

# Guard Your Heart!

Prov 4:23

## Introduction:

1. I recently saw the list of the Top Ten Most Secure Places
2. Let me tell four of most secure places on earth
  - a. Air Force One - the president's plane
  - b. Area 51 - Top secret Air Force base in Nevada. So secret that the military refuses to acknowledge that it even exists. Airspace for a thousand miles is cleared.
  - c. Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado - location of the US war room which is housed under 1800 feet of solid rock.
  - d. Fort Knox - The most secure place in the world. Fort Knox is located just south of Louisville, KY and it is home to the nation's gold reserve.
    1. Our nation's gold reserve is housed in a two-story building constructed of granite, steel and concrete.
    2. The building is 105 ft by 121 feet.
    3. The vault door weighs 20 tons and no one person has the combination. Various members of the staff must dial separate combinations known only to them.
    4. The vault is made from steel plates, steel I-beams, and steel cylinders laced with hoop bands and encased in concrete.
    5. The outer walls of the building are constructed of granite lined with concrete.
    6. Materials used in construction included 16,500 cubic feet of granite, 4,200 cubic yards of concrete, 750 tons of reinforcing steel and 670 tons of structural steel.
    7. The building is equipped with the latest security systems and protective devices.
    8. It has it's own emergency power system, water system and other facilities.
    9. In the basement is a pistol range for use by the guards.
3. There is another place that needs to be well guarded.
4. It is the most important place in the world, your heart / mind.

# I. The Duty

**23 Keep thy heart** with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

## A. What is the Heart?

- "Heart" = leb (labe) is used 592x in the OT
  - 508x = heart                      12x – mind
  - 11x – midst                      10x – understanding
  - It can refer to the mind, emotions, will, whole person
- The heart speaks of the inner life or the inner man

## B. What is It to “Keep” the Heart?

- “Keep” = “natsar” and appears 63x
  - “keep” – 38x                      “preserve” – 13x
  - “watchmen” – 3x                      “besieged” – 2x
- It means to guard, watch, watch over, keep
- Sometimes “keep” means to take care of something so that it is not lost

## C. Why Should We Guard Our Hearts?

- The Lord Considers the Heart - 1 Sam 16:7  
**7** But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.
  - Samuel looked on the outward appearance
  - But God looked on the heart of the sons of Jesse
  - Ps 44:21** Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.
- What Goes into Our Minds Stays There
  - Bad TV, movies, music, books, images stay in ur brain
  - Advertisers know this - if they can get their slogan into your mind, it is there to stay
    - "Oh I wish I were an...."
    - "You deserve a...."
    - "When E.F. Hutton talks..."
    - "Where's the ...."
    - Youth director around campfire was involved with pornography years earlier but can't get the images out of his mind

- c) *Don't let the garbage in - Kevin Inciyaki of Sierra Madre, CA was featured in USA Today some time ago. Kevin is 9 yrs old and he is fixated on garbage. He not only likes garbage, but he also loves garbage containers and garbage trucks. Early photos of him in the family scrapbook show him inspecting trash cans at Sea World. He has a photo collection of "Garbage Trucks of the World." Family friends on vacation around the world would send photos of garbage trucks from different countries. Kevin's mother, Marsha said, "It's been garbage since he was 2 yrs old. You have no idea what it is like having a child who has a passion for trash."*
  - d) *I wonder if that is the way God feels about us. Far too often our minds are not focused on the things of God but on the garbage dumps of the world.*
  - e) *Many Christians have a passion for trash. Trashy books and magazines, trashy TV shows, trashy movies, trashy sites on the internet, trashy language and trashy jokes.*
  - f) *In the early days of computers we had a phrase "garbage in - garbage out." It meant that if we put bad programming into a computer then we would get bad results. Let's get out of the garbage business.*
3. Satan is going to do all he can to fill our minds with garbage
- a) *He knows that if he can change our thoughts, he can change our attitudes*
  - b) *If he can change our attitudes, then he can change our actions,*
  - c) *If he can change our actions, then he can change our goals,*
  - d) *And if Satan can change our goals, then he'll be able to destroy our marriages, families and churches*
  - e) *De 4:9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently...*

## **D. How Do We Guard Our Hearts?**

### **1. Make Sure Christ Dwells in Your Heart**

**Eph 3:17** That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

- a) *Be sure that you are genuinely converted*
- b) *If Christ be in the heart, He will purify it*
- c) *He will defend it*

### **2. Keep the Word in Your Heart – Ps 119:11**

**11** Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

- a) *God's Word is a preservative and antidote to keep the heart free from spiritual infection*
- b) *The precepts of God's Word are prescriptions for guarding the heart*

### **3. Keep Close to the Lord's Church**

- a) *Be part of the Lord's church + attend faithfully*
- b) *During WWII ships crossed the Atlantic in convoys since there was protection in numbers*
- c) *On the journey to heaven let the fellowship of the saints be your convoy*

### **4. Keep Watch Over the Passages to the Mind**

- a) *To guard the border of a country, the border crossing stations must be manned and guarded*
- b) *All the ways into the country must be guarded*
- c) *To guard our hearts we must guard all the passageways into our minds*

#### **d) Guard Your Eyes**

(1) Job did this – Job 31:1

**1** I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

(2) A hole or crack in the foundation will let in snakes or rats or other critters

(3) In the same way, that old serpent tries to creep through the window of your eyes

(4) Eve first saw the forbidden fruit, then desired it and took it

(5) Achan saw the goods, then desired them then took them

#### **e) Guard Your Ears**

(1) Much sin is conveyed to the heart through the ears

(2) The apostles calls it "corrupt communication" in Eph 4:29 and it corrupts the heart

(3) Keep your ears open to God and closed to sin

5. Guard Your Thoughts – Jer 4:14b

**14b ...** How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

a) *Impure thoughts make a way to sin*

b) *David let his heart rove into impure thoughts and this led to adultery – 2Sam 11:4*

6. Be Committed to Communing with Your Heart

**Ps 4:4** Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

**Ps 77:6** I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

a) *Meditate on the Lord, examine your heart*

b) *Check out your motives, attitudes, actions*

7. Sir Walter Raleigh, a great sea captain in the days of Elizabeth I of England was a great adventurer. He was a favorite of the queen, but not of her successor James I who condemned him to death. The executioner, whose sympathy evidently was with the prisoner, had no joy in his gruesome task. Hoping to ease Raleigh's last moments the executioner told him exactly how to place his head on the block to ensure swift decapitation. The prisoner thanked him saying, "It matters little, friend, whether or not the head is right so long as the heart is right."

## II. The Manner of Performing the Duty

**23** Keep thy heart **with all diligence**; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

### A. Many People Today Focus on Heart Health

1. Some restaurant menus highlight heart healthy menu choices
2. Today much health education is focused on keeping the heart healthy
3. People have their cholesterol checked
4. People change their diets to guard against heart disease
5. Soldiers going to battle protect their hearts

## **B. Your Heart is to Be Guarded at All Costs**

1. We need the same zeal as those who focus on heart health
2. Guarding our hearts should receive highest priority
3. Solomon tells us to guard our hearts with all diligence
4. Literally he says, “keep your heart with all keeping” or “guard your heart with all guarding”
5. The reason that there are so many causalities spiritually is because the heart is often ignored
6. If the fort is taken, then the whole town must surrender and if Satan captures your heart then he has your desires, affections, motives and pursuits
7. "With all diligence" tells us that this is a constant warfare and will require much spiritual energy
8. Avoid having a double heart - Ps 12:2  
*2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*
9. Avoid having a hard heart - Pr 28:14  
*14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.*
10. Avoid having an unbelieving heart - Heb 3:12  
*12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*
11. Avoid having an unclean heart - Ps 51:10  
*10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

## **III. The Reason for the Duty**

**23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.**

### **A. The Heart is the Central Focus of Life**

1. Is not this a plain allusion to the arteries which carry the blood from the heart through the whole body, and to the utmost extremities? As long as the heart is capable of receiving and propelling the blood, so long life is continued. Now as the heart is the fountain whence all the streams of life proceed, care must be taken that the fountain be not stopped up nor injured. A double watch for its safety must be kept up.

2. So in spiritual things: the heart is the seat of the Lord of life and glory; and the streams of spiritual life proceed from him to all the powers and faculties of the soul. Watch with all diligence, that this fountain be not sealed up, nor these streams of life be cut off.

### ***B. All of Life Springs from the Heart***

1. If the heart is not clean, then everything issuing from it will not be clean.
2. Until the fountain be cleansed, all the streams which issue from it must therefore be impure.
3. What we do is a product of the heart
  - a) *What we say is evidence of what is in our hearts*  
**Mt 15:18** But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. **19** For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: **20** These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.
  - b) *Your heart is like the reservoir for a large city.*
    - (1) If terrorists could poison the water in the reservoir, then they could harm a vast number of people and effect a widespread area.
    - (2) Satan, the first terrorist, knows that if he can poison your heart, then he can corrupt your life.
    - (3) Your behavior is determined by the condition of your heart.  
**Lu 6:45** A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

### Conclusion:

1. I was saddened a few years ago to hear of the death of Steve Irwin, the crocodile hunter. I was not shocked that he died, for he faced dangers on a daily basis. But I was surprised at the way he died. About the only way a stingray could kill someone is to stab him directly in the heart with that barbed spine. Who would have thought that the crocodile hunter would go in this fashion?

2. Everything in the Christian life is a matter of the heart
  - a. Salvation is a matter of the heart
    - a. The heart of man is the source of man's lostness  
**Jer 17:9** The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?
    - b. Likewise, the heart of man is where salvation takes place - Rom 10:9-10  
**9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
    - c. Salvation involves more than just head knowledge
  - b. Sanctification is a matter of the heart
    1. Outward sanctification may be just turning over a new leaf - Isa 29:13  
**13** Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:
    2. True sanctification begins in the heart – Dan 1:8a  
**8** But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank...
  - c. Service is a matter of the heart
    1. Its not the "what" but the "why" in service - Matt 6:5
    2. Service from the heart is the only service God recognizes - Col 3:23; Deut 10:12