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## A New Heart

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*"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."*

*Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV*

## **A New Heart**

What a semester it's been already! From Student Week of Prayer to PraXis I have heard countless testimonies pointing out how God is truly at work. Today I'd like to add to all that by sharing what He's been up to in my life.

But first, I have to start with a confession: as much as I want Him to be, I've not always allowed or made Jesus to be the Main Thing this year.

With an endless "To Do" list, long work days, bridges to build and relationships to maintain, I struggled with severe stress and anxiety, fatigue and lack of confidence last semester. Was I free? No.

A mentor pastor of mine recently reminded me, "Whatever shackles you is the hard place in your heart. And, if you're shackled to something you cannot come to God with your whole heart."

When senior theology major Julie MacLafferty approached me this summer and described her desire to see revival on our campus, I told her it was a confirmation of everything I had been feeling myself. As we prayerfully prepared for PraXis I eagerly anticipated our community to experience the Spirit's presence. What I didn't expect though, was how much God was wanting to transform me personally. Just a few days into PraXis I heard the Spirit whisper to my heart:

*"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm."*

*Joel 2:12-13 NKJV*

Each night that I engaged in PraXis I felt God drive a wedge into my stoney heart. After all, who's the major player in our verses for today from Ezekiel? Our Heavenly Father! *HE promises:*

1. I will give you a new heart
2. I will give you a new spirit
3. I will take our your stoney heart
4. I will give you a heart of flesh
5. I will put my spirit in you
6. I will cause you to walk in my statutes
7. I will cause you to obey my rules

Through PraXis, Jesus took me on a journey to experience reconciliation, forgiveness, restoration and healing. Completely surrendered, I invited the Holy Spirit in to do open-heart surgery on me, yet again.

Today, I'm celebrating everything God is doing in my life - for setting me free from anxiety, fear, and bitterness - and praising God that the name of Jesus truly does have all power, authority and victory over all things!

As we continue to learn how to better make the Main Thing the main thing in our personal lives as well as our first priority as a campus family, may God pour out His Spirit to give us new hearts of flesh desiring to follow Him with utter abandon!

**Challenge:**

1. What's the next step God is convicting you to take in your walk with Him?
2. Find a friend or mentor to share with, pray with and hold one another accountable to whatever God may be asking you to do.
3. Visit [www.southern.is/PraXis](http://www.southern.is/PraXis) to find continuously updated resources for your next step with God, and engage with our community in continued revival.

-Pastor Anna Bennett