

Mending a Broken Heart

Digging Deeper

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God is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. He heals them and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 34:18, Psalm 147:3

He stopped and sat down on the park bench in the middle of the day, head in his hands, elbows on his knees, eyes gazing down at his feet. He knew something was broken deep down inside, but had no idea what it was or how to make it better.

She often laid in bed late at night, hands folded behind her head, eyes staring up at the ceiling, tears running down her cheeks. Her heart ached with a pain she didn't understand and couldn't shake, and she didn't know why.

He had let his craving for wealth and his desire to prove himself to a father who said he would never amount to anything take over his life and harden his heart, and it had cost him everything. His family was gone, his health was ruined, and his circle of friends had abandoned him long ago.

She had dealt with the emptiness that came from growing up in a broken home by pursuing one bad relationship after another, trying with all her might to fill the void in her broken heart to no avail. And it had led to a deep, penetrating loneliness that felt like death.

Outwardly, both looked fine. He had a successful career, wore nice clothes and drove a fancy car. She was an attractive, intelligent woman with a good career of her own who was very popular with her co-workers and never lacked for company.

But inside, where it counts, both were broken and neither knew why or what to do about it.

Our heart is the center of our very being - the place where our spirit resides - and it can be easily broken or hardened by the pain and neglect that come from living in a fallen world. Pain that comes from the thoughtless and sometimes cruel words of a parent, a spouse, a teacher, a coach or a pastor can wound deeply and shape our life for decades.

Neglect that we experience at the hands of those we love and trust can create feelings of rejection, emptiness and bitterness that follow us everywhere we go like a lonely shadow. Either can break our heart and darken our spirit. Both must be identified and healed before we can truly answer the call that God has placed on our life.

When we believe something deep in our heart, it affects who we are, how we see ourselves, how we relate to others, and how our life turns out. As we believe, so we are and so we live. To protect our inner being from the negative onslaught of the world around us, we must fill our thoughts with what God has to say about us and let His words penetrate our spirit, define our identity and determine our destiny. (Prov. 4:21-22). We must let Him strengthen our heart against whatever pain or suffering comes our way (Psalm 73:26). And we must let His love heal the brokenness in our heart and restore our spirit (Psalm 34:18, Psalm 147:3).

We must also allow our heart to heal by forgiving those who have harmed, neglected or abandoned us. Without forgiveness, our heart hardens and none of God's healing love shines through.

And we must remain forever vigilant lest pain or neglect once again creep into our life and darken our heart and everything that flows from it (Prov. 4:23).

No one goes through life without experiencing a broken heart. To ignore that reality or pretend it has never happened to us invites a perpetually troubled spirit that isolates us from God and those we love. It is no way to live.

But honesty and vulnerability, along with God's forgiveness and unconditional love, heal a broken heart and soften a hardened one. They take us to a new life filled with meaning, purpose, and real love.

You can begin that journey right now by opening up about where you've been, what you're going through and where you need healing.

Are you ready?

Reflect

When we believe something deep in our heart, it affects who we are, how we see ourselves, how we relate to others, and how our life turns out. As we believe, so we are and so we live.

Pray

Come Holy Spirit and heal the wounds of my broken heart. Penetrate my innermost being and silence the words that have harmed me. Fill the void created by neglect. Release me from the bondage of bitterness by bestowing a spirit of forgiveness upon me. And restore me to wholeness so that I may enjoy a new life filled with meaning, purpose and real love.

Amen

Discuss

Questions for Understanding:

What are some of the symptoms of a broken heart?

How about a hardened heart? What does that look like?

Have you ever had any of these symptoms?

Thought Provoking Question:

When in your life have you experienced a broken or hardened heart? Was it pain or neglect that affected you the most, and where did it come from?

Question for Sharing:

Which of the following scriptures are most helpful to you in identifying and healing a broken or hardened heart? Tell us why you chose these scriptures.

Identifying a Broken Heart

Pay Attention to How You're Living

As water reflects the face,
so one's life reflects the heart.

Proverbs 27:19 NIV

Listen Carefully to What You Say and How You Say It

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

Matthew 12:34-35 ESV

Be On the Lookout for an Angry Spirit

Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 ESV

Beware of a Rebellious Spirit

The wise in heart accept commands,
but a chattering fool comes to ruin.

Proverbs 10:8 NIV

Depression is a Warning Sign

A cheerful heart is good medicine,
but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Proverbs 17:22 NIV

So is Anxiety

Anxiety weighs down the heart.

Proverbs 12:25 NIV

Healing a Broken Heart

Purify Your Heart

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

Psalm 51:10

Trust The Lord With All Your Heart

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Fill Your Heart With Love and Faithfulness

Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your
neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.

Proverbs 3:3 ESV

Set Your Heart On What Is Good

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:22 NIV

Seek God With All Your Heart

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:13 NIV

Ask Him to Strengthen Your Heart

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Psalms 73:26 NIV

And Fill It With Empathy and Compassion for Others

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 NIV

Cultivate a Grateful Heart

I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

Psalms 9:1 NIV

Pursue Righteousness

I will praise you with an upright heart
as I learn your righteous laws.

Psalms 119:7 NIV

Pray for Healing

He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.

Psalms 147:3 NIV