

GUARD YOUR HEART: IT'S A BATTLEFIELD - Proverbs 4:23

1. A PERSONAL REQUEST FOR WISDOM TO GUARD THE HEART - v 23a

THE HEART IS ESSENTIALLY VITAL AND IMPERATIVE *"Above all else"*

THE HEART IS EASILY VULNERABLE AND IMPRESSIONABLE *"guard with diligence"*

THE HEART IS EXTREMELY VALUABLE AND IMPORTANT *"your heart"*

WE NEED TO KNOW GOD'S WORD? Proverbs 4:1-9, Psalm 119:11

WE NEED TO TRUST GOD'S PROVIDENCE Proverbs 4:10-19

WE NEED TO OBEY GOD'S WILL? Proverbs 4:20-27

WE NEED GATEKEEPERS WITH PERCEPTIVE EYES & EARS Psalms 141:4, Job 31:1

WE NEED GUARDS WITH PROTECTIVE WEAPONS 2 Cor 10:4-5

WE NEED GUARDIANS WITH PIERCING SWORDS Hebrews 4:12

WE NEED GUARD RAILS WITH PROFITABLE MOTIVES 2 Timothy 3:16

2. THE PRIORITY REASON FOR THE WELLSPRING TO BE GUARDED - v23b

THE WELLSPRING IS THE SUPPLY OF ABUNDANT INEXHAUSTIBLE RESOURCES

THE WELLSPRING IS THE SANCTUARY AND DEEPEST CORE OF OUR BEING

THE WELLSPRING IS THE SOURCE OF CONTINUOUS INTENT AND DIRECTION

WE NEED TO HAVE A WELLSPRING THAT IS PLANTED ANCHORED IN TRUTH AND NOURISHED BY WISDOM AND GOD'S WORD - Luke 6:45

WE NEED TO A WELLSPRING THAT HAS PROTECTIVE BOUNDARIES THAT FILTERS DAILY INFLUENCES - Romans 12:2

WE NEED TO HAVE A WELLSPRING THAT IS PURE AND PRODUCES POSITIVE ACTIONS AND PURE SPEECH - John 7:38

WE NEED TO HAVE A WELLSPRING THAT IS STEADFAST ON A PATH WITH SPIRITUAL COMPASS AND NOT SIDETRACKED BY WORLDLY TEMPTATIONS - Ps 1, Pro 3:5-6

3. THE PURPOSED RESULT IS WORSHIP FROM A GRATEFUL HEART

YOU CANNOT DEFILE A BELIEVER WHO WALKS IN WISDOM AND KNOWS THE POWER OF PEACE AND TRUST - Colossians 3:15

YOU CANNOT DECEIVE A BELIEVER WHO WALKS IN THE WORD AND KNOWS THE POWER OF PROPER THEOLOGY - Colossians 3:16a

YOU CANNOT DEFEAT A BELIEVER WHO WALKS IN WORSHIP AND KNOWS THE POWER OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING - Colossians 3:16b-17

DO YOU HAVE A SOFT OR HARD HEART? Psalm 51:10

DO YOU HAVE A LOVING HEART? - Mark 12:30

STUDY AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Proverbs 4:23 states: *"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."* In Scripture, the "heart" represents your innermost being—your thoughts, desires, motives, and beliefs. Diligently guarding it means being intentional about what you allow into your soul, as it ultimately determines the course of your life.

Study Questions (Understanding the Text)

1. In your own words, what does it mean to "guard" something "with all diligence"? What specific actions do we take when guarding things we value (e.g., locking a car, securing a home)?
2. According to the context of Proverbs 4, does the "heart" simply mean our emotions? Based on verses like Luke 6:45, what does the heart encompass?
3. How do the "issues of life" (or our words, actions, and habits) physically flow from the heart?
4. Look at Proverbs 4:24-27. How do our mouths, eyes, and feet serve as indicators of what is currently going on inside our hearts?

Application Questions (Putting Truth into Practice)

1. **Evaluating Your Intake:** Just as a physical diet affects your body, your spiritual diet affects your soul. What are you repeatedly feeding your heart (e.g., the media you consume, the people you listen to, the time you spend on your phone)? Are these influences shaping you in a godly direction?
2. **Recognising the "Trash":** When your heart is not feeding on the things of God, what negative symptoms or "trash" overflow into your life (e.g., discontentment, anxiety, a quick temper, or relationship chaos)?
3. **Identifying Your Weaknesses:** In what situations or environments are you most likely to "let your guard down" and return to unhealthy habits?
4. **Guarding Your "Gates":** Our eyes and ears are the "gates" to our hearts. What is one concrete boundary you need to set this week to protect your heart from negative or corrupting influences?
5. **Replacing, Not Just Restricting:** Guarding your heart is not just about avoiding bad things; it is also about actively pursuing the good. What specific spiritual disciplines (e.g., time in the Word, prayer, fellowship) can you implement to fill your heart with truth?