

Inner Vows

(taken from Elijah House Training & School of Healing Prayer Training)

Ezekiel 36:26 "... 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."

HEARTS OF STONE

A heart of stone is a defense mechanism, a hiding place we believe will protect us from hurt, but which in fact makes us the loneliest people in the world. The Church is filled with hearts of stone, people who can love and serve others but who can't allow others to minister to them. Healing is hard work; it requires time and the understanding and support of family and friends.

Years of neglect or hurt can cause emotional callousness to develop, thus protecting the inner person from further hurt by stifling real feelings, avoiding vulnerability, blocking out tenderness and refusing to listen or be sensitive to the needs of others. This is often characterized by rugged individualism born of cynicism, resulting in emotional impenetrability.

INNER VOWS

When you experience hurt in your childhood, a common reaction is to employ an emotional self-defense by making an inner vow that you will never let yourself be vulnerable in that way again. This emotional barrier can shut you off from fulfilling relationships because your inner self will never let go enough to trust and risk vulnerability.

Examples of Inner Vows

I will NEVER:

- ... let anyone love me.
- ... be weak.
- ... trust anyone.
- ... allow myself to need.
- ... let them take anything away from me.
- ... allow anyone to touch me.
- ... share what is mine.
- ... allow anyone to give me money.
- ... write, read, understand.
- ... go out at night.
- ... let you see who I am.
- ... let anyone know I hurt.
- ... tell a woman anything.
- ... let a man control me.
- ... be responsible for actions of others.
- ... receive a compliment.

... participate in life.
... allow a woman in my heart.
... be anything worthwhile.

I will ALWAYS:

... remain aloof, separate.
... be logical.
... be in control of my life.

Inner vows imprison us to think and act only from the mold set by those inner vows.

HEART OF STONE AND INNER VOWS

To best understand how hearts of stone relate to inner vows, think of the heart of stone as a walled fortress. Life goes on inside, but access is very limited and well-guarded. Many try to scale the walls; most are “picked off” by skilled defenders. Those who persevere, wanting to minister to the pain and loneliness inside, often find they are scaling ladders roughly pushed away from the wall. Some may even be invited inside, but when they get too close, they are thrown from the wall and barred from the real life inside.

Inner vows, on the other hand, are the armor we wear in the hope it will protect and empower us. Since, however, the armor was forged from judgments, it chafes constantly and attracts more hurt and abuse. With it on, we are incapable of doing the work of the Lord, even when that’s exactly what we want to do. The armor binds and fetters us with our judgments against one another, and we head for certain defeat in the battle.