

## **Keep Your Heart With All Diligence** **Proverbs 4:23**

Introduction: The Proverbs are filled with wisdom. When we carefully study the book of Proverbs, we gain a valuable perspective to allow us to live in a godly way. This morning, I want to consider the instructions of Solomon in the fourth chapter. They are given from the perspective of a father as he teaches his son and prepares him for life and a life that is pleasing before God.

### **I. Guard Your Heart:**

#### **A. Why guard Your heart?**

1. It is extremely valuable.
  - a. We don't guard worthless things. There's a reason we don't have locks on our garbage cans.
  - b. The value of our hearts can be seen in the many places the heart is described. Throughout the Bible as a whole, God has desired the hearts of His people to be devoted to Him: Deuteronomy 6:5
  - c. If the heart is the seat of our relationship with God, there is nothing of greater value than the heart. Therefore we must guard it to ensure that we can continue to enjoy a relationship with God.
2. It is the source of all that you do:
  - a. From It Springs the Issues of Life. In other words, it is the source of everything else in your life. Your heart overflows into thoughts, words, and actions: Luke 6:45
  - b. Think of a natural spring where water flows to the surface of the earth from deep underground. If you plug up the spring, the flow of water stops. If you poison the water, the flow becomes toxic.
  - c. In the same way, if your heart isn't right, it will have an impact on every part of your life. We must guard our hearts because it determines character: Proverbs 23:7, Matthew 15:18-19
  - d. Our heart determines our speech: Luke 6:45
  - e. It is the source of Faith: Romans 2:29, 10:10
  - f. This is the reason Paul exhorts us to set our mind on things above: Colossians 3:5, Romans 8:5-6
3. It is under constant attack:
  - a. You are living in a combat zone... We are at war and the goal is our heart. Like the game, Capture the Flag, each team is attempting to take the opponents' flag while guarding their own. Satan is on the attack to steal our heart away from God.
  - b. Paul speaks of the spiritual battle we are engaged in and the need to stand firm: 2 Corinthians 10:5
  - c. The armor of God is designed to help us keep our hearts pure from the defiling influences of the world around us: Ephesians 6:11-18

#### **B. When we fail to guard our hearts:**

1. Solomon turned his heart away: 1 Kings 11:1-3
2. We open our hearts to being corrupted by sin:
  - a. Whether we are willing to admit it or not, sin damages our hearts. Whether we are actively involved in it or we are simply exposing ourselves to it, we are damaging our hearts.
  - b. It begins with a denial of the impact that sin has upon us. Whether we are outright denying our involvement in sin or how much exposure will affect us, This lack of honesty will prevent us from properly guarding our hearts.
  - c. While some may admit their involvement, they often try to minimize it. They try to convince themselves and others that it's no big deal. We might make statements like 'There's only a few words in it, I just like the beat, or I know they do things they shouldn't but I don't participate in it.'
  - d. Eventually we seek to rationalize our involvement and even justify what we are doing.
  - e. Finally, we openly celebrate the sin we are involved in or we are constantly exposing ourselves to. We will openly discuss the movies we watch, the music we listen to, the people we associate with, and no longer feel any guilt for the corrupting influence they present in our lives.
  - f. Sin by its very nature is corrupting. That is why it is so important that we guard ourselves so our hearts are not overtaken by it: Proverbs 6:27-28, 1 Corinthians 15:33
3. We place ourselves in danger of becoming callous: Ephesians 4:17-19, Jeremiah 6:15

### **II. How to Guard Your Heart:**

#### **A. Recognize the importance:**

1. A failure to guard your heart will result in spiritual failure. Remember the example of Solomon.
2. If we hope to dwell with God, we must guard our hearts to ensure they remain pure.

#### **B. Minimize the trash: Hebrews 12:1-2**

1. What lies do I believe about myself or the world around me, and how is that affecting my relationship with God?
2. What sins or bad habits in my life are weighing me down from a higher moral conduct?
3. We must not allow ourselves to be conformed to this world: Romans 12:2

#### **C. Store up the word of God:**

1. Keeping the word of God in our hearts will keep us from sin: Psalm 119:9-11
2. We can use the word of God to overcome temptation and to help us draw closer to God.

#### **D. Consider the context: 2:24-27**

1. The following verses deal with watching your mouth, your eyes, and your feet to ensure they are kept far from evil. (Be careful little eyes what you see)
2. When we keep ourselves from evil, we are making no provision for the flesh: Romans 13:11-14

#### **E. Pursue holiness: 2 Corinthians 6:14-18**

### **III. Guarding With All Diligence:**

#### **A. Guard it with your life, because it is your life.**

#### **B. Keep yourself: Deuteronomy 4:9, Proverbs 16:17**

**Conclusion:** Our heart is the seat of all that we say and do. If we hope to draw closer to God we will guard our hearts to ensure they remain pure. Guard your heart with all diligence.