

Discussion Guide

March 8, 2026

It's Time For A Heart Check

Built Different Week 2

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Main Idea

God is deeply concerned with the condition of the human heart because the heart shapes the direction of a person's life. A heart that is surrendered to Christ becomes tender, responsive, and increasingly aligned with what God loves. This matters now because many people want guidance from God while neglecting the inner condition from which their choices, words, and habits flow. At the beginning of a new season, the Lord often calls His people to inward examination before outward movement. Spiritual formation begins when we stop managing appearances and allow God to transform us from within.

Achor Verse: *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."* (Ephesians 2:10, ESV).

Bonus verse: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a right and steadfast spirit within me."* (Psalm 51:10 AMP)

1. A Heart Changed By God Produces Compassion And Generosity

When God changes the heart, He does more than improve behavior. He renews desires, reorders priorities, and softens what was once hard and self-protective. Zacchaeus is a clear picture of this truth, because his encounter with Jesus produced visible repentance and practical generosity. A changed heart does not merely feel convicted. It begins to act differently toward God and toward people. Christ remains at the center of this transformation, because true compassion is not human niceness but the fruit of a life touched by His mercy.

Scripture: Ezekiel 36:26, Luke 19:1-10, 2 Corinthians 9:11

Discussion: Consider the ways your heart has been shaped by your encounter with Jesus over time and where that transformation is still needed. Reflect on whether compassion and generosity are growing naturally in your life or whether self-protection, indifference, or control still occupy too much space.

Think about one area where the Lord may be calling you to move from inward conviction to outward action so that others can experience His grace through

2. A Joy-Filled Heart Gives Willingly And Worships Freely

Biblical generosity is not driven by pressure, image, or religious performance. It flows from a heart that has learned to delight in God and trust Him as the source of all provision. Scripture teaches that God loves a cheerful giver because joyful generosity reveals a heart that is no longer clinging fearfully to what it has received. The widow's offering reminds us that heaven measures giving by surrender, not by amount. In Christ, generosity becomes an act of worship, because we are responding to the God who first gave to us without measure.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Mark 12:41-44, John 3:16, Romans 8:32

Discussion: Examine what usually shapes your giving of time, attention, resources, and service, whether gratitude, fear, obligation, or convenience. Reflect on how your attitude toward generosity reveals what you believe about God's faithfulness and ownership over your life. Consider what it would look like for your giving to become a freer and more joyful response to the grace you have already received in Christ.

3. A Surrendered Heart Learns To Love What God Loves

A surrendered heart is not merely corrected by God. It is taught by Him. As the heart comes under the lordship of Christ, it begins to value people, purposes, and priorities the way He does. Jesus taught that loving God fully and loving neighbor faithfully are inseparable marks of a rightly ordered life. This means that guarding the heart is not only about avoiding corruption but also about cultivating devotion. When the heart belongs to God, compassion for people is no longer optional. It becomes part of what it means to walk in step with Jesus.

Scripture: Matthew 22:37-39, Luke 6:45, Psalm 24:1, Philippians 4:7

Discussion: Reflect on what your daily reactions, priorities, and relationships reveal about what your heart truly loves. Consider whether your life is being shaped more by the love of God or by distraction, offense, comparison, and self-interest. Identify one relationship, conversation, or responsibility where surrendering your heart more fully to God would change the way you respond and help you love what He loves.

GOD DEVELOPS DEPTH BEFORE HE RELEASES RESULTS

SUMMARY

The condition of the heart determines the direction of the life. When God renews the heart, He produces compassion, generosity, joy, and surrendered love that reflects the character of Christ. Guarding the heart is not a passive idea but a daily act of obedience, discernment, and trust. As we

submit ourselves to the Lord, He forms within us a steadiness that honors Him and blesses others. A true heart check leads not to shame, but to deeper surrender and lasting transformation.

CALL TO ACTION

- **Ask the Lord** this week to reveal any bitterness, pride, fear, or distraction that has been shaping your heart more than His Word.
 - **Make one deliberate change** to guard your heart by adjusting an influence, relationship, or pattern that is pulling you away from Christ.
 - compassion or generosity in response to God's grace, not from pressure, but from a surrendered and grateful heart.
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GROUP LEADER RESOURCE

Would You Survive?

Purpose:

Light-hearted, quick laughs, and subtly sets up the "roots" theme before diving into the sermon discussion.

Time: 8–10 minutes

Supplies: None

How It Works

Tell the group:

"Tonight we're talking about roots — but before we get spiritual, let's see how you'd survive as a tree."

Then read these fun scenarios one at a time. After each one, have people raise their hand or move to one side of the room to answer.

Round 1: Weather Check

1. A week of nonstop rain.

Are you thriving 🌧️ or already complaining?

2. 100-degree Texas heat with no shade.

Still standing ☀️ or dramatically wilted?

3. A strong windstorm hits.

Firm and steady 💪 or leaning like the Tower of Pisa?

Let people explain their answers briefly for laughs.

Round 2: Root Reveal

Now shift slightly: “Okay, but what actually determines whether a tree survives?”

Let them answer:

- Roots
- Soil
- Water source
- Depth

Then ask: “If your week was the weather... how did your roots do?”

No deep processing yet — just quick one-word answers:

- Strong
- Shaky
- Dry
- Growing
- Surviving
- Needs water

Transition:

“Just like a tree’s strength isn’t determined by the weather but by the depth of its roots, our spiritual stability isn’t determined by our circumstances but by what’s happening beneath the surface. Let’s lean into tonight’s discussion and take an honest look at our roots.”