Guard Your Heart
Proverb 4:23

Objective: Help @ learn to protect their hearts.
Reading: Proverb 4:20-27.
Memory: Proverb 4:23, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

Introduction:
1. The author of Proverb 4:23 says that your “heart” is the wellspring of life.
2. Not a 1 pound muscle that is under consideration. “Heart” is the attitude you have. When one is determined we say, they have a “lot of heart”. It is the seat of emotion. The inner determining volition. What drives you.
3. Matthew 15:16-20, “Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man ‘unclean’; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean.’”
4. The “heart” here is that from which our very lives derive, The “heart” is a derivation of what is inside us; of what we are in reality. You might have an evil heart, or a good heart.
5. We need and desire to have what Scripture refers to as a “good and noble heart”, but there are many forces at work that would rob us of life eternal by corrupting our hearts, so…

We need learn to guard our hearts! (HOW?)
In Proverb 4, Solomon, the wisest person that ever lived, after giving a long list of recommendations for spiritual welfare, teaches that above all, it is important to guard our hearts. He doesn’t really say, specifically how to do this, but there is an abundance of Scripture that seems to help us out in this. Let’s consider how to guard our hearts.

One of the sources for good information in guarding our hearts is probably the parable of the soils – in which their soils really represent men’s hearts. From here we can learn the heart-protecting principle of…

I. Spend Much Time In The Word.
A. Don’t let loose of it.
   1. Hold tight to the “seed”. Don’t let Satan snatch it away from you. In the parable, the seed is the Word of God. It is sown on the hard-packed path, and birds come and snatch it away before it can grow. Satan snatches the Word away.
   2. Matthew 13:19, “When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.”
   3. Make sure you understand the word.
   4. Proverb 4:7, “Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.”
      a. Sounds like it is worth more effort that 45 minutes once a week. It is more vital than that.
      b. If it costs you your house …, If it costs you your car…, If you have to choose between your hobby and spending time learning to understand the Word…
B. Take the Word into your heart.
   1. Luke 8:13, “Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.”
   2. Make sure the word gets deeply rooted in you. Apply it. Make it govern your life. Work with it to understand how it fits and applies to you.
   3. Anticipate being tested. If you f stumble, make sure you get right back up and grow some more.
   4. Pray for faith and patient endurance. Meditate on God’s teaching and use it constantly.
C. Give it a top priority in life.
   1. A higher priority than wealth or any of the things you worry about. More important than …
   2. Luke 8:14, “The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.”
One of the things that influences your heart the most is what you spend time thinking about.

**II. Control What You Think About.**

A. Refuse to dwell on wrong things.

1. Terminate any lustful thoughts.
2. **James 1:14-15**, “…but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”
3. Avoid sexual fantasies especially. A great deal of Proverbs is dealing with this trap.
4. Steer away from companions that entice you to think on bad things. **1 Corinthians 15:33**, “Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”

B. Determine to think on noble things.

1. **Philippians 4:8**, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”
2. **Colossians 3:1-2**, “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”
3. Requires self-control and discipline.

C. Let your thoughts lead to heavenly investments.

1. **Matthew 6:19-21**, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
2. “Store” is an action word. It relates to deed. Also relates to what you spend time and money on.

One of the most difficult things to do in our high paced society, but one of the very best things we can do to protect our hearts is to

**III. Spend Time Alone With God.**

A. Jesus did.

1. He routinely left the crowds and went off by Himself to pray.
2. Time for just escaping affairs of this world. Get away from its influence for a time.
3. 10 minutes over lunch. Park you car by side of road. Or a lengthy sabbatical retreat.
4. Time to think Godly thoughts. Time to FEEL the presence of God. To re-orient your life.
5. This is what the Old Testament Sabbath was all about! God is in control of things; not you.

B. Time for praying.

1. Pray that God would let you see with your heart.
2. Pray for an open and sincere heart. For a pure heart. Invite God to examine your heart;
   a. **Psalm 139:23-24**, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”
3. Pray that your heart not become calloused.
4. Present everything to Him in order to restore peace in your heart.
   a. **Philippians 4:6-7**, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

**So What?**

Don’t let Satan pull your heart off course and destroy the devotion of your heart to God. Don’t leave spiritual well-being to chance. Do things intentionally to protect your heart.

Intentionally, spend time with the Word, control your thoughts, spend time alone with God.

**Closing Prayer:**
We need learn to guard our hearts!

Let’s consider how to guard our hearts.

I. Spend Much Time In The Word.
A. Don’t let loose of it. Matthew 13:19 Proverb 4:7
B. Take the Word into your heart. Luke 8:13
C. Give it a top priority in life. Luke 8:14

II. Control What You Think About.
A. Refuse to dwell on wrong things. James 1:14-15 1 Corinthians 15:33
C. Let your thoughts lead to heavenly investments. Matthew 6:19-21

III. Spend Time Alone With God.
A. Jesus did.

So What?
Do things intentionally to protect your heart.

Action: (Specify an action or change you will make in your life as a result of this message.)

Date: (When you will check to verify that you have done it.)