THE EXPEDITION

Week 3: Guarding the Trail

Primary Scripture: Proverbs 4:23 (CSB)

“Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life.”

Central Truth: The compromises that eventually take us far from God usually begin long before anyone else can see them.

1. Guard Your Heart Before You Have to Repair Your Life

Text: Proverbs 4:23

The heart includes our thoughts, desires, affections, intentions, and will. What grows within us eventually shapes how we live. Guarding the heart involves both what we allow in and what we cultivate within.

Key question: What are you feeding?

Supporting Scriptures: Psalm 101:3; Mark 7:21–23; Psalm 51:10; Colossians 3:2

Personal reflection: What am I allowing into or allowing to grow within my heart that makes holiness more difficult?

2. Never Make Peace With “Little” Sin

Text: James 1:14–15

James describes the progression from desire to sin to death. Song of Songs 2:15 pictures little foxes damaging a vineyard; in its original context the imagery concerns a relationship, but it illustrates how seemingly small things can cause serious harm. Confront compromise early and put sin to death.

Key truth: Sin will always ask you for something small before it asks you for something devastating.

Supporting Scriptures: Song of Songs 2:15; Matthew 5:29–30; Colossians 3:5

Personal reflection: What have I called “not a big deal” that God is calling me to confront?

3. You Need More Than Better Behavior—You Need a New Heart

Text: Ezekiel 36:26–27

God promises to give His people a new heart and His Spirit. Salvation is not behavior modification; it is God’s transforming grace through Christ. Believers who compromise should confess and repent, not seek another new heart. We pursue holiness because we belong to Christ, not to earn salvation.

Key truth: We do not fight sin to become God’s children; we fight sin because we are God’s children.

Supporting Scriptures: Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 51:12

Personal reflection: Where has my heart become less sensitive to God, and what would genuine repentance look like?

This Week’s Challenge: Heart Inventory

• Lord, what have I started tolerating that I once would have called sin?

• Lord, what am I defending that Your Word is confronting?

• Lord, where has my heart become less sensitive to You?

Respond: Name it. Confess it. Repent of it. Take practical action: remove access to temptation, establish a boundary, or seek accountability. **Don't manage the fox. Catch it.**

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

1. Why do major spiritual failures often begin with seemingly small compromises?

2. How do we distinguish Christian freedom from using "not a big deal" to excuse sin?

Digging Into Scripture

3. Read Proverbs 4:20–27. How does verse 23 relate to the instructions about the mouth, eyes, and feet?

4. What does the biblical "heart" include beyond emotions?

5. Read James 1:14–15. What progression does James describe, and where can it be interrupted?

6. How does Mark 7:21–23 challenge our tendency to blame circumstances for sin?

Making It Personal

7. What influences and habits are strengthening holiness or temptation in your life?

8. What are some "little foxes" believers commonly excuse?

9. Why can repeatedly ignoring conviction make us less sensitive to sin?

10. What is the difference between managing temptation and putting sin to death?

11. Why do practical boundaries and accountability matter if transformation comes from God?

Gospel & Transformation

12. In Ezekiel 36:26–27, who performs the work of heart transformation?

13. Why is Christianity more than self-improvement?

14. What does it mean to fight sin because we are God's children rather than to become His children?

Taking the Next Step

15. Which Heart Inventory question most needs your attention this week?

16. What concrete step of repentance and obedience can you take now?

Closing Prayer

Read Psalm 139:23–24. Pray for honesty about compromise, tender hearts, genuine repentance, and a deeper desire for holiness. Thank God for forgiveness and new life in Jesus Christ.