

(D1: The Heart) Guarding My Heart (Proverbs 4:23)

The Wellspring Purpose and Disciplines:

Guarding My Heart (Proverbs 4:23):

"If the citadel be taken, the whole town must surrender. If the heart be seized, the whole man—the affections, desires, motives, pursuits—all will be yielded up."

"The heart—the citadel of man—the seat of his dearest treasure. It is fearful to think of its many watchful and subtle assailants. Let it be closely garrisoned." (Bridges, C. Commentary on Proverbs)

"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." Proverbs 4:23.

In Proverbs 4:23 There's a **what**, a **why**, and a **how**:

What:

Keep your heart (ESV/NKJV) Watch over your heart (NAS) Guard your heart (HCSB/NET/NIV)

How:

With all vigilance (ESV/NET) Above all else (HCSB/NIV) With all diligence (NAS/NKJV)

Why:

Because from it flow the springs of life (ESV/NAS) It is the source of life (HCSB) It is the wellspring of life (NIV)

I. WHY: FROM IT FLOW THE SPRINGS OF LIFE

Jeremiah 17:9 says: *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"*

Genesis 6:5 *Every intention of his heart was only evil continually*

+ Proverbs 4:23 *Heart is the source of all life*

= Romans 3:10-12 (Psalm 14:1-3) *"None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good no not one.*

BUT THE GOSPEL:

Ezekiel 36:26

2 Corinthians 5:17

Romans 6:17

The heart of man is his worst part before salvation, and it is his best part after it."
- John Flavel

"Till the Spirit has regenerated the soul, all outward religion will be but a dead and pitiful thing...to make up a religion of doing or saying something that is good, while the heart is void of the Spirit of Christ, and sanctifying grace, is the hypocrite's religion."
- *The Practical Works of the Rev. Richard Baxter*

"The poison of the soul is only sin, and this is like to poison in many respects. Poison, wherever it enters, stays not here, but diffuseth itself all over the body, and never ceaseth till it has infected all. Such is the nature of sin; enter where it will it creeps from one member of the body to another, and from the body to the soul, till it has infected the whole man; and then from man to man, till the whole family; and stays not there, but runs like a wildfire, from family to family, till it has poisoned a whole town, and so a whole country, and a whole kingdom. Woeful experience proves this true,"
- *Charles Spurgeon, The Treasury of David Volume 6*

II. WHAT: KEEP YOUR HEART

Psalm 119:9

*"How can a young man keep his way **pure**?*

By guarding it according to your word.

*With my **whole heart I seek you;**
let me not wander from your commandments."*

1 John 3:2-3

"Beloved, we are God's children now,

But what we will be has not yet appeared;

but we know that when He appears, we shall be like him,

because we shall see Him as He is.

*And everyone who thus hopes in Him, **purifies** himself as He is **pure.***

III. HOW: WITH ALL VIGILANCE

1 Kings 11:1-4

Water Purity Check

(In the shadow of the cross... "If you don't watch you will...weaken" –Mahaney)

1. Do you usually sense a presence or absence of affection for God?
2. Do you have an appetite for God's Word?
3. Are you daily shepherding your heart to God in His Word?
4. Do your daily routines (including entertainment choices, internet use, free time, priorities) reflect that you are guarding your heart above all else?
5. How do your prayers reflect the vigilance with which you guard your heart?
6. What lures your heart away from God? How diligently do you flee this?
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

"If my heart is the source of my sin problem, then lasting change must always travel through the pathway of my heart. It is not enough to alter my behavior or to change my circumstances. Christ transforms people by radically changing their hearts. If the heart doesn't change, the person's words and behavior may change temporarily because of an external pressure or incentive [the pain of discipline]. But when the pressure or incentive is removed, the changes will disappear."
– Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*