Lesson on a Hardened Heart

1.) Pray for Wisdom & Insight

2.) What is a hardened heart? Describe it. People with hardened hearts are so stubbornly set in their ways they can not turn to God for help through prayer. This is a dangerous situation! The Bible sometimes describes the hearts condition as a hard lump of useless clay or a hardened loaf of bread. The person is unable to receive any correction from people or God. The Word of God become useless.

**How does a person acquire a hardened heart?** It doesn't happen suddenly or all at once; but as a result of making a series of choices to disregard God's will. The person knows what the Word of God says but refuses to follow it! They need to understand that those who resist God long enough; will be tossed aside like hardened clay or bread because they stubbornly refuse to follow / obey Him. God just leaves them alone to struggle!

3.) How does the hardening process start?

The Potter and the Clay

Read: Jer. 18:1-6 (NLT)  1 The Lord gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, 2 "Go down to the potter’s shop, and I will speak to you there." 3 So I did as he told me and found the potter working at his wheel. 4 But the jar he was making did not turn out as he had hoped, so he crushed it into a lump of clay again and started over.

5 Then the Lord gave me this message: 6 "O Israel, can I not do to you as this potter has done to his clay? As the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand.

**What is God's purpose behind such action?**

Read: Rom. 9:18-23 (NLT) 18 So you see, God chooses to show mercy to some, and he chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen.

19 Well then, you might say, “Why does God blame people for not responding? Haven’t they simply done what he makes them do?”

20 No, don’t say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to argue with God?

Should the thing that was created say to the one who created it, “Why have you made me like this?”

21 When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn’t he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into? 22 In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls, who are destined for destruction. 23 He does this to make the riches of his glory shine even brighter on those to whom he shows mercy, who were prepared in advance for glory.

We are created objects which all deserve death but the Creator has control over the objects. The Creator uses us to demonstrate the riches of His glory through His mercy.

**How does our response to the Creator's action affect our heart condition?**

Spiritual hardening begins with an attitude of self-sufficiency, security in one's self, and self-satisfaction. The real danger is at some point, repeated resistance to God will yield an actual inability to respond, which the Bible describes as the hardened heart. Insensitivity indicates...
advanced hardening.

**Name a few situations you have observed which caused the hardening in people.** Baby with a defect. Early death of a spouse or parent. Spouse affair. Severe injury or physical disease. Loss of job. Disrespect or rejection. **Why God did you allow these things to happen to me?**

4.) **Warning signs for developing hardness.**

A. **Ex. 4:21 (NLT)**  
21 And the Lord told Moses, "When you arrive back in Egypt, go to Pharaoh and perform all the miracles I have empowered you to do. But I will harden his heart so he will refuse to let the people go."

Warning Sign? Disobeying. Pharaoh's willful disobedience led to his hardened heart.

B. **Deut. 8:6-14 (NLT)**  
9 It is a (Promised) land where food is plentiful and nothing is lacking. It is a land where iron is as common as stone, and copper is abundant in the hills. 10 When you have eaten your fill, be sure to praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

11 "But that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today. 12 For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, be careful! 14 Do not become proud at that time and forget the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt."

Warning Sign? Having wealth and prosperity. Taking the Lord's blessings for granted can cause us to feel as if they were owed to us.

C. **Ps. 95: 8-11 (NLT)**  
8 The Lord says, "Don’t harden your hearts as Israel did at Meribah, as they did at Massah in the wilderness. 9 For there your ancestors tested and tried my patience, even though they saw everything I did. 10 For forty years I was angry with them, and I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts turn away from me. They refuse to do what I tell them.’ 11 So in my anger I took an oath: 'They will never enter my place of rest.'"

Warning Sign? Rebelling and being discontented. Suffering or discomfort can create an attitude that blames God.

D. **Proverbs 29:1 (NLT)**  
Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept criticism will suddenly be destroyed beyond recovery.

Warning Sign? Rejecting a deserved rebuke. Rejecting God's gift makes our necks stiff and our hearts hardened.

E. **Zech. 7:11-13 (NLT)**  
11 "Your ancestors refused to listen to this message. They stubbornly turned away and put their fingers in their ears to keep from hearing. 12 They made their hearts as hard as stone, so they could not hear the instructions or the messages that the Lord of Heaven's Armies had sent them by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. That is why the Lord of Heaven's Armies was so angry with them. 13 "Since they refused to listen when I called to them, I would not listen when they called to me, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies."

Warning Sign? Refusing to listen. Refusing to listen leads to a loss of spiritual hearing.

F. **Matt. 13:11-15 (NLT)**  
11 He replied, "You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not. 12 To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them. 13 That is why I use these parables, For they look, but they don’t really see. They hear, but they don’t really listen or understand. 14 This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says, ‘When you hear what I
say, you will not understand. When you see what I do, you will not comprehend. 15 
For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they 
have closed their eyes— so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and 
their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.’

Warning Sign? Failing to respond. Listening to God with no intention of obeying produces an 
inability to obey.

5.) What will God do when we repent?

**Read: Eze. 36:22-27 (NLT) 25 "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. 
26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take 
out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. 27 And I 
will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey 
my regulations.

How can we help each other?

** Read: Heb. 3:12-14 (NLT) 12 Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make 
sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the 
living God. 13 You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that 
none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. 14 For if we are 
faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will 
share in all that belongs to Christ.

To prevent having an unbelieving heart, stay in fellowship with other believers, talk daily 
about your mutual faith, be aware of the deceitfulness of sin (it attracts but also destroys), 
and encourage each with love and concern.

6.) What are you going to do with this information?

Go to your "Secret Place" to soak and talk honestly with God. Acknowledge God as your 
Potter / Creator and his ways are supreme to yours. Repent and accept His ways. 
This hardening can start with anger, jealousy, or any other sin but it grows like a quick 
spreading cancer! It is really directed towards God because it grows out of a belief that God 
can not change a situation. This rebellion and disobedience is directed towards God!

Please pray for help and ask for a new softened heart if you have a condition like this. God 
the Father is full of mercy!