



# Hoboken Church

## 5-Day Devotional: Beyond the Polished Surface

### Day 1: The Heart God Sees

**Reading:** 1 Samuel 16:7; Hebrews 4:12-13

**Devotional:** God doesn't evaluate us by our spiritual resume. While we carefully curate what others see—our church attendance, our service, our giving—God looks past the polished exterior straight into our hearts. Like the Pharisees at dinner with Jesus, we can master the external rituals while harboring greed, pride, or selective love internally. The truth is both terrifying and liberating: nothing is hidden from God's sight. He sees the version of ourselves we keep private, the thoughts we'd never post, the attitudes we carefully conceal. But this exposure isn't meant to shame us—it's meant to cleanse us. Today, ask God to search your heart. What would He find that no one else sees? Invite His transforming work to begin from the inside out.

### Day 2: Transformation, Not Performance

**Reading:** Ezekiel 36:25-27; 2 Corinthians 5:17

**Devotional:** Jesus doesn't want behavior modification; He wants heart transformation. The Pharisees had mastered external religion—they tithed their spice racks and followed elaborate washing rituals—but their hearts remained unchanged. God's promise through Ezekiel reveals His true desire: to remove our hearts of stone and replace them with hearts of flesh. This isn't something we can accomplish through willpower or discipline. Only surrender brings transformation. When we give Christ not just our money but our pride, not just our time but our greed, not just our service but our sin, He performs surgery on our souls. Stop trying to clean up the outside of the cup. Instead, surrender the inside to the One who can make you genuinely new. What needs surrendering today?

### Day 3: Love That Costs Something

**Reading:** 1 John 3:16-18; Micah 6:8

**Devotional:** The Pharisees calculated their percentages and gave faithfully, yet Jesus rebuked them for neglecting justice and love. They had empty rituals without sacrificial relationships. Real love isn't convenient—it's costly. It means making someone else's problem your problem. It's driving to the airport when it's inconvenient, sitting with someone in their pain when you're tired, sharing groceries when your budget is tight. Jesus calls us to a "both-and" faith: faithful giving AND showing up for people. Love in deed and truth, not just in word and talk. This week, whose problem could become yours? Who needs you to interrupt your comfort and lean into their need? Real love doesn't just send resources from a distance—it shows up, puts its arm around someone, and says, "Let's figure this out together."

## Day 4: The Danger of Subtle Pride

**Reading:** John 5:44; Proverbs 4:23

**Devotional:** Jesus warned the Pharisees that they loved the best seats and elaborate greetings—they craved visibility and recognition. His question cuts deep: "How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" You cannot chase human praise and God's glory simultaneously. Pride doesn't announce itself loudly; it drifts in subtly, gradually reshaping our motivations. We start serving to be seen, giving to be recognized, leading to be affirmed. The antidote? Hidden faithfulness. Choose the lower seat. Give credit away. Serve where no one notices. Pride dies in obscurity. Guard your heart carefully, because what's inside will eventually spill out. Are you playing for the audience of One, or are you performing for the crowd?

## Day 5: The Fingerprints We Leave

**Reading:** Romans 2:24; Matthew 5:14-16

**Devotional:** Jesus told the Pharisees they were like unmarked graves—spiritually contaminating everyone who came near them. Their polished religion without transformed hearts caused God's name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles. This is sobering: when our lips profess faith but our lives lack love, humility, and justice, we confuse people about Jesus. We leave fingerprints on every soul we encounter. The question is: are they fingerprints that draw people toward Christ or push them away? Your coworker, your neighbor, your family member—they're forming their opinion of Jesus partly based on their contact with you. This isn't about performing perfectly; it's about living authentically surrendered. When Christ truly has your heart—not just your Sunday morning appearance—His love, grace, and truth flow naturally through you. What fingerprints are you leaving this week?

*Reflection Questions for the Week:*

- **Where am I polished but not surrendered?**
- **Where is my love selective rather than sacrificial?**
- **Where is my pride subtle but shaping my heart?**
- **What does the Holy Spirit want me to hand over to Him today?**

