



Unlock Your Heart

Message Series
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NOTE TO THE TEACHER

This series can be adapted and used to teach to a congregation or a small group.

This series contains Message Notes for the teacher and outlines for the student. In the Message Notes some words are in blue; the blue words indicate what content is on the outline. The underlined words in the Message Notes indicate blanks on the outline.

Ideas to promote the series:

- You could purchase locks and keys to hand out at the beginning of this series.
- You could decorate the stage with doors and door frames.

Series: Unlock Your Heart
Part 1: You Hold the Key

Series: “Unlock Your Heart” is a series about the incredible life that is available to the one who has totally surrendered themselves to God’s amazing love.

Anyone can have an area of the heart that is locked away so that no one can see what is being hidden or controlled. We alone hold the key that will unlock those areas and allow God to have access into our whole heart.

What is living?

Living is experiencing God’s presence and sharing the kind of life He has for us.

His life includes: His power, blessings, provision, health, peace, wisdom, etc.

Life outside of God

Life as we know it, is not the life God intended for us to have. God’s intention for us was to be innocent of sin and the consequences of it. We were created to know God’s glory, His holiness, His joy and peace, His health, His provision, His rest. God didn’t pull away from mankind; human beings pulled away from God, from the God-kind of life.

1. We experience failure

Apart from a relationship with God, men and women make mistakes. We do things that are outside of God’s plan for us. Has anyone ever made a mistake? We all make mistakes. Has anyone ever felt like they’ve failed at something? Has anyone ever felt like they weren’t enough?

2. We experience hurt.

Mistakes bring us trouble. Wrong choices cause us to suffer. Whether we hurt ourselves or someone else hurts us, everyone understands what it is to feel pain. We hurt ourselves, we hurt others, and others hurt us.

3. We experience fear.

What if you got a bad grade at school? Do you want to show your parents? What if you wrecked your car? Would you want to call them? What if your car got towed and you needed your parents help? Is that an easy call to make? No, why? We’re afraid of the punishment. People are that way with God sometimes. They don’t want Him to see certain parts of their lives, things that are deserving of punishment.

4. We experience [guilt](#)

Most of us have experienced the guilt of disappointing ourselves. Most of us are also familiar with the guilt that follows disappointing someone else. We may have felt responsible for hurting someone else. Guilt is a feeling that we experience from making wrong choices.

5. We experience [shame](#)

Genesis 3:7-11

Another feeling that goes along with sin is shame. Shame makes us feel unworthy or not presentable. Shame makes us want to cover up or hide ourselves from others.

Some people hate to be seen in a bathing suit. They don't want people to see where they aren't perfect. We try to do the same thing with our hearts. If you hide or isolate yourself, you distance yourself from someone who loves you. I don't want you to see that part of me. If you saw it, you may not accept me.

What does God want?

God wants [all of you](#)

Have you ever had someone want to drop by at the last moment? Have you ever rushed to pick up the house? You shove things in a drawer, close the door to junior's room... we don't want them to see the mess inside. We get nervous if they get close to walking into that room we don't want them to see.

Shame, guilt, and fear. Keep us from letting God get too close.

Sometimes we think we need to fix ourselves up before we can present ourselves to God. So we try and try, but it doesn't work. We can never be good enough for God. It's not about us being good enough. We'll always be lacking. We'll always be too short to get any net. We try and try and can't figure it out.

What's the answer? We have to know that God loves us. We can't trust God, if we don't know His love. Then we can let God in.

Romans 5:5

It's about His love for us. He will cloth us with His grace, cover up those unsightly things.

Jesus knows where the messy rooms are in our hearts. We might have the front door open, but there might be a room that we've locked to others. He asks us, "Can I see that room, that drawer?" He knows the messy parts of our lives are parts of our hearts that we're holding back from Him. He doesn't want to go there because He wants to embarrass us; He wants to go there because He knows that part is keeping us at a distance from Him. If He can touch that part, He can heal it. He can restore it. He can give it new hope.

When you know He loves you, you'll let Him in. He won't judge you. He won't reject you. He won't feel less about you.

The only way to have a relationship with God is total surrender. 99 percent is not enough. God wants to be the lord of your life, that means 100 percent.

When we hold back a part of our hearts, we want to have control of that area of our lives. We don't want to turn it over to God. Control is the opposite of the surrender that God wants from us.

Why would someone lock their heart?

1. They want to control not being hurt again.

When our girls were small and would accidentally fall down and scrap an elbow, we would ask to see their injury. They would pull back that elbow, afraid that we would touch it and make it hurt worse. People can be the same way. If you get too close to their pain, they might withdraw or become defensive. They are protecting themselves. People can be the same way with God or with us. They don't want to feel hurt or ashamed or afraid. They know that feeling and they don't want to experience it again.

2. They want to control a hidden pleasure

Pleasures – when someone desires something more than they desire God, sometimes they don't want to let it go. It could be breaking a commandment. It could be something in your lifestyle or in your environment that God wants you to let go. Something as simple as God saying, "No that's not for you." Or God could be tugging at your heart to do something and you're hesitant to obey Him - Jonah. Maybe someone has hurt you and God is asking you to forgive them and let it go.

3. They want to control money and things

Money, things – the Rich Young Ruler (Luke 18:18-30) is an example of someone who locked up his heart. He wanted control – loved his lifestyle. He didn't want to give it up. He wanted to do what he wanted to do with his money. He missed it. He could have lived a life by the side of the King of Kings. It wasn't a money issue, it was a love issue. What you treasure is where your heart is. Matt 6:19-21

4. They want to control personal success

Self achievement. Careers/Talent – For example, maybe you want to spend your life being an astronaut, maybe God wants something different. There's nothing wrong with being an astronaut, maybe you would make a great astronaut, but God wants something different with your earth time. There is a man who was a fantastic engineer. God called him to the mission field. He decided to obey. He could have made a lot of money, have a nice home, retirement. Now he's an old man, still working at JAARS in Waxhaw, NC, still

leaning on supporters for their financial support. He has spent his life serving God. If your time on earth were money, what would you spend it on? When all is said and done, what is really going to matter?

5. [They want to control their ministry](#)

We're all called to serve Jesus. We're all called to the ministry. What if God says I want you to serve me in an area and you say– “no they're not good enough for me, they're making mistakes, I don't agree with how they're doing things – so they hold back, not only from people but from God's will for their life. That ministry may be just what they're going to need to round off some rough edges or help them receive things they've been closed to before. We don't always know what's best for us. It takes humility to receive God's love.

You can't know the joy of being caught without the wonder of falling. You abandon what is secure, what is comfortable, what is solid, and you jump. It's a free fall without a parachute. No plan B. Only plan A, I'm going to obey God.

When we do, God moves. In our strength, we can only do so much. We can run and go so fast. But when we let go of control, God is like superman, who picks us up and causes us to fly.

God will say “give.” Give to missions, but we could use that money to meet our needs. He wants us to trust Him. God will say “reach out”, but we know we're not going to get anything out of it – how is it going to benefit us. God wants us to trust Him. Sometimes it doesn't make sense to our heads, but it makes all the sense in the world when you realize God wants 100 percent of our hearts. He's after us.

Rich Young Ruler.

When we don't hold back from Him, He doesn't hold back from us. Psalm 84:10.
Romans 8:

That's why He wants you free from sin. This is the mistake people make, they will wrestle with it, trying to make themselves presentable BEFORE handing themselves over to God. You can't do that. First of all, your goodness is like filthy rags to God. Secondly, there are many things that you can't fix about yourself. Sin can be addictive, controlling. It pulls you back in. If you give yourself to it in any way shape of form, it has you. If you think on it. If you fantasize about it. If you play with the idea of it. It can be something as difficult as pornography, drugs, homosexuality...or it can be something as simple as wanting something that God has said, for you, I don't want you to have it.

God wants us to have faith in Him. What is faith? It's being able to trust His love and relinquish control. It's loosing our white knuckle grip on life and freefalling. It's putting action to what we choose to believe about Him. And its personal. It's not about following a formula, but God will let you follow all the procedures and still not get what you want, and you're left thinking “faith doesn't work.” Why? Faith lets go of control. Do you know how many people try to “work the word, or work faith?” Do you know what that is many times? People trying to control God.

God, you have to keep your word, I'm holding you to Your promise. That's control, trying to manipulate God. Here's the kicker – faith let's go of control.

What do you want from Him? Healing is personal. Provision is personal. Success is personal. God wants to provide your needs, but He can't do that if you don't get close to Him. God wants you to have these things, but even more, He's like a father that wants a relationship with His child. He doesn't just want to meet your needs, He wants to be Your Provider. He doesn't just want to comfort you, He wants to be the one holding you in His arms. He doesn't just want to care for your body, He want you to look in the face of your healer. Why? He wants you to know that He loves you.

Faith is personal. God wants your attention – like a parent, sometimes you want your child to look in your eyes. God wants us to look in His eyes, trust Him, let go of control, and believe Him. He knows you better than anyone else. He'll knock on the door and ask to come into your house. You let Him in. What a great house you have. It's beautiful. It's all cleaned up for a nice presentation. But in your house you have a room that is just yours. It's a dream that you have for your own life. Jesus asks to go into the room. Sorry, it's locked. You can't go in there, but let's go to the game room and play some X-box. We'll enjoy ourselves out there.

But you cannot have a close relationship with Jesus until you let Him in every area of your life. He will only go where you allow Him to.

We hold the key

Rev. 3:20 “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

What if there's something in our hearts that we thought was gone, we tucked it away and forgot about it, but God knows it is still there and it is a problem for us. What if we have ways of thinking that are holding us back from what we're supposed to do. God has a way of bringing things to the surface. He may lead you through a difficult time in your life, but He has purpose in it. He needs you to see it in order to turn it over to Him. Sometimes in the Christian life, God has to remove things that might hurt us. Like removing a tumor – God has to get it out or it could harm us.

Maybe you've been hurt and you don't understand why God allowed something to happen. Maybe it was the loss of someone you loved. Maybe it was the loss of a business venture or a ministry. Maybe you feel like you lost yourself.

Maybe you are holding on to something you shouldn't be holding onto. God is saying let it go. It's not for you. Maybe you love yourself, your things, your money. God is tugging on your heart, and you are holding on. There can be no other loves in our lives. God wants to be our spouse. He wants us to quit dating other things in our lives. He wants us to commit to Him, total surrender. James told us that any type of sin is like adultery. James 4:4. True love makes a commitment. True love says “I only have eyes for you, Jesus.” You're the one that I want. I don't want anyone else.

This Wednesday is Valentines Day. Maybe you're married, maybe you're single, maybe you're divorced...let God be your Valentine today. Give your heart to Him, not just pieces of it, but the whole thing. If there is a part that you're holding back – maybe you're frightened of being hurt again, maybe you're afraid that if you make that leap God won't be there for you, maybe you want to hold on to something God has said "no" to, maybe you are holding back from saying "yes" to His call for obedience, maybe it's something else. Only you know.

This is the heartbeat of our church. We want to love people. If you're a single mom, we want to love you. If you are struggling financially, we want you here. If you have hurts and baggage, you are exactly the one that we want here with us. If you think you are a mess, we accept you with open arms. If you have anxiety of being accepted because of your race, you'll find variety is what we go out and search for – you are valued just like anybody else at the Life. If you wonder if you'll be treated with respect because of a shameful past, you should not that you have enough value that Jesus Christ would give His life for you. If you've hurt people, if you struggle with sin or anger, we'll walk toward God together. We want to see God restore you. Your future with God is bright. If you feel like a failure, if you feel like everything you touch turns to dust, trust God and open your heart. God will never fail you.

Not only will we love and accept you. We also commit to see you restored. We also commit to see you raised up and strengthened. We also commit to see you get back to the point where you go out and have some wins. This is what God is all about. This is what church is about. It's for real.

I John 4:18 "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."

Prayer. If you have an area of your life that you've hidden from God, unlock the door to your heart and let your Savior come in. He would never harm you. He would never shame you. He would never push you into something that you don't want to do. Let Him in.

5. You will be able to stand _____ in confidence _____

1 John 4:18 "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect (mature) in love."

6. You will experience more _____ of God's glory _____

II Cor. 3:18 "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

What is God's glory? - The essence of who He is and what He possesses. People received healing from Jesus Christ as a revealing of God's love for them. Because God loves you, God is healing you. Provision is an expression of God's love for you. Rest is an expression of God's love for you.

With unveiled face. An uncovered heart. Look at me. Transparent, exposed, holding nothing back. See it all – the good, the bad, the ugly. I don't want ownership of it anymore. I surrender it all to You. I'm not going to own the good, because my goodness is nothing compared to Your righteousness. I'm not holding on to the bad, trying to fix it or control it. It's not mine anymore, I'm giving it to you. I'm not holding on to the ugly. I've been through stuff. I have a past, I'm not holding onto it anymore. I'm giving it to you. I refuse to be identified with my stuff, I'm giving it all up to You. I would rather be identified with Your love, your forgiveness, your grace, your mercy, your righteousness, your power. I'm free.

Illus. holding onto something. I throw you a ball. You can't receive it. Why? Your hands are already full of something else. We have to let go of control in order to receive God's love.

In order to receive what God has for us, first we have to take off the lid and open our hearts to Him. Secondly, we have to empty ourselves in complete surrender. Third, God will pour Himself into our hearts.

It's not a one-time event. We can choose to put that lid back on any minute of any day. We can close up to Him, even though we have Him in our hearts. Daily we must choose to trust God's love for us.

Life with God is like a journey. Sometimes we don't go forward with Him. Sometimes we fall short of knowing His full glory.

1. Some might stop on the journey. We refuse to go any farther with God. They're satisfied to stay where they're at. Knowing God is a daily pursuit.
2. Some go back to where they came from.
3. Some try to go in another direction. They become interested in satisfying their curiosities and desires. They want the approval of people. They want pleasure. They chase money so they can be self-ruled. When we aren't satisfied, God brings us back to where we left Him.

4. Some get distracted from the journey. We make ourselves busy right where we are instead of going forward. Distractions are often a way of avoidance.
5. Some continue to follow after God. They pay the price to press forward. They refuse to go backwards. They deny themselves of anything that would compromise their pursuit. They are determined not to be distracted by anything other than what God has for them. They're after the glory.

7. You will be able to effectively relate to others

You can receive love from other people. You don't have to earn their love. You don't have to be perfect before you are worthy of love.

You aren't damaged goods anymore.

Maybe people used you in the past. Maybe people didn't value you for who you were. Maybe they valued your talent or your skills. Maybe they valued your resources. Maybe they valued your sexuality. Maybe they valued your influence with people.

God found you. God restored you. God put a high value on you. Like a restored car, restored furniture, a restored home. You need to value yourself before you can expect other people to value you.

Romans 5:5 "...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit..."

You can give love to other people because God has loved you. You are now in a position where you are free to be the giver, not just the receiver.

What if they don't love me back? It doesn't matter. I can love people even when they don't love me back. Why? I don't need their love. I'm already filled with God's love. What if they hurt me? I know a Healer. What if they want to control or manipulate me? If I am totally surrendered to God's lordship, there are no handles for you to grasp onto. There are no buttons you can push. I'm controlled by Him.

8. You will be able to help hurting people

II Corinthians 5:14a "For the love of Christ compels us..."

Compels means "leaves no option." I have to do something with this love in my heart. God's love cannot leave people to die. It cannot leave people to suffer. It sees behind the veils, the locked hearts. It goes after them. It knocks on those closed doors.

Isn't God that way with us time after time after time? Does He ever give up? No. His love never fails, meaning it never stops, it never runs out.

His love compels us to give to missions, give to the poor, give our time, serve in children's ministry, be at church because we want to love one another, do our part to serve any newcomers, pray for the hurting.

We don't help the hurting because we're trying to be popular or noticed for being generous. We don't help the hurting because we want to grow and have influence. We help the hurting simply because we want to share the love we've experienced. How could we not?

I can't be self-centered anymore. It doesn't satisfy me. It's empty.

Not only has God put His love in your heart, but He also wants to pour His love out of your heart. It's not your love; it's His love. God is compassionate. Compassion compels you to action. Compassion will never be content until it is expressed.

When the Holy Spirit gets close to an area that a person doesn't want to go to, people sometimes pull away. They begin to avoid church. They begin to avoid Christians. They avoid reading the Bible. They avoid anything related to God because they are protecting their hidden parts. The Holy Spirit never pushes; He always draws. He knows when we begin to pull away. He would never violate our choice. As Christians, we should be the same way with hurting people.

The Love of God Liberates Us

[Luke 10:25-37](#) Good Samaritan

The Good Samaritan wasn't bound by culture, ignorance, or politics. Those things did not cause him to hesitate helping the beaten man. The Samaritan wasn't bound by fear, intimidation, or manipulation. The Samaritan wasn't bound by selfishness, hurts, disappointments, or shame. The Samaritan was free to be himself. He was free to love.

3. Guard what you allow to influence you.

Proverbs 4:23

Guard who you let into your heart. We should be reaching out to the lost. We don't isolate ourselves. But we are careful to guard ourselves so that we don't enter into temptation.

Guard our behavior. We need to put boundaries on what we allow ourselves to participate in.

Guard what you let in – tv, music, internet. Not because God wants to control you and keep you from having fun. But you become what you behold. You want love to rule in your heart- not disrespect, negativity, or sinful desires. That doesn't mean you go to extremes with self deprecation, but be led by the Holy Spirit.

Consecration is a big part of knowing God's glory. He is a holy God. If we want His presence in our lives, we have to be holy like He is holy. Our hearts have received His holiness, God continues to work on our soul, changing the way we think and act, to become more and more like Him.

4. Make the decision to love.

Romans 5:5

Our motive is to love people. God's love is in our hearts. Sometimes we have to be tough with people who need discipline or correction in their lives. Loving people is not being a people-pleaser. We don't love people because we want something from them or from God. We love them because it's part of our new nature. God's love is in us.

You may not feel like it. Emotions might still be hurt. Emotions might be filled with anger. Make the choice anyway. It's a matter of the heart. You can make the decision to love and still feel hurt. Choose to obey.

When you make the decisions to forgive someone, you aren't saying that what they did was okay. You aren't saying, "You were right, I was wrong." The original word for forgive in the Greek (NT) means "to loose." When you forgive, you are choosing to release that person from any judgment or consequences from you to them. You have turned that over to God. Make the choice not to be offended.

5. Lay your life down

Philippians 2:3-8

Surrender to God, yield to others as the Spirit of God leads you. Be careful who you yield to. Remember – you do have to guard your heart, you don't just give it away to anyone. Your heart belongs to God.

It's not just about you; life is also about sharing ourselves with others.

Die to self every day. It's a choice we make. That doesn't mean we let people walk all over us. We are led by the Spirit, knowing who we are in Him, and serving the people God leads us to serve.

6. Rely upon the Holy Spirit

John 14:16-17

Rely upon God.

The Holy Spirit is our helper. He helps us to love people. He helps us to overlook their faults. He helps us to be patient in their development. He helps us to bring them up a level.

7. Put love into action

James 2:26

II Cor. 5:14 God's love compels us. Leaves no option. His love, His compassion, stirs on the inside of us, compelling us to action.

Pray for friends. Pray for enemies. Choose to love them, release them. Matthew 5:44

Do good to those who love us. Do good to those who hurt us.

Romans 12:19-21 do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Enjoy life in the Spirit

Romans 8:6

This is freedom. This is real living. Take the high road, the road of the spirit.

The way of the spirit

If you want to know God, learn to open your heart to love. Let God live in you. If you want to know how to live the God-kind of life, learn to walk in love. Open the door to your heart and let God in. Open up the door to your heart and let people in. There is tremendous life and power available to us beyond the open door.

1. God is [love](#)

1 John 4:8b "...God is love."

God is love. Love is how the realm of the supernatural operates. Faith is a response to love.

2. The focus of Jesus' ministry was [love](#)

John 14:9 "...he who has seen me has seen the Father..."

Philippians 2:8, John 15:13, Hebrews 12:2

Jesus walked in power; Jesus walked in love.
Loved enemies. Prayed forgiveness for enemies.
Reached out to the hurting.
Strengthened the weak.
Went beyond the borders of religion.
Died to self. He put us before Himself. Made sacrifices.

Philippians 2

Focus on love and power will show up.
You can't work the things of the supernatural – God is not bound by a manipulative heart. Faith, which is surrendered reliance, is what pleases Him.

Heb 12: 2 "...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross..." Loved you...that's why He died. Love put Christ to death and power lifted Him up.
Salvation is the biggest miracle of all.

John 15:9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you, abide in My love."

Love like He loved. Unconditionally. Fully. Whole heart. Love God. Love People.
But people might fail us. Its not based on them. Its based on God. Love isn't based on who they are, its based on who He is.

John 13:35 as I have loved you, so you must love one another. Lay down your life for others. Let go of self for others. Prefer them before you. Serve others. Why is there joy in that? Because we are desperate to show someone else how much I love you. You take it. You have it. You be comfortable. You be blessed. You enjoy it. Parents enjoy seeing their children succeed more than they do. They would rather be sick than to see their children sick. Spouses focus on the other one being happy. Love focuses on others.

3. God's kingdom operates by [love](#)

Galatians 5:6b "...faith working through love."

Mark 11:22-26; John 13:34-35; Colossians 3:13b

Jesus to disciples – why did you doubt? Little faith – you doubted Me. You doubted my care and love for you. Little faith, little love.

The more you receive from God, the more you can give. Must be humble to receive. Receive grace, healing, provision. Ever have a hard time accepting a gift? Must be able to receive before you can give. Surrender to receive.

Open your heart wider and it will become a larger container for the glory of God.

Run from a judgmental, critical spirit. Guard your heart from offense. Satan knows there's a bigger picture than just that irritating sister Sally – he wants to make you ineffective for the kingdom of God. Shut down your pipes, or at least clog them up. Close up your container.

Guard your heart. Prov. 4 Be led by the Spirit. Guard it from sin. Guard it from evil. Guard and protect it from being abused.

Mark 11:23 faith in God - your love – nothing is impossible. Vs 25 forgive or you won't be forgiven.

Don't sweat the small stuff – earthly stuff. Eternity is at stake. So what if someone criticizes you? You aren't the first one. Die. Die to self. Die to know glory.

Love will lay down its life.

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

4. If you can't receive love, you can't receive [anything fully](#).

Romans 8:32

5. Power without love means nothing

I Corinthians 13:1-3

James 2:26

God's power rides on God's love.

Live from your heart.

6. Real love has action

II Corinthians 5:14 "For the love of Christ compels us..."

Compel: "to leave no other option"

I John 3:18 "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Col. 3:13 "forgive as the Lord forgave you." How? Lean on God's love in your heart. Don't try to do it in your own strength. Your love is limited. God's love is not. Ask for help. Spiritually grow up. A mature Christian is a forgiving Christian. Feed yourself the right diet – don't be influenced by haters, criticizers, the media, a worldly mindset. Revenge is not sweet. Surrender is sweet. It's a heart issue. Someone might be dead and you still hold resentment. You're not hurting them – you're hurting yourself!

New nature. You have to love – its in you. What's happening to me? You're transforming.

Without love, actions mean nothing – no effect.

Live from your heart

John 15:9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you, abide in My love."

You operate, live, from the heart. It's the heart that is your core. If the core isn't right, nothing else is right. God looks at the heart. The world is what it is because of the hearts of mankind. Its not all about what you do, but its about how you do it.