEEPEST WANTS OFTEN GO UNFULFILLED BECAUSE OF SUPERFICIAL WANTS WE CHASE.”

Do you agree with this statement?

¹⁵For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin (disordered desire) that dwells within me. **Romans 7:15-17**

Is it possible to change what you want or desire? How?

READ ROMANS 7:24-8:8

What role does Jesus and specifically the Holy Spirit play in changing our desires?

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:7-10

- What does Paul tell the Philippians he wants or desires?
- What would need to change for you to have your wants and desires set upon the right things?

Next week we begin advent. Will you join the church as we begin a series called Christmas Rethink? We will do inner life work that will lead us to pay attention to our mind, thoughts, desires, and focus.

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