

# The Oak Grove Oracle

(Family News & Views of the Oak Grove Church of Christ)

Meeting Weekly At Our Building Located At:

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## How Tender Is Your Heart?

**A**t tender steak is a highly prized commodity in foodie circles. People will pay big bucks for tender beef. Cattlemen make their living trying to raise beef that will ultimately be judged not only for its delicious juicy flavor, but also for its tenderness. Guess what? There's a parallel in the spiritual realm. God appreciates, yea delights in spiritually tender hearts.

As always, Jesus provides a perfect example of what it means to be a "tender-hearted" individual. Over and over again throughout the four accounts of the earthly life of Christ, we see the picture of a loving, compassionate, merciful, tender-hearted, sympathetic, and empathetic Jesus. As He had the opportunity to help alleviate human suffering, He unselfishly used His power to do so. He rejoiced with those who met success, and He wept with those who suffered loss. He then, as the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, left us a perfect example of compassion, mercy, and love to follow (1 Pet. 2:21-25).

Likewise, if we are to be faithful followers of Christ, we must strive to develop a tender heart, which can be pricked by God's Word, and which can feel compassion for the plight of other wounded souls and hearts in this old wicked world. In Romans 12:15, true disciples of Christ are enjoined to prove the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, by "Rejoicing with them that rejoice, and weeping with them that weep." Time and again, the Scriptures exhort us to fill our tender hearts with compassion and mercy, as we do good to all men, but especially to our brethren (Phil. 2:1-4, Col. 3:12-14, 1 Pet. 3:8-9, Gal. 6:1-10). Paul beautifully summarized our responsibility towards one another, in 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15, with this admonition, "Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

**F**ollowing his adulterous affair with beautiful Bathsheba, and then the cowardly murder of her husband, Uriah, sinful King David penitently prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). He then shared the key to the door of God's mercy when he so poignantly penned, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17). Jesus knocks at the door of your heart, but you must open the door and let Him in (Rev. 3:20). In one of Holman Hunt's most famous paintings of Jesus knocking at the door of someone's heart, perhaps you noticed that the door handle is only on the inside. Yes, God can accomplish some great spiritual renovations in your heart, but only if you unlock your heart and let him in. How tender is your heart to the pleading of God? Think about it!

**David A. McCain**