

GUARD YOUR HEART

PROVERBS 4:23-27

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INTRO: The physical heart of a person is something that is absolutely essential to his life and well-being. In fact, the heart is the central organ of the body that propels the blood into the arterial system by which it is conveyed to the remotest extremities of the body. When one has a diseased heart, his life is limited greatly. A GOOD PHYSICAL HEART CONTRIBUTES TO A MEANINGFUL AND ACTIVE LIFE. But even more important is the moral heart of a person, which is the INNER SELF THAT THINKS, FEELS AND DECIDES. The moral heart is more important than the physical heart because though the physical heart is essential to physical life on earth, the moral heart determines the character of life on earth as well as the destiny of life after physical death. So, HOW IS YOUR HEART? WHAT IS YOUR MORAL HEART CONDITION? NOTE OUR TEXT. “KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE, FOR OUT OF IT ARE THE ISSUES OF LIFE.”

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AN EXPLANATION OF VS. 23: To “keep thy heart with all diligence” literally means ABOVE ALL THINGS, GUARD YOUR HEART! In Proverbs 4, many priorities are taught including, 1) Fatherly instruction (Vs. 1), 2) Obtaining Wisdom (Vs. 5a), 3) Obtaining Understanding (Vs. 5b), and 4) Fleeing Evil (Vs. 14). But ABOVE ALL THESE THINGS, THE HEART IS TO BE GUARDED! WHY? BECAUSE “OUT OF THE HEART ARE THE ISSUES OF LIFE! In other words, ALL MATTERS OF LIFE STEM FROM THE FOUNTAIN OF THE HEART! Compare some scripture:

- 1) The moral heart is the source of character – Prov. 23:7
- 2) The moral heart is stubborn – Ecc. 8:11
- 3) The moral heart is madness – Ecc. 9:3
- 4) The moral heart is depraved – Jer. 17:9,10
- 5) The moral heart is the head of evil – Mk. 7:20-23
- 6) The moral heart is the source of speech – Lk. 6:45
- 7) The moral heart is the source of unbelief – Hebrews 3:12
- 8) The moral heart is the center of covetousness – 2 Peter 2:14
- 9) The moral heart is the source of faith – Rom. 10:10

WHEN YOUR HEART IS PURE, YOUR LIFE IS PURE. WHEN YOUR HEART IS CORRUPT, YOUR LIFE IS CORRUPT. HOW IS YOUR HEART?

SERIOUS QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- 1) Are you guarding your heart?
- 2) How can we guard our heart?
- 3) Will we guard our heart?
- 4) Does God want us to guard our heart?

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I. CONDUCT AN EXAMINATION OF YOUR HEART (EKG)

A. A Positional Exam

-Is your heart a heart of belief in Christ? Romans 10:9,10

B. A Practical Exam

1. Is your heart a heart of submission to Christ?
BE HONEST! YOU MAY FOOL OTHERS, BUT YOU CANNOT FOOL GOD!
DON'T PLAY THE HYPOCRITE! GOD KNOWS YOU AND GOD WILL DEAL WITH YOU ACCORDINGLY!
2. How can we examine the practical condition of our heart?
-Spend time in the Word of God – Hebrews 4:12

ILLUSTRATION:

II. CONSIDER SOME REGULATION OF YOUR HEART

A. Regulate your Speech Vs. 24

1. Put away a “froward mouth.” This speaks of **fraudulent, deceitful speech that twists, distorts, perverts and misrepresents that which is true.**
2. Put away “perverse lips.” This speaks of **speech that is not truthful.**
BOTH OF THE ABOVE ARE TO BE PUT “FAR AWAY FROM US.” If our tongue is not controlled by the Holy Spirit, our life will be a mess.
– James 3:5-12

B. Regulate your Sight Vs. 25

1. “Right on” means to **fix our eyes steadily upon an object before them, not allowing the gaze to deflect either to the right hand or to the left.**
2. The call is for us to LOOK AT THE RIGHT THINGS and determine to ONLY LOOK AT THE RIGHT THINGS!
3. To look at the RIGHT THINGS, we must steady our gaze on Christ!
 - a. The example of looking on Christ – HE DID THE FATHER’S WILL and looking upon Christ will enable us to do the same. John 5:30
 - b. The power of looking on Christ – It will enable our faith to be strong. Mt. 14:22-32. KEEPING OUR EYES ON CHRIST WILL BRING VICTORY. TAKING OUR EYES OFF OF CHRIST WILL BRING DEFEAT.

C. Regulate your Feet Vs. 26,27

1. “Ponder” means to **weigh out a matter and consider the consequences of the conduct.**
2. Before we walk anywhere, in our physical walk, or our spiritual walk, we are to consider the outcome from God’s perspective! Some questions to ask in pondering our path.
 - a. Is this path of the Lord?
 - b. Is this path going to glorify God or me?
 - c. Is this path in agreement with the whole counsel of God?
 - d. Is this path necessary in the conducting of God’s will?
 - e. Will this path lead me into sin?
 - f. Will this path hinder my testimony?
 - g. Will this path cause someone to stumble spiritually?
 - h. Does this path have the potential to lead someone to Christ?
3. Verse 27 tells us to stay on the right path always and correct any diversion right away!

ILLUSTRATION: