

Heart Transplant...

Wisps of grey hair get blown out of the way of eyes that carry a deep sparkle within them, a sparkle that has survived the passing of countless ages since they first began to shine. The old man's hands are wrinkled with time, worn and callused from the monotony of the day's work. They don't mind, though... they enjoy the part they play in the task before them. Their grip becomes a little firmer as a beautiful groove begins to be shaped into the mound of clay, and a smile appears from the old man's face, the sparkle in his eyes becoming just a bit brighter.

Slowly and painstakingly, the groove takes shape, and the mound of clay begins to take the form of what had been birthed in the mind of the old man long before it was ever laid upon the table. This collection of mud - this anthology of rock and dust, of sand and water - this lump of nothing was becoming something, giving birth to a masterpiece that only the Master could envision.

Life appears from the work of his hands... hard pieces of clay have become soft muscle tissue; jagged rocks have become malleable walls that begin to push life giving blood in and out of this newly formed pump. A heart has been formed - the life granting and life sustaining centre of the Master's creation. His work is good and his smile is true. He takes delight in the form before him.

God has placed such a heart within each one of us. It was once as soft and delicate as the one I have just described in my little analogy. The same amount of care, of compassion, and of love was put into the making of yours as well... God took the time to knit you together in your mother's womb. He could have snapped his fingers and made you appear, but he wanted to *create* you - he wanted to gently form the masterpiece that had been birthed in his mind long ago. He took the time to shape you, to wire you up with your own personality, and to breathe life into this new creation. His eyes sparkled just a bit brighter the day you came into this world, because he saw that his work was good, and he took delight in it.

Over time, however, I think many of us have lost the malleability of our once soft and delicate spiritual hearts. Just as fat and cholesterol clog up the free flowing pathways of our physical hearts, so sin and bitterness tend to clog up the flow of our spiritual heart. What was once delicate and soft has become hardened. What was once life giving has become life threatening.

You've seen the signs. Shortness of breath and numbness on the left side of your body are warnings that you need to get your heart looked at quickly. Why don't we pay as close attention to our spiritual heart? Instead, we allow hurt to take control and clog up our thinking. Depressive and degrading thoughts infiltrate our mind and block the spiritual flow of our life giving center while we try to ignore or even deny it. Numbness of our conscience produces acts we would not normally do, and we allow it to happen.

You can ignore the earthly signs for a time, but sooner or later you will have to deal with the junk that you have allowed around your heart. The same rings true spiritually - the signs are right in front of us. Yet we labour on this walk of purity - we struggle through the process and seem to be gaining no ground - our walk often consists of one step forward and two steps back and we can't figure out what's wrong.

Maybe it's because we have ignored the warning signs of a spiritual heart that is in danger. Maybe it's time to allow the potter's hand to do its work on you once again. Maybe it's time to allow him to break off the hardened pieces that block the flow, and to mould you and shape you back into his design for you.

The truth is, he has always been trying to keep your heart soft. His hand has always been there, trying to guide you on the right path - the path that will keep your life song singing and your spiritual blood flowing. But we shy away from his firm grip. We demand control of our own life, our own destiny, our own way. Being reshaped isn't always the most pleasant feeling, so instead we choose to ignore the doctor's orders of lifestyle changes, while the walls of our arteries and vessels continue to build up and our spiritual blood struggles more and more to get through.

A key factor to living our lives as a reasonable act of worship is allowing God to keep our heart clean and soft before him. That might involve a bit of a heart transplant from time to time. God is willing to do the operation if you are willing to lay your life in his hands.

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so you will obey my laws and do whatever I command.

~ Ezekiel 36:25-27

Living out this process of purity involves allowing God to do a spiritual heart transplant. It means being willing to let go of some of those things you have held on to for comfort's sake. It means being willing to be opened up and showcased - being transparent and vulnerable about the stuff you struggle with and the things you fear. And it means being willing to make changes to your lifestyle and become a little more proactive about taking care of that new heart of yours. Becel seems to sum it up well in their latest commercial...

Follow it
Break it
Change it
Don't do it if it's not in it
Get it pumping
Pour it out to someone
Keep your loved ones close to it
Whether it's cold, warm, or made of stone
Take good care of it
Exercise and listen to it
It's the most important thing you'll ever own

It really is the most important thing you'll ever own. Allow God to shape you. Allow him to have his way in your life. Listen to him as he gently guides you through this process of purity. Take good care

of this heart of yours, and be willing to allow the potter's hand to push and prod, to gently but firmly shape you into the person that he knows you can be - his masterpiece.

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