



A HEART
LIKE HIS

*Forming the Heart
of Jesus Within Me*

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Preface

This book invites disciples to sit at the feet of Jesus – to see what moved Him, what shaped His thoughts, and what guided His steps – so that, through reflection and practice, we may live, love, and lead more like Him. Through thirteen lessons, this study will examine the heart of Jesus, challenging us to embrace His heart as our own. We strive to shape not merely better habits, but a deeper, Christlike character, formed and inspired by His very heart.

This study is designed in four intentional parts – Foundation, Formation, Transformation, and Application – to guide us through patterning our hearts after Jesus.

- **Foundation** lays the groundwork for our study by exploring what it means to have a heart like Jesus and why this matters deeply in our lives. This section covers lessons 1 and 2, where we begin by looking beneath the surface and learning to embrace humility as the starting point of our journey.
- **Formation** focuses on the essential Christlike qualities we are called to grow in and live out. This part of our study encompasses lessons 3 through 7, where we aim to explore the essential attributes of Jesus' heart, including compassion, selflessness, service, purity, and forgiveness.
- **Transformation** dives deeper into our personal relationship with God and His people as we develop prayerful, sacrificial, courageous, and submissive hearts. Lessons 8 through 11 guide us in cultivating these vital qualities, inviting ongoing growth in these often-challenging areas.
- **Application** brings all we've learned together into practical, everyday living. Lessons 12 and 13 will challenge us to keep our focus on the cross as we daily live out the heart of Jesus – fully aligned in thought, love, and action as His followers.

Each part of this study is designed to build on the last, helping us to move from simply knowing about Jesus' heart to truly becoming shaped after His heart. While there is so much to be said about the heart, this study will help us focus on key aspects that bring about lasting transformation – leading us to live with greater love, purpose, and faithfulness each day.

My prayer for this study is that we set aside any preconceived notions about the heart, seeking instead to understand the heart of Jesus. May we be both motivated and challenged to shape our hearts after His own. In doing so, I believe we will take a profound step toward loving the Lord with **all** our hearts!

*“And you shall love the Lord your God **with all your heart** and with all your soul and with all your might.” – Deuteronomy 6:5*

Structure

Each lesson in this study focuses on one Christlike heart attribute that disciples of Jesus must intentionally cultivate if we are to reflect His character in our own lives. Though these attributes can be traced throughout Scripture, our aim in this workbook is to draw near to Jesus Himself – to see these qualities in His words, in His choices, and in His interactions.

To guide this journey, every lesson will follow the same four movements: **The Truth Jesus Taught, The Way Jesus Walked, Beneath the Surface of My Heart, and Forming His Heart Within Me.** Together, these movements help us move from understanding to reflection to transformation.

Here is what each part means:

- **The Truth Jesus Taught:**

Jesus' teaching does far more than communicate information – it invites transformation. He never offered a list of external rules; instead, He spoke to the heart, calling His disciples to deeper devotion, renewed vision, and genuine inner change. Though His words often arose in specific historical moments, His message is timeless and reaches directly into our lives today. He calls us to more than behavior modification. He calls us to heart transformation. Each lesson begins by listening to Jesus Himself, grounding our study in His teaching.

- **The Way Jesus Walked:**

What Jesus taught, He embodied perfectly. His life was a living demonstration of His message – faithful, consistent, and whole. When we look at Jesus' actions, we see His teaching made visible, His heart revealed in daily life. In this section, we consider how Jesus lived out the attribute we are studying. By observing His example, we gain clarity on what these qualities look like in real practice and how we may walk in those same footsteps.

- **Beneath the Surface of My Heart:**

Throughout His ministry, Jesus invited His followers to examine the true condition of their hearts. He called for honesty, humility, and vulnerability – an openness to see ourselves clearly before God. Heart transformation cannot begin until we acknowledge what lies beneath the surface. Here, we turn inward. We reflect on where we are living in alignment with Jesus' heart – and where we are not. Together, we will consider why these attributes can challenge us and what hinders us from embracing them more fully.

- **Forming His Heart Within Me:**

Every lesson concludes with an opportunity to move from understanding to action. Knowing Jesus' heart is essential – but allowing His heart to shape our own is where transformation truly occurs. This final section focuses on practical steps: how we can cultivate these Christlike qualities, how they can reshape our relationships, and how we can walk into the coming week more aligned with Jesus in thought, word, and deed. Our goal is not simply to admire His heart, but to begin forming it within ourselves.

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Foundation

Preparing the Heart for Transformation

Every journey toward Christlikeness begins beneath the surface. Before we can imitate the attributes of Jesus or embrace His way of life, we must first understand the condition of the heart itself. The *Foundation* section invites us to slow down, look inward, and recognize that real and lasting transformation begins at the deepest level of who we are.

This section focuses on two essential starting points: **self-reflection** and **humility**. These attributes serve as the soil in which every other Christlike virtue takes root. Without honest examination and a humble posture before God, spiritual growth becomes shallow, fragile, and easily distorted. But when our hearts are open, teachable, and willing to be shaped, we create space for Christ to form His character within us.

In these foundational lessons, our aim is not to master practices but to cultivate posture – to adopt the mindset and orientation necessary for God’s transforming work. As we begin, let these themes prepare the ground of your heart for the formation that follows. Transformation begins here.

The Treasure of the Heart

Beginning Beneath the Surface (Luke 6:43-45)

Every disciple of Jesus is shaped first and foremost by the condition of the heart. Skills, habits, and outward acts of obedience all matter, but they flow from the deeper, unseen place where our loves, desires, and beliefs are formed. If we want to become like Christ, we must learn to take on His heart – His way of thinking, feeling, valuing, responding, and living. We look to the condition of Jesus’ heart, not as a list of traits to admire, but as a pathway toward genuine transformation.

In this first lesson, we begin with the foundational attribute of self-reflection – the humble, honest examination of what is happening beneath the surface of our lives. By self-reflection, we mean the intentional practice of looking inward to recognize the true condition of our hearts before God. This is not self-condemnation, nor is it a vague awareness of our thoughts and feelings. Rather, it is the courageous willingness to acknowledge what is good, what is growing, and what needs to be confronted, surrendered, or reshaped by Christ. A self-reflective heart listens. It slows down long enough to consider motives, desires, and patterns that are often overlooked. Without this attribute, spiritual growth becomes accidental and shallow. With it, transformation becomes possible because we begin to see ourselves as God sees us.

This is why our study opens with Jesus’ words in Luke 6:43-45. In this passage, Jesus directs His listeners to the inner life – the unseen tree that produces visible fruit. A good tree bears good fruit, and a bad tree bears bad fruit, not because of the fruit itself, but because of the nature of the tree. “*The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good,*” Jesus says, “*and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil.*” With this simple but profound teaching, Jesus reveals a truth at the center of spiritual formation: who we are on the inside cannot be separated from what we do on the outside. Jesus invites us to look honestly at the “treasure” we carry within, because that treasure determines the kind of fruit our lives bear.

Self-reflection matters because it creates the inner space where all other Christlike attributes can be formed. A heart unwilling to look inward will remain unchanged, no matter how many sermons are heard or Scriptures are read. But a heart willing to be examined becomes open, teachable, and responsive. Jesus consistently called His disciples to examine their hearts because He knew that transformation begins at the core of a person’s character.

As we begin this study, this first lesson invites us to pause, look inward, and consider the state of our hearts. Jesus does not merely ask for external obedience – He calls us to transformation from the inside out. May this study open our eyes to the importance of a heart that is willing to reflect, examine, and be reshaped by Christ.

The Truth Jesus Taught

Passages to Ponder: Luke 6:43-45, Matthew 12:33-37, Mark 7:14-23

1. What does Jesus teach about the heart in these passages? How does this deepen or reshape my understanding of how the heart influences my words, attitudes, and actions?
2. What other Scriptures help clarify the importance of the heart, and how do they support or reinforce what Jesus teaches here?

The Way Jesus Walked

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 4:1-11, John 4:31-38, Matthew 26:36-46

3. What do these passages reveal about Jesus' heart? In what ways do I see Him living out the very truths He taught about the heart?
4. What stands out to me about the unity between Jesus' inward devotion and the outward actions that flowed from His heart?

Beneath the Surface of My Heart

Before Jesus' attributes can form within us, He calls us to look honestly within ourselves, inviting reflection and vulnerability as we search beneath the surface of our hearts.

5. Where do I see evidence of self-reflection already forming in my heart, even in small ways? What helps it to grow?

6. What makes self-reflection difficult for me to practice consistently?

Forming His Heart Within Me

Following Jesus means taking intentional steps to let His heart reshape ours. Let's focus on specific ways we can practice, cultivate, and embody a habit of self-reflection in daily life.

7. What is one practical, specific way I can cultivate self-reflection in my life this week?

8. How might self-reflection transform my relationships, decisions, or habits if I truly embrace it?

A Humble Heart

Let This Mind Be in You Which Was Also in Christ (Philippians 2:1-11)

Every journey toward Christlikeness leads us to the same essential virtue: humility. Humility is the doorway through which real spiritual transformation begins, and it is the foundation that allows for continued growth. Without it, discipleship becomes self-directed and self-reliant. With it, we become teachable, responsive, and open to the shaping work of God. Humility is not simply one attribute among many – it is the posture that allows every other Christlike trait to take root in the heart.

By humility, we mean the intentional lowering of self so that Christ may be elevated in our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Humility is not self-degradation, nor is it the denial of our worth. Rather, it is the willingness to see ourselves truthfully in light of God’s grace – recognizing our dependence on Him and choosing to place the good of others above our own pride, preferences, and position. A humble heart sees clearly: it discerns its own limitations, values others rightly, and is freed from the weight of self-exaltation. Without humility, spiritual growth becomes stunted because the heart remains closed, defensive, and resistant. With humility, transformation becomes possible because we willingly surrender our whole selves over to Christ.

Humility matters because it is at the very core of the heart of Jesus. This is seen so clearly in Philippians 2:1-11, where Paul calls believers to “*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*” He points us directly to the pattern of Christ because humility is what drove Him to act. Though eternally equal with the Father, Jesus did not cling to His rights or status. Instead, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, entering humanity, and submitting Himself to the will of the Father, even to death on a cross. This is humility beyond sentiment or soft language; it is humility expressed in sacrificial action and total obedience.

Jesus does not merely exemplify humility; He defines it. His mindset becomes the model of our own. To truly follow Him is to embrace His way of thinking, His way of valuing others, and His willingness to release all self-interest for the good of God’s kingdom. Humility calls us to reorder our hearts so that love – not pride – governs the way we live.

This second lesson invites us to adopt the posture that makes every other aspect of Christlikeness possible. Jesus does not call us to admire His humility from a distance; He calls us to share in it. May this lesson challenge us to lay aside pride, soften our defenses, and learn the way of the One who “*humbled Himself.*”

The Truth Jesus Taught

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 5:3, Luke 14:7-11, Luke 18:9-14

1. What does Jesus teach about humility in these passages? How does this deepen or reshape my understanding of humility?

2. What other Scriptures help illuminate humility, and how do they support or reinforce what Jesus teaches here?

The Way Jesus Walked

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 11:25-30, Mark 10:13-16, John 13:1-20

3. What do these passages reveal about Jesus' heart of humility? In what ways do I see Him living out the very truths He taught about humility?

4. What stands out to me about the consistency between Jesus' teaching and His actions in this area?

Beneath the Surface of My Heart

Before humility can form within us, Jesus calls us to look honestly within ourselves, inviting reflection and vulnerability as we search beneath the surface of our hearts.

5. Where do I see evidence of humility already forming in my heart, even in small ways? What helps it to grow?
6. What makes humility difficult for me to practice consistently?

Forming His Heart Within Me

Following Jesus means taking intentional steps to let His heart reshape ours. Let's focus on specific ways we can practice, cultivate, and embody humility in daily life.

7. What is one practical, specific way I can cultivate humility in my life this week?
8. How might humility transform my relationships, decisions, or habits if I truly embrace it?

Formation

Growing the Character of Christ Within Us

Once the heart is prepared through reflection and humility, we are ready to cultivate the qualities that shaped the life and ministry of Jesus. The *Formation* section guides us into the core attributes that defined His heart – attributes He invites His disciples to embody in their daily lives.

In this section, we will explore **compassion, selflessness, service, purity, and forgiveness**. These are not isolated traits, nor are they optional. They are expressions of the very heart of Jesus, and they form the character of those who follow Him. Through Scripture and reflection, we will see how each attribute was displayed in the life of Christ and how it can be formed within us through intentional practice.

Formation is not fast, and it is never accidental. It is the steady shaping of the heart as we yield our desires, habits, and priorities to the example and teaching of Jesus. As we walk through these lessons, allow each attribute to challenge, strengthen, and shape you. This is where the character of Christ begins to take form within us.

A Compassionate Heart

Moved With Compassion, He Reached Out (Mark 1:40-45)

Every meaningful expression of Christlikeness is rooted in a heart that feels deeply for others. Compassion is more than a passing sense of pity; it is a movement of the heart that moves us to act on behalf of someone in need. When Scripture speaks of compassion, it speaks of love being stirred, a response that arises when the suffering of another becomes impossible to ignore. A compassionate heart reflects the very character of Jesus, who consistently allowed the pain of others to interrupt His path, reshape His priorities, and guide His actions. Without compassion, we become cold, clinical, and detached. With it, discipleship becomes warm, human, and profoundly Christ-centered.

By compassion, we mean the willingness to be moved by the needs, wounds, and struggles of others in a way that compels us to act for their good. It is not mere emotion, nor is it simply feeling sorry for someone's hardship. Rather, it is a Christlike sensitivity that sees people as God sees them – valuable, vulnerable, and worthy of care. Compassion notices what others overlook. It willingly enters the difficult places of another's life, offering presence, mercy, and help. It is the driving force that motivates us to slow down and choose involvement when others rush past, and comfort might prefer avoidance. Without compassion, we become indifferent and insulated. With it, we become open, attentive, and ready to serve.

The importance of compassion becomes unmistakably clear in interactions such as the one recorded in Mark 1:40-45. A man with leprosy comes to Jesus, kneels before Him, and pleads, “*If You are willing, You can make me clean.*” Jesus responds, not merely aware of the man's suffering, but moved by it. Mark tells us that Jesus is “*moved with compassion.*” He reaches out His hand to touch the untouchable. He bridges the distance everyone else maintained, entering the man's isolation, breaking through his shame, and restoring him completely. This moment shows us what compassion does: it moves toward pain, not away from it. It refuses to be restrained by fear, inconvenience, or social boundaries. Compassion leads to bold, sometimes even costly action.

Jesus does not simply act with compassion; He embodies it. His response to the leper reveals that compassion is not optional for those who follow Him. It is part of the very mind and heart He calls us to develop. To imitate Christ is to cultivate a willingness not just to see, but to feel, and to reach out. A compassionate heart is a reflection of the gospel – a God who draws near to the broken, touches the unclean, and makes the wounded whole.

This third lesson invites us to consider whether the needs of others around us truly move our hearts. Jesus calls us not only to admire His compassion, but to practice it. May we open our hearts to be shaped like the One who saw the suffering, felt deeply for the hurting, and reached out in love.

The Truth Jesus Taught

Passages to Ponder: Luke 10:25-37, Matthew 9:35-38, Luke 6:27-36

1. What does Jesus teach about compassion in these passages? How does this deepen or reshape my understanding of compassion?
2. What other Scriptures help illuminate compassion, and how do they support or reinforce what Jesus teaches here?

The Way Jesus Walked

Passages to Ponder: Mark 1:40-45, Luke 7:11-17, Matthew 14:13-21

3. What do these passages reveal about Jesus' heart of compassion? In what ways do I see Him living out the very truths He taught about compassion?
4. What stands out to me about the consistency between Jesus' teaching and His actions in this area?

Beneath the Surface of My Heart

Before compassion can form within us, Jesus calls us to look honestly within ourselves, inviting reflection and vulnerability as we search beneath the surface of our hearts.

5. Where do I see evidence of compassion already forming in my heart, even in small ways?
What helps it to grow?

6. What makes compassion difficult for me to practice consistently?

Forming His Heart Within Me

Following Jesus means taking intentional steps to let His heart reshape ours. Let's focus on specific ways we can practice, cultivate, and embody compassion in daily life.

7. What is one practical, specific way I can cultivate compassion in my life this week?

8. How might compassion transform my relationships, decisions, or habits if I truly embrace it?

A Selfless Heart

For Your Sake He Became Poor (2 Corinthians 8:1-15)

Every pursuit of Christlikeness calls us to confront the natural pull of self-interest. The way of the world teaches us to protect, preserve, and promote ourselves. But the way of Jesus leads us in the opposite direction – toward a life shaped by self-giving love. A selfless heart willingly pours itself out for the good of others, reflecting the character of the One who came, “*not to be served, but to serve.*” When selflessness guides our thoughts and actions, discipleship becomes a life of joyful generosity rather than guarded obligation. Without selflessness, spiritual growth becomes constrained by our own priorities. With it, we learn to love, give, and serve, mirroring the heart of Christ.

By selflessness, we mean the intentional choice to place the needs, burdens, and well-being of others ahead of our own preferences, comfort, or advantage. Selflessness is not the erasure of self, nor is it allowing others to take undue advantage. Rather, it is the willingness to release the unrelenting pursuit of personal gain for the sake of others. A selfless heart is unburdened by compassion and sacrifice. It gladly seeks the flourishing of others. Without this attribute, our service to God becomes transactional and limited by convenience. With it, our lives become channels of grace that reflect the generosity of Jesus.

The significance of selflessness becomes unmistakably clear in 2 Corinthians 8:1-15, where Paul holds up the Macedonian churches and ultimately Christ Himself as examples of sacrificial generosity. The Macedonians, though enduring “*a severe test of affliction*” and living in “*extreme poverty,*” overflowed with joy that resulted in rich generosity. They gave not out of abundance but out of devotion – “*beyond their means,*” Paul says, begging earnestly for the privilege of helping others. Their example exposes the truth that selflessness is not dependent on circumstances; it is born from a heart willing to trust God and place others ahead of self. Even still, Paul points to a greater model: “*For your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.*” Jesus, though eternally rich in glory, willingly emptied Himself – not merely of possessions, but of privilege and status – to meet the deepest need of humanity. His poverty was not merely economic; it was the self-giving act of stepping into our brokenness so that we might share in His life. In Christ, we see that selflessness is not only an ethical ideal – it is the very shape of the gospel.

Jesus does not call us to admire His self-giving love from afar. He calls us to follow Him into a life defined by it. Paul’s exhortation is not simply about financial generosity; it is about cultivating hearts that mirror the self-emptying posture of Christ.

This fourth lesson invites us to examine the ways we hold tightly to ourselves and consider how Christ calls us to loosen our grip. May this study challenge us to reflect the selfless nature of the One who gave Himself fully.

Beneath the Surface of My Heart

Before selflessness can form within us, Jesus calls us to look honestly within ourselves, inviting reflection and vulnerability as we search beneath the surface of our hearts.

5. Where do I see evidence of selflessness already forming in my heart, even in small ways?
What helps it to grow?

6. What makes selflessness difficult for me to practice consistently?

Forming His Heart Within Me

Following Jesus means taking intentional steps to let His heart reshape ours. Let's focus on specific ways we can practice, cultivate, and embody selflessness in daily life.

7. What is one practical, specific way I can cultivate selflessness in my life this week?

8. How might selflessness transform my relationships, decisions, or habits if I truly embrace it?

A Serving Heart

Not to Be Served, But to Serve (Matthew 20:20-28)

The journey of discipleship is not only about inward transformation but also about outward expression. A heart shaped by Christ naturally moves toward action – toward lifting burdens, meeting needs, and bringing God’s love to others. A serving heart is the practical outworking of everything the disciple has learned to value, embrace, and believe. Without it, faith remains theoretical and self-focused. With it, our beliefs become living reality, visible in the ways we give our time, energy, and resources for the good of others. Serving is not an optional accessory to discipleship; it is the essence of what it means to follow Christ in daily life.

By a serving heart, we mean a disposition of willingness to act for the benefit of others, motivated not by recognition or reward, but by love and obedience to God. A serving heart seeks opportunities to contribute, bear burdens, and alleviate the struggles of those around us. It is not self-effacing for the sake of approval, nor is it limited to those who ask. Rather, it is a posture of attentiveness, readiness, and sacrificial love. Without a serving heart, discipleship can become self-centered, focused on personal growth alone. With it, transformation moves outward, extending God’s care through concrete acts of love.

Matthew 20:20-28 illuminates the nature of Christlike service. When the mother of James and John asked Jesus to grant her sons positions of honor, Jesus turned the moment into a lesson on true greatness. He makes clear that leadership and influence in His kingdom are not earned by ambition or assertion, but by willingness to serve. *“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many,”* He said. Jesus shows that greatness is measured not by status or authority, but by the extent to which one lays down personal privilege for the good of others. In doing so, He redefines this, which can so easily become a worldly metric. Service, then, was not incidental to His mission; it is the very pattern of His life, culminating in the ultimate act of self-giving on the cross.

A serving heart is a reflection of Christ’s own priorities. To cultivate it is to reorder our daily choices around the needs of others, guided by love rather than obligation and humility rather than pride. It is a heart that looks beyond self, responds to the silent cries and unseen needs, and participates in demonstrating God’s love to a world so desperately in need.

This fifth lesson invites us to embrace the path of active discipleship. Jesus calls us not merely to admire His example, but to follow it – placing others before ourselves, meeting needs without expectation of reward, and allowing our lives to demonstrate His love. May this study inspire hearts that move outward in service, revealing the heart of Christ through the tangible, everyday way we give ourselves in service to others.

The Truth Jesus Taught

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 22:24-27, John 12:24-26

1. What does Jesus teach about serving others in these passages? How does this deepen or reshape my understanding of serving others?
2. What other Scriptures help illuminate serving others, and how do they support or reinforce what Jesus teaches here?

The Way Jesus Walked

Passages to Ponder: John 13:1-17, Mark 10:46-52, John 2:1-11

3. What do these passages reveal about Jesus' heart of service? In what ways do I see Him living out the very truths He taught about serving others?
4. What stands out to me about the consistency between Jesus' teaching and His actions in this area?

Beneath the Surface of My Heart

Before a desire to serve can form within us, Jesus calls us to look honestly within ourselves, inviting reflection and vulnerability as we search beneath the surface of our hearts.

5. Where do I see evidence of a desire to serve already forming in my heart, even in small ways? What helps it to grow?

6. What makes serving others difficult for me to practice consistently?

Forming His Heart Within Me

Following Jesus means taking intentional steps to let His heart reshape ours. Let's focus on specific ways we can practice, cultivate, and embody serving others in daily life.

7. What is one practical, specific way I can cultivate a desire to serve – and act on it – in my life this week?

8. How might serving others transform my relationships, decisions, or habits if I truly embrace it?

A Pure Heart

Blessed Are the Pure in Heart (Matthew 5:8)

As disciples of Jesus, the condition of our hearts shapes not only our actions but the very quality of our spiritual lives. Among the most vital attributes of a Christlike heart is purity. A pure heart is essential because it defines the way we see God, ourselves, and others. It allows our motives to align with God's purposes, and it creates clarity in how we live before Him and in the world. Without a pure heart, spiritual perception is clouded, decisions are compromised, and our walk with Christ is weakened. With it, we experience intimacy with God and a clarity that brings life and blessing to ourselves and those around us.

By a pure heart, we mean an inner life untainted by deceit, malice, or divided loyalty – a heart committed to truth, integrity, and wholehearted devotion to God. Purity is not merely external behavior or moral compliance; it is an inward orientation that shapes thoughts, desires, and intentions. A pure heart is single-minded in its love for God and others, refusing to let selfish ambition, bitterness, or hypocrisy take root. Without purity, the heart becomes vulnerable to distortion and distraction. With it, spiritual growth is unhindered, and God's presence becomes increasingly visible in the ways we live and relate.

Matthew 5:8 situates purity at the very center of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*" Jesus emphasizes purity as the prerequisite for spiritual vision, the ability to perceive God's reality and experience His presence. A pure heart allows us to see rightly. Seeing rightly is the start of loving rightly and acting rightly because our motives and desires have been shaped by God rather than by the shifting values of the world. Purity, then, is not only a personal blessing but also the gateway to communion with God and a life marked by discernment and truth.

A pure heart mirrors the heart of Christ, who lived without deception, whose motives were never selfish, and whose devotion to the Father was complete and never compromised. Cultivating purity requires intentionality. We must constantly examine our thoughts, guard our affections, and surrender areas of our lives that have been resistant to God's redeeming work. It is a daily posture of honesty, integrity, and submission to Jesus and His guidance.

The sixth lesson invites us to consider the inner clarity and devotion that a pure heart brings. Jesus does not merely commend purity; He requires it, establishing it as the pathway to the promised blessing of seeing God Himself. May this study inspire hearts that seek God above all else, refuse the compromise of divided loyalties, and pursue a life of integrity and devotion that reflects the purity of Christ within us.

Beneath the Surface of My Heart

Before purity can form within us, Jesus calls us to look honestly within ourselves, inviting reflection and vulnerability as we search beneath the surface of our hearts.

5. Where do I see evidence of purity already forming in my heart, even in small ways? What helps it to grow?
6. What makes purity difficult for me to practice consistently?

Forming His Heart Within Me

Following Jesus means taking intentional steps to let His heart reshape ours. Let's focus on specific ways we can practice, cultivate, and embody purity in daily life.

7. What is one practical, specific way I can cultivate purity of heart in my life this week?
8. How might purity transform my relationships, decisions, or habits if I truly embrace it?

A Forgiving Heart

Father, Forgive Them (Luke 23:33-34)

The journey of discipleship is shaped not only by what we do but also by how we respond to the offenses, hurts, and wrongs we encounter. Often, the path becomes more difficult when we are called to examine our hearts in the face of pain and injustice. Christlikeness produces the vital attribute of forgiveness. A forgiving heart is essential because it frees us from the bondage of resentment, anger, and bitterness, reflecting the very heart of God to those around us.

Forgiveness is also the condition upon which the Father offers His mercy to us. Without it, relationships stagnate, spiritual growth is hindered, and our hearts become hardened. With it, we participate in God's restorative work, experiencing freedom, peace, and the ability to extend grace to others.

By forgiveness, we mean the intentional act of releasing resentment and the willingness to offer mercy to those who have wronged us, regardless of whether they seek or deserve it. Forgiveness is not forgetting or excusing the offense, nor is it a superficial act of politeness. It allows the heart to relinquish the desire for revenge, to let go of bitterness, and to entrust justice to God. A forgiving heart does not deny the pain experienced; rather, it chooses to respond differently than the natural inclinations of pride, anger, or self-protection. It proves that His love is stronger than our hurt and His grace more powerful than our grievances.

Forgiveness matters because it lies at the very center of Jesus' ministry and example. In Luke 23:33-34, we encounter the profound model of a forgiving heart as Jesus hangs on the cross. Despite the injustice, cruelty, and betrayal He endured, Jesus prays, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" At the most climactic moment of Jesus' life, we see forgiveness expressed, not as a passive sentiment, but by a deliberate, sacrificial choice. Jesus' heart moves toward mercy even in the face of the ultimate offense, showing us that forgiveness is both an inward condition and an outward expression of love. His example teaches that true freedom comes not from holding on to wrongs but from surrendering them into God's hands.

A forgiving heart transforms both the giver and the receiver. It breaks cycles of anger, restores relationships, and cultivates peace. It mirrors the heart of Christ, who bore the weight of humanity's sins without retaliation, offering mercy and reconciliation. Cultivating forgiveness requires intentionality: we must examine our hearts for grudges, release the desire for revenge, and depend on God as we forgive even where it feels impossible. It is a daily act of surrender, a choice to reflect Christ's love rather than our own impulses.

This seventh lesson calls us to embrace Jesus' posture of forgiveness. He does not merely model forgiveness for admiration; He calls us to it, offering freedom for our hearts and the lives of those around us. May this study inspire hearts to release offenses, extend grace, and walk in the liberating power of a forgiving heart.

Beneath the Surface of My Heart

Before forgiveness can form within us, Jesus calls us to look honestly within ourselves, inviting reflection and vulnerability as we search beneath the surface of our hearts.

5. Where do I see evidence of forgiveness already forming in my heart, even in small ways?
What helps it to grow?

6. What makes forgiveness difficult for me to practice consistently?

Forming His Heart Within Me

Following Jesus means taking intentional steps to let His heart reshape ours. Let's focus on specific ways we can practice, cultivate, and embody forgiveness in daily life.

7. What is one practical, specific way I can cultivate forgiveness in my life this week?

8. How might forgiveness transform my relationships, decisions, or habits if I truly embrace it?

Transformation

Deepening Our Relationship with God

After the heart is prepared and Christlike traits begin to take root, discipleship calls us into deeper, more personal transformation. The *Transformation* section explores the attributes that form the inner life of a mature disciple – qualities that shape not only what we do but who we are becoming before God.

Here, we will consider **prayerfulness, sacrificial love, courage, and submission** – attributes that ask us to trust God with our whole selves. These traits touch the core of our desires, loyalties, fears, and identity. They require total surrender. They require complete reliance. They require a heart totally aligned with the will of the Father.

Transformation is where faith becomes costly, but also where it becomes most beautiful. This is the stage in spiritual formation where our deepest motivations and desires are molded into more thorough Christlikeness. In this, Christ draws us into a more intimate relationship with Him. As we study these lessons, allow the teaching and example of Christ to challenge the parts of your heart that need refining. Transformation is only possible when our soul is willing.

A Prayerful Heart

Frequently Withdrawing to Pray (Luke 5:12-16)

Discipleship is a constant evaluation of the posture of our hearts toward God. Without the proper posture, what we do does not matter. Christlikeness produces the essential attribute of prayerfulness. A prayerful heart is vital because it completes the connection through which we receive guidance, strength, and intimacy with God. Without prayer, our spiritual lives become shallow, disconnected, and reactive to circumstances. With it, we are grounded, sustained, and aligned with the purposes of God. Prayer is not merely an activity on our to-do list but the condition of the heart that allows our relationship with God to flourish.

By a prayerful heart, we mean the intentional and persistent practice of turning to God and talking to Him as we seek His presence, wisdom, and will in all things. Prayer is not simply asking for what we want, nor is it a ritual to be checked off. It is a conversation with God, a posture of dependence, and a surrender of our thoughts, desires, and plans to His care. A prayerful heart listens as well as speaks, resting in God's timing and trusting His faithfulness. Through prayer, we acknowledge our need for Him, cultivate humility, and invite His shaping of our attitudes, decisions, and actions. Without this discipline, the heart grows self-reliant and disconnected from the source of true strength. With it, transformation becomes possible because our desires are continually aligned with God's purposes.

Jesus shows us that prayerfulness matters, as it was consistently at the center of His life and ministry. In Luke 5:12-16, we see Jesus frequently withdrawing to pray, even amid the demands of His ministry, teaching, and the needs of others. His example shows that prayer is not reserved for emergencies, special occasions, or convenience but is a constant and sustaining practice. Jesus demonstrates that a prayerful heart is attentive, persistent, and responsive, seeking communion with the Father before, during, and after critical moments. His withdrawals for prayer reveal that spiritual vitality flows from a heart that consistently depends on God, rather than relying solely on human effort or wisdom.

A prayerful heart transforms both the individual and those around them. It cultivates peace, clarity, and discernment, while also producing a posture of humility and reliance that honors God. It enables us to navigate life's challenges with grace and courage, and it strengthens our ability to respond to others with wisdom and compassion.

This eighth lesson invites us to examine the rhythms of our own lives and to cultivate a heart that regularly turns to God in conversation, trust, and surrender. Jesus did not merely pray for recognition; He calls us to it, offering to us the same relationship with the Father He experienced while here on Earth in the flesh. May this study challenge us to embrace the practice of prayer, deepen our dependence on God, and open our hearts to be continually shaped after His will.

The Truth Jesus Taught

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 6:5-15, Luke 18:1-8, John 16:16-24

1. What does Jesus teach about prayer in these passages? How does this deepen or reshape my understanding of prayer?
2. What other Scriptures help illuminate prayer, and how do they support or reinforce what Jesus teaches here?

The Way Jesus Walked

Passages to Ponder: Luke 5:12-16, Mark 1:35-39, Luke 6:12-16

3. What do these passages reveal about Jesus' heart of prayer? In what ways do I see Him living out the very truths He taught about prayer?
4. What stands out to me about the consistency between Jesus' teaching and His actions in this area?

Beneath the Surface of My Heart

Before prayerfulness can form within us, Jesus calls us to look honestly within ourselves, inviting reflection and vulnerability as we search beneath the surface of our hearts.

5. Where do I see evidence of a willingness to pray already forming in my heart, even in small ways? What helps it to grow?

6. What makes prayer difficult for me to practice consistently?

Forming His Heart Within Me

Following Jesus means taking intentional steps to let His heart reshape ours. Let's focus on specific ways we can practice, cultivate, and embody prayer in daily life.

7. What is one practical, specific way I can cultivate a rhythm of prayer in my life this week?

8. How might prayer transform my relationships, decisions, or habits if I truly embrace it?

A Sacrificial Heart

No Greater Love (John 15:12-17)

Authentic discipleship challenges us to embrace a love that goes far beyond comfort, convenience, and self-interest. Among the most vital attributes of Christlikeness lies the essential trait of a sacrificial heart. A sacrificial heart is vital because it reflects the love of Jesus, who gave Himself completely for the benefit of others. Without a willingness to lay down our rights, preferences, or possessions, our faith will remain theoretical, self-focused, and incomplete. With it, we participate in the redemptive work of God, serving others and demonstrating the depth of His love through tangible action. Sacrifice is not merely a noble idea but a condition of the heart that allows love to be expressed fully without filter.

By a sacrificial heart, we mean the intentional willingness to give of ourselves – our time, resources, energy, and even comfort – for the sake of God’s purposes and the well-being of others. Sacrifice is not about coercion, guilt, or unhealthy self-denial. Rather, it is the posture of a heart aligned with God’s love, choosing the good of others even when it costs us. A sacrificial heart sees beyond immediate personal gain, values the needs of others, and mirrors the self-giving love of Christ. Without sacrifice, our discipleship is incomplete, limited by our own preferences and priorities. With it, transformation becomes possible because our love is active, outward-focused, and rooted in obedience to God’s will.

Sacrifice matters because it is at the core of Jesus’ command and example. In John 15:12-17, Jesus calls His followers to love one another as He has loved them, making the ultimate expression of love the willingness to lay down one’s life for a friend. He teaches that true greatness is measured not by status, accolades, or possessions, but by our capacity to give ourselves completely for the good of others. Jesus did not merely speak of sacrificial love; He embodied it fully, offering Himself that He might bring us to God. His example reveals that a heart willing to sacrifice is a heart transformed by love, one that prioritizes God’s kingdom work of saving souls above personal comfort.

A sacrificial heart shapes both our character and our relationships. It cultivates generosity, courage, and humility, while also inspiring others to respond in love. It enables us to act with intentionality and to embrace God’s purposes even when doing so requires cost or discomfort.

In this ninth lesson, we are invited to examine the ways our hearts may cling to self-interest and to embrace the model of Jesus’ self-giving love. He did not offer Himself merely for the glory of sacrifice; He calls us to follow His example, challenging us to love and give of ourselves for the sake of others, just as He did. May this study encourage us to open our hearts, relinquish our rights, and embody a love that reflects the greatest love of all – the love of Christ.

Beneath the Surface of My Heart

Before a sacrificial heart can form within us, Jesus calls us to look honestly within ourselves, inviting reflection and vulnerability as we search beneath the surface of our hearts.

5. Where do I see evidence of a willingness to sacrifice already forming in my heart, even in small ways? What helps it to grow?

6. What makes sacrifice difficult for me to practice consistently?

Forming His Heart Within Me

Following Jesus means taking intentional steps to let His heart reshape ours. Let's focus on specific ways we can practice, cultivate, and embody sacrifice in daily life.

7. What is one practical, specific way I can actively choose sacrifice in my life this week?

8. How might a willingness to sacrifice transform my relationships, decisions, or habits if I truly embrace it?

A Courageous Heart

I Must Go On (Luke 13:31-35)

The journey of transformation inevitably brings us to a virtue that tests the strength of our convictions and the depth of our trust in God: courage. Christlikeness is not shaped only by quiet devotion but by the choices we make when the path is uncertain, intimidating, or costly. Courage is essential because it keeps us moving in God's direction even when fear urges us to retreat.

Without courage, discipleship becomes fragile – easily shaken by pressure, opposition, or hardship. With it, we remain steadfast, obedient, and faithful to the mission God has entrusted to us. A courageous heart enables us to persevere, to stand firm in truth, and to follow Christ even when the way is difficult.

By courage, we mean the confident and unwavering willingness to do God's will despite fear, pressure, or personal cost. Courage is not bravado, recklessness, or stubborn self-assertion. Nor is it the denial of fear. Rather, it is a heart anchored in trust – trust that God is sovereign, that His purposes are good, and that His presence goes with us always. A courageous heart sees clearly: it discerns danger without being dominated by it, recognizes the cost without shrinking from it, and chooses obedience over self-preservation. Without courage, our spiritual growth stalls beneath the weight of fear, doubt, or hesitation. With courage, transformation becomes possible because we act in faith, walk with conviction, and follow Christ with steadfast resolve.

This virtue is powerfully displayed in Jesus' response to the warning of the Pharisees in Luke 13:31-35. When told that Herod sought His life, Jesus did not alter His course or retreat from danger. Instead, He declared with striking clarity: "*I must go on.*" His courage did not arise from pride or defiance but from His unwavering commitment to the Father's will. Jesus understood the necessity of His mission – the healings, the teachings, the journey to Jerusalem, and ultimately the cross. Even as He lamented over the hardness of Jerusalem's heart, His compassion did not weaken His courage; it strengthened it. Love propelled Him forward. Obedience kept Him steady. Purpose gave Him resolve.

Jesus shows us that courage is rooted in submission, sustained by love, and directed by purpose. It takes courage to speak truth, to endure hardship, to pursue righteousness, and to finish the work God has set before us. His example calls us to examine our own hearts: Where have we allowed fear to hinder obedience? Where have we hesitated instead of pressing forward? Where must we say, with Christlike resolve, "*I must go on*"?

This tenth lesson invites us to embrace a heart that reflects the courage of Jesus – a heart that trusts God fully, obeys Him boldly, and advances His purposes faithfully. May this study embolden us to press forward faithfully, strengthening us to walk with conviction, unmoved by fear, with an unwavering devotion to the will of God.

The Truth Jesus Taught

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 10:24-33, Luke 12:4-7, John 16:29-33

1. What does Jesus teach about courage in these passages? How does this deepen or reshape my understanding of courage?
2. What other Scriptures help illuminate courage, and how do they support or reinforce what Jesus teaches here?

The Way Jesus Walked

Passages to Ponder: Luke 13:31-35, John 11:5-16, Mark 14:43-50

3. What do these passages reveal about Jesus' heart of courage? In what ways do I see Him living out the very truths He taught about courage?
4. What stands out to me about the consistency between Jesus' teaching and His actions in this area?

Beneath the Surface of My Heart

Before courage can form within us, Jesus calls us to look honestly within ourselves, inviting reflection and vulnerability as we search beneath the surface of our hearts.

5. Where do I see evidence of courage already forming in my heart, even in small ways? What helps it to grow?

6. What makes courage difficult for me to practice consistently?

Forming His Heart Within Me

Following Jesus means taking intentional steps to let His heart reshape ours. Let's focus on specific ways we can practice, cultivate, and embody courage in daily life.

7. What is one practical, specific way I can cultivate courage in my life this week?

8. How might courage transform my relationships, decisions, or habits if I truly embrace it?

A Submissive Heart

Not as I Will, But as You Will (Matthew 26:36-56)

One of the most profound and demanding aspects of discipleship is the call to submission. While many attributes shape our walk with Christ, submission reaches into the deepest places of the heart, asking whether we truly trust the wisdom, authority, and goodness of God. A submissive heart is essential because it frees us from the illusion of self-rule and anchors our lives firmly under the reign of God. Without submission, discipleship becomes selective – we obey when it is easy, agreeable, or convenient. With submission, we follow God wholeheartedly, even when His will leads us through difficulty, discomfort, or sacrifice. Submission is the posture that declares, in life and in death, that God’s way is always best.

By submission, we mean the willing and deliberate choice to place God’s will above our own in every circumstance of life. Submission is not passivity, weakness, or the abandonment of personal responsibility. Nor is it coercion. True submission is voluntary – a conscious yielding of our desires, plans, and preferences to the authority of God. In one sense, submission is simply choosing to follow God, ordering our steps beneath His direction. Yet it becomes most real and most revealing, precisely when our will does not align with His. When we agree with God’s will, we are merely doing what we already desire; when we disagree, submission becomes an intentional act of trust and loyalty. A submissive heart recognizes God’s wisdom, relies on His goodness, and yields to His rule even when obedience is costly. Without submission, our spiritual growth remains shallow and self-centered. With submission, transformation deepens as Christ’s obedience becomes the pattern of our own.

Nowhere is this virtue more vividly displayed than in the garden of Gethsemane. Faced with the immeasurable weight of impending suffering, Jesus prayed, “*Not as I will, but as You will.*” In that moment, the full humanity of Jesus is on display – He felt sorrow, anguish, and dread. Yet His submission did not falter; He entrusted Himself entirely to the Father’s will, even as it led Him to betrayal, arrest, and ultimately the cross. Jesus’ submission was neither reluctant nor mechanical; it was the overflow of perfect trust in the Father’s purposes. His obedience was not the absence of desire but the surrender of desire to the higher call of God’s redemptive plan.

Jesus shows us that submission is not about suppressing self but about aligning self with God. It is the courage to say “yes” when every earthly instinct urges “no,” the faith to trust God where we cannot see the path, and the love to yield completely to His purposes.

This eleventh lesson invites us to examine the posture of our hearts before God. May this study challenge us to relinquish our insistence on our own way, to trust God’s wisdom more deeply, and to echo the words of our Savior: “*Not as I will, but as You will.*”

The Truth Jesus Taught

Passages to Ponder: Luke 9:23-26, Matthew 6:9-10, John 4:31-38

1. What does Jesus teach about submission in these passages? How does this deepen or reshape my understanding of submission?

2. What other Scriptures help illuminate submission, and how do they support or reinforce what Jesus teaches here?

The Way Jesus Walked

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 26:36-56, John 12:23-28, John 5:19-24

3. What do these passages reveal about Jesus' heart of submission? In what ways do I see Him living out the very truths He taught about submission?

4. What stands out to me about the consistency between Jesus' teaching and His actions in this area?

Application

Living Out the Heart of Jesus Daily

The journey of formation finds its culmination in the way we live. The *Application* section turns our focus outward, inviting us to put into practice the heart that Christ has shaped within us. This is where discipleship moves from inward transformation to daily expression.

In this section, we will explore what it means to live with a **cross-focused heart** and to **embody the heart of Jesus** as a whole. These final lessons call us to unite the attributes we have studied into a single, cohesive way of life – one shaped by Christ’s purpose, sacrifice, and kingship over us. Application is not merely the “doing” of discipleship; it is the lived expression of a transformed heart. It reminds us that Christ forms us not only for our own growth but for the good of others and the glory of God.

As we enter this final stage, consider the invitation to live Jesus’ heart more fully, more intentionally, and more joyfully in the days ahead. This is where formation becomes a way of life.

A Cross-Focused Heart

For This Purpose, I Have Come (John 12:27-33)

Every step of spiritual formation eventually brings us face-to-face with the purpose that defined Jesus' life: the cross. The cross is not simply the place where Jesus dies – it is the purpose of His mission, the culmination of His obedience, and the clearest expression of His love. A cross-focused heart is essential for every disciple because it reorients us away from self-interest and toward God's redemptive purpose. Without this focus, discipleship becomes comfortable, shallow, and easily shaped by the desires of our culture. With it, we learn to measure our lives by the sacrificial love of Christ, allowing His purpose to shape our own.

By a cross-focused heart, we mean the intentional choice to let the mission of Jesus define the direction of our heart, mind, and life. This is not a morbid fixation on torture, nor is it an unhealthy pursuit of hardship. Instead, it is the posture of a disciple who understands that following Jesus requires dying to self so that His will may be fully embraced. A cross-focused heart willingly surrenders pride, comfort, and personal ambition to take up the way of Christ. Without this orientation, our faith becomes selective and conditional. With it, transformation becomes possible because our desires and priorities are shaped by the sacrificial love and obedience of Jesus.

This matters because the cross reveals the deepest truth about what it means to follow Jesus. In John 12:27-33, Jesus speaks with a troubled heart, yet with unwavering clarity and purpose: “*For this purpose I have come to this hour.*” The cross was not an interruption to His ministry but the very fulfillment of it. Even as His soul wrestled with the weight of what lay ahead, Jesus refused to turn aside from the Father's will. His commitment was not sentimental or theoretical – it was embodied obedience. Through His death, He would draw all people to Himself. In this moment, Jesus shows us that a cross-focused heart is rooted in purpose, anchored in obedience, and compelled by love.

A cross-focused heart calls us to live with the same clarity and conviction. It asks us to examine whose purpose truly directs our lives: our own desires, or the will of God. It challenges us to embrace the kind of love that sacrifices for others, the kind of obedience that chooses God's will over our own, and the kind of faith that does not shrink back when the cost becomes real. This way of life is not easy, but it is the path Jesus walked – and the one He invites us to follow.

This twelfth lesson invites us to re-center our lives on the heart of Christ's mission. Jesus does not call us merely to admire His sacrifice; He calls us to share in it. May this study lead us to fix our hearts on the cross, to walk with purpose and surrender, and to allow the love of Christ to shape every part of who we are.

The Truth Jesus Taught

Passages to Ponder: Mark 10:32-34, Luke 9:21-22, John 3:14-17

1. What does Jesus teach about living with a cross-focused heart in these passages? How does this deepen or reshape my understanding of what it means to focus on the cross?
2. What other Scriptures help illuminate a cross-focused heart, and how do they support or reinforce what Jesus teaches here?

The Way Jesus Walked

Passages to Ponder: John 12:24-33, Luke 22:14-20, Mark 15:16-39

3. What do these passages reveal about Jesus' cross-focused heart? In what ways do I see Him living out the very truths He taught about having a cross-focused heart?
4. What stands out to me about the consistency between Jesus' teaching and His actions in this area?

Living Jesus' Heart

Christ Lives in Me (Galatians 2:20)

Every step in this study has led us toward one ultimate goal: becoming like Jesus in every part of who we are. The Christian life is not simply the pursuit of individual virtues, nor is it a checklist of moral achievements. It is the comprehensive transformation of the inner person until the heart of Christ becomes the animating center of our lives. A heart shaped by Jesus is not defined by isolated attributes but by a new identity, new desires, and a new way of living that flows from His presence within us. Without this final aim, discipleship remains fragmented and incomplete. With it, we embrace the fullness of what it means to be united with Christ.

By living Jesus' heart, we mean allowing the very life of Christ to shape our thoughts, attitudes, actions, relationships, and direction. This is not about perfection, nor does it erase our individuality. Rather, it is the deliberate and ongoing surrender of self so that Christ may live more fully within us. To live His heart is to let His character guide our responses, His priorities define our values, and His love direct our steps. Without this integration, the attributes we study remain theoretical. With it, transformation becomes holistic, touching every part of who we are and who we are becoming.

This matters because the heart of discipleship is union with Christ. In Galatians 2:20, Paul declares, "*It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.*" This is not merely poetic language – it is the foundation of Christian identity. Paul had surrendered his old life, not only in behavior, but in ownership. The life he now lived was animated, guided, and shaped by Christ Himself. The cross had put his old self to death, and the resurrected life of Christ gave life to his new way of living. This is the invitation extended to every disciple: not simply to imitate Jesus from a distance, but to be transformed by His presence.

Living Jesus' heart calls us to see our spiritual formation as something larger than isolated habits or attributes. It asks us to consider the overall direction of our lives and the deeper story our hearts are telling. Are we living from our own strength, or from the strength of our living Savior? Are we shaped by our culture, preferences, and fears, or by the values and vision of Jesus? To live Christ's heart is to allow His character to become the defining reality of our everyday lives – our decisions, relationships, sacrifices, and responses.

This thirteenth lesson invites us to step back and see the whole picture of spiritual formation. Jesus does not call us to admire His heart; He calls us to embody it. May this study lead us to live with deeper surrender, clearer purpose, and greater love, so that the world may see Christ living in us.

