

GUARD YOUR HEART

SCRIPTURE READING:

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov 4:23).

INTRODUCTION:

- A. “Picture your heart like an ancient walled city. The gates of your mind (what you hear and see) and your mouth (what you say) let supplies in and out.** If the guards fall asleep and open the gates to enemy forces like bitterness, jealousy, and toxic influences, the entire city suffers. But, if you diligently guard the entrance by keeping out the junk and letting in God’s truth, wisdom, and love, everything that flows out of your life will be pure and bring life to those around you.” – Philippa Hanna
- B. Based on Proverbs 4:23, the heart is the central control center of your entire being and the wellspring of life.** It does not relate to the physical organ pumping blood in your body, but rather to your invisible spiritual center. Because your deepest thoughts, desires, beliefs, and motives shape everything you say and do, this metaphorical heart acts as the unseen root from which your visible actions and character flow. Guarding your heart means actively protecting this inner sanctuary so that your choices and the ultimate direction of your life remain aligned with biblical wisdom and truth.
- C. Quotes About the Heart:**
- “The heart is the **“master control”** of life; A wrong heart always produces a wrong life. To allow sin into the heart is to pollute the entire life.” – Warren Wiersby
 - “Be careful how you think. Because your thinking results in actions that have either a positive or negative affect upon your territory (sphere of influence {source of everything you do}).” – D. Paul Montague
 - “The heart is the great vital spring of the soul, the fountain of actions, the center of principle, and the seat of motives. The heart is the center of the thoughts and feelings – out of which conduct comes.” – John James
- D. Breakdown of Key Hebrew words in Proverbs 4:23:**
- **“Keep”** – to watch, guard, keep close or maintain; to protect the treasure inside.
 - **“Heart”** – mind, will, thinking, seat of appetites; dictates how a person thinks, reasons, and acts.
 - **“All Diligence”** – above all things; above all; above every other thing that must be guard, guard your heart.
 - **“For Out of It”** – for from it or because of it; comes the consequence.
 - **“Issues of Life”** – outgoing extensions or source – springs of living; our actions, speech, habits and destiny are the outward streams, fed entirely by the internal reservoir of our hearts.

PROPOSITION:

In this Bible Study, we will explore five practical ways to Guard Your Heart: (1) Identify the Priority of the Heart, (2) Guard your Sensory Gates, (3) Take Captive Every Thought, (4) Uproot the Hidden Roots of Resentment; and (4) Entrust your Life to the Supreme Protector.

I. IDENTIFY THE PRIORITY OF THE HEART (Prov 4:23)

The heart is the core of our spiritual life which requires the highest level of diligence.

A. The Heart Defines Our Character

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov 23:7).

1. The heart reveals our subconscious, true beliefs, and hidden motives. A person becomes what he deeply believes in this heart.
2. Character is the sum of a person’s moral and mental qualities. It is not a reputation (what others think you are), but a person’s identity (who you are when no one is looking).

The heart holds the true intentions. The heart that values greed, the character becomes selfish. If the heart values love, the character becomes generous.

B. The Heart is the Source of Our Words

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).

Our speech reveals our real underlying beliefs, actions, and motivations. What is in a person’s heart will come out in his words and actions. Bitter and hateful words reveal a wounded heart.

C. The Heart Directs Our Life Path

“⁵Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Prov 3:5-6).

When the heart is aligned with God, the person’s steps and choices aligns with God’s will. We must trust God to have complete direction and control of our lives and He will direct our paths.

Study Question:

In what ways can we apply the principle of Guarding our hearts in our relationships with others?

II. GUARD YOUR SENSORY GATES (Prov 4:25)

“Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee” (Prov 4:25).

What a person allows into his mind through his senses will eventually settle in his heart.

- **“⁸ But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. ¹⁹ For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matt 15:18-19).**

A. Guard Your Eyes From Compromise

“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me” (Ps 101:3).

1. Be intentional in choosing to turn away from media and images that cause temptation. Be committed to living a life of integrity and purity for God.

2. **Avoid anything that might lead to moral or spiritual corruption.**

- **“I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?” (Job31:1).**

- **“²⁷ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: ²⁸ But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt 5:27-28).**

B. Guard Your Ears From Toxic Speech

“The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with” (Prov 17:14).

Protect your heart by rejecting (do not listen to) gossip, slander unfounded rumors, false accusations, and ungodly advice that harms our perspective with others.

C. Guard Your Mouth From Speaking Deceit

“Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee” (Prov 4:24).

Active heart protection involves refusing to participate in dishonest, harsh, or corrupt speech about others.

- **“Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips” (Ps 141:3).**
- **“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph 4:29).**
- **“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile” (Ps 34:13).**
- **Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see**
 Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see,
 Oh, be careful, little ears, what you hear,
 Oh, be careful, little tongue, what you say,
 Oh, be careful, little hands, what you do,
 Oh, be careful, little feet, where you go.
 There’s a Father up above looking down in tender love.

III. **TAKE CAPTIVE EVERY THOUGHT** (2 Cor 10:5)

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor 10:5).

Guarding your heart requires active mental security to filter our destructive attitudes.

A. Cast Down Imaginations and Pride

“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) – (2 Cor 10:4).

1. Believers are in a spiritual battle against Satan. The weapons used by Believers are not physical or fleshly in nature.
2. Believers use divine strength, which comes from God, in the spiritual battle in guarding his heart and to overcome strongholds (false beliefs or sinful patterns that resist God’s truth).
3. The divine weapons are the Word of God and prayer.

B. Fix Your Mind On What is Pure

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil 4:8).

1. Guard your heart by replacing harmful and hateful thoughts by focusing on things that are honorable and praiseworthy.
2. Believers are called to focus on what aligns with God’s truth as revealed in His Word. Live a life that reflects God’s character – Be Christlike.

C. Test Your Thoughts Against God’s Truth

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

Evaluate your inner monologue against the Bible to see if the thought comes from God, yourself or Satan.

1. We should not believe everything we hear. Just because someone says the message is from God does not necessarily mean it is so. Check it out against the Bible.
2. There are people who profess to be Christians, but teach **“another gospel.”** (Gal 1:6-10).

D. How to Test if a Message is From God

1. Search the Scriptures yourself.

- “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

- “³⁹ Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. ⁴⁰ And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (John 5:39-40).
2. What does the messenger teach about God and His Word? What is the lifestyle of the messenger? Is the messengers focus on God or on himself?

Study Questions:

1. How can focusing on what is true and honorable impact Guarding the Heart?
2. In what ways can the example of the Berean Christians in Acts 17:11 inspire you to be more diligent in studying the Scriptures.

IV. UPROOT THE HIDDEN ROOTS OF RESENTMENT (Heb 12:15)

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Heb 12:15).

Guarding your heart is an on-going process to pull out negative thoughts and emotions before they take root.

“Like a small root that grows into a great tree, bitterness springs up in our hearts and overshadows even our deepest Christian relationships. Bitterness comes when we allow disappointment to grow into resentment, or when we nurse grudges over past hurts. Bitterness brings with it jealousy, dissension, and immorality. When the Holy Spirit fills our lives, however, he can heal the hurt of bitterness. – (Life Application Study Bible – Heb 12:15)

A. How to Handle the Hidden Roots of Resentment

1. Deal quickly with anger and resentment

- “²⁶ Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: ²⁷ Neither give place to the devil” (Eph 4:26-27).

Resolving conflicts and anger quickly prevents the enemy from establishing a base in your heart.

2. Cleanse your heart through confession

- “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Forgiveness acts a spiritual cleansing agent that washes away guilt and hidden sin.

3. Release offenses through forgiveness

- “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col 3:13).

Forgiving others protects your own heart from becoming hard, cold, and bitter.

B. Forgiveness

In his book [Lee: The Last Years, Charles Bracelen](#), Charles Bracelen Flood reports that after the Civil War, Robert E. Lee visited a Kentucky lady who took him to the remains of a grand old tree in front of her house. There she bitterly cried that its limbs and trunk had been destroyed by Federal artillery fire. She looked to Lee for a word condemning the North or at least sympathizing with her loss. After a brief silence, Lee said, "Cut it down, my dear Madam, and forget it." It is better to forgive the injustices of the past than to allow them to remain, let bitterness take root and poison the rest of our life. (Michael Williams- Precept Austin).

- "If you are suffering from a bad man's injustice, forgive him lest there be two bad men." – Augustine
- "If we really know Christ as our Savior our hearts are broken and cannot be heard, and we cannot refuse forgiveness." – D. Martyn Lloyd
- "Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude." – Rev. Dr. Martin Luther, King, Jr.
- "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph 4:32).

Study Questions:

1. How does understanding Christ's forgiveness toward us helps us in Guarding our Heart?
2. What are some practical ways we can cultivate a tender heart toward those who have wronged us, according to Biblical principles?

V. ENTRUST YOUR LIFE TO THE SUPREME PROTECTOR (Phil 4:7)

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:7).

A. Surrender Through Prayer

- "Be careful for nothing; but in *every thing* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil 4:6).

"Be careful for nothing" - do not worry. We are to turn worries into prayers. Do not worry – pray more to Guard Your Heart against the nature of the flesh. Everything means everything. There is nothing too great or small for God's loving care.

B. Meditate on Scripture

- "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps 119:11).

Storing God's Word in our hearts creates an internal shield against temptation. It is a deterrent to sin – it will keep us from sin. God's Word should be a vital guide to all we do.

- Jesus quoted Scripture when Satan tempted Him in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11).

C. Submit to Christ's Authority

- “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Col 3:15).
- 1. Allow the peace of Christ to act as the final authority over your emotions and decisions.
- 2. **“Rule in your heart”** means that Believers should allow God’s peace to act as the decision-maker in their lives, guiding their thoughts and actions. The Believer is to allow the peace of God to guard his heart and mind.

Study Question:

How can a person let the peace of God rule in his heart, especially in times of conflict and stress?

Memory Verse:

“³ Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. ⁴ Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties” (Ps 141:3-4).

CONCLUSION:

- A. **“The enemy of your soul rarely uses a head-on, obvious attack to destroy your life.** He doesn’t knock down your front door. Instead, he digs tunnels. He slips under your guard through a small compromise, a hidden habit, a bit of media entertainment, or a lingering seed of resentment.
If you are only watching for the ‘big sins’ out there, you will miss the toxic attitudes creeping up from beneath your notice. This is why King Solomon didn’t say to just check the perimeter occasionally; he said to **guard your heart with all diligence, more than all other guarding.**
- B. **“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).**

C. A-B-C’s of Salvation



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“... the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa 40:8).