



GOD HAS A NEW STORY FOR YOU

with Jim Miner

▶ FOCUS VERSE

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;
I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.
Ezekiel 36:26

▶ DISCUSSION

- In general, of all the male friendships you have right now, what proportion are men you would call close friends, the kind you could have deep and/or difficult conversations with, and what proportion are more casual acquaintances with whom you mostly just share small talk?**
 - What are the traits or qualities that set the first group apart from the second?
- Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt like you didn't need anybody, like you could go it alone and human connections were just a burden?**
 - Where did that belief come from—a place of arrogance, perhaps, or a place of defeat, thinking nobody would ever want to get close to you?
 - How well did you do “going it alone”?
 - Was there an event or development that shook you up and caused you to rethink things?
- What's the longest grudge you've ever held? *(See Ephesians 4:32.)***
 - Who was it against, and what happened between the two of you that made you feel this resentment?



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- b. If you got over it, what made you finally decide to forgive and forget, and how did that experience change you?
 - c. If you're still holding on to this grudge, what's keeping you from offering forgiveness?
 - d. Are there any ways in which holding on to this anger might be keeping you from making progress in your life?
4. **Jim compares his resentments to “tapes” that he would play over and over in his mind, which made the past slights against him seem worse with each additional “viewing.”**
- a. How much time do you spend reviewing your “tapes”?
 - b. Why do you think you devote that much time to it, and what is that accomplishing?
5. **Talk about Jim’s reflections on marriage—particularly where he says we’re often sold a romanticized version that sounds like a Karen Carpenter song, but the reality is that marriage is much harder work.**
- a. Did you get married with this romanticized view in your head, and if so, did the reality of the hard work shake you in any way?
 - b. In what ways did you change yourself and your behaviors to adapt to that reality?
6. **How hard on yourself are you about your failings or mistakes? (See *Colossians 2:13*.)**
- a. Do you give yourself grace and vow to do better, or do you feel a deep sense of shame?
 - b. If you make a mistake or give into temptation and it’s an isolated incident, do you view it in the context of an otherwise Godly life, or do you think even one error makes you worthy of condemnation?
7. **Jim talks a number of times about struggling for much of his life to find his true identity.**
- a. When you think about your identity in Christ—the way God sees you—is your view mostly positive and hopeful, or negative and self-critical?
 - b. Is it sometimes difficult for you to grasp the idea of a forgiving God who sees you for more than just your worst aspects?

