

GUARD YOUR HEART

Proverbs 4:23 (KJV) Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Proverbs 4:23 (NLT) Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do.

- We are the watchmen, the doorkeepers for our own souls. We determine what is allowed in, which in turn determines who we are!
- If you were driving on a busy highway and saw an off-ramp sign that said, "DO NOT ENTER," would you resent it or would you appreciate it? That sign is there to keep you from danger – it is a negative command with a positive result. That's the way it is with the God's commandments; they are given not to produce pain, but to provide protection. When you play by God's rules, you always win in the end!
- **THE BIBLE DEMANDS THAT CHRISTIANS HAVE PURE HEARTS!**
1 Timothy 2:8 *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*
- **BENEFITS OF A PURE HEART:**
 1. **SALVATION** – Matthew 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*
 2. **CONFIDENCE** – Hebrews 10:22a (CEV) *So let's come near God with pure hearts and a confidence that comes from having faith.*
 3. **ANOINTING** – Hebrews 1:9 (NLT) *You love what is right and hate what is wrong. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.*
- **THE WORLD TEMPTS ME TO ALLOW EVIL INTO MY HEART.**
- While I am trying to lead a decent, restrained life, TV and movies propagate the notion that everybody else is having a wild, debauched time and that I may be missing out.
- That is the true power of mass media – the power to redefine normal. The harmful behavior that we see glamorized not only conveys powerful messages of what's ACCEPTED, but what is EXPECTED. The unreal world of the media becomes, over time, a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- About 350 characters appear each night on prime-time TV, with an average of 7 of them murdered every night. If this rate applied in reality, then in just two months, everyone in North America would be killed – and the last one left could turn off the TV!
- Every year on prime-time TV, there are 65,000 sexual references. Seven out of eight of the sexual encounters in TV dramas involve extra-marital relations. Reality? A 1994 University of Chicago study showed that both sexual satisfaction and frequency is greater among married people than among single people. But in Hollywood, the only kind of sex that seems to be banned is intimacy between husband and wife!
- The media is a seducer! In the film "Indecent Proposal," a character is offered a million dollars to spend one night with a billionaire. It became the topic of conversation on talk shows, in offices and schools. The film implied that everyone has a price! But that is not true!
- It's not just in movies! Recent Jerry Springer Show topics included:
 - The Babysitter Stole My Husband!
 - I'm In A Lesbian Affair With My Niece!
 - Baby, I've Been Bad!
 - Prostitution Sex Scandals
 - I Want To Marry My Daughter!
 - I'm Sleeping With My Brother and My Sister!
 - My Daughter Married My Husband!
 - My Dad Stole My Wife!
 - I'm Cheating With Your Dad and Sister!
 - Lovers Battle It Out!
 - I Will Break The World's Sex Record
 - War Of The Wounded Lovers!
 - Explosive Transsexual Affairs
 - I'm Marrying My Sister!
 - My Mom Is Sleeping With My Boyfriend!
 - Revenge Of The Jilted Lovers!
- It would be laughable if the effects were not so tragic on our society! Due to the increasingly permissive views towards sex today, over 40% of married women and nearly 50% of married men have had an extramarital affair (researchers Gilbert Nass and Roger Libby). And this has a direct effect on our teenagers who are not finding an example of faithfulness to follow. 1/5 of North American children have lost their virginity by the age of 13!
- These statistics are only slightly lower in the church world! Christianity Today found that 23% of its subscribers have committed adultery and 45% have acted inappropriately toward someone of the opposite sex.
- Almost all distinctions between the world and so-called "Christianity" are quickly evaporating:
 - 19% of Christians watched MTV this week (24% of non-Christians)
 - 70% of Christians subscribe to cable television (70% of non-Christians)
 - 76% of Christians watched a PG-13 or R-rated movie in the last three months (87% of non-Christians)
 - 9% of Christians watched an X-rated movie this quarter (16% of non-Christians)
 - 27% of Christians have been divorced (23% of non-Christians)
- The Single Adult Ministry Journal reported in January 1991 that, of Christian single men who attended church faithfully, only 33% were virgins. 35% had had four or more sexual partners, and 23% had been sexually active in the past six months.
- WE ARE IN A WAR FOR OUR VERY SOULS!
- **I NEED TO GUARD MY HEART IF I'M GOING TO REMAIN PURE!**

- Psalm 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.
- Romans 12:2a (NLT) Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.
- **Proverbs 23:7a** For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:
- The word "thinketh" comes from the Hebrews word "shaar" which means, "to split or open, to act as a gatekeeper." In other words, we are who we are because of what we allow into our minds! Whatever you let into your soul, that's what you will be!
- HUMAN BEINGS ARE NOT CONTROLLED BY THAT WHICH IS TRUE. THEY ARE CONTROLLED BY THAT WHICH THEY BELIEVE TO BE TRUE! Deceptions, lies and distorted perceptions can control us, even if they are untrue. This is the biblical concept of a stronghold – A PRISON IN THE MIND, BUILT BY THE DECEPTIONS OF THE ENEMY.
- **2 Corinthians 10:4** (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)
- "When people who fear snakes are shown a picture of a snake, sensors on their skin will detect sweat, a sign of anxiety, even though the people say they do not feel fear. The sweat shows up even when a picture is presented so rapidly that the subject has no conscious awareness of seeing it." (Reader's Digest, January 1996) WHY? Because once a concept, fear or philosophy has embedded itself into the recesses of the belief center, the mind considers it to be truth and functions accordingly. **WHAT IS BELIEVED TO BE TRUE WILL CONTROL THE PERSON, WHETHER IT IS TRUE OR NOT.**
- WE MUST GUARD OUR HEARTS! If strongholds already exist because we have allowed in unbiblical information, we must LAY SEIGE to them with spiritual weapons!
- **Proverbs 4:23** Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.
- The word "keep" in this verse is "natsar" which means "to lay siege."
- **John 8:32** And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
- Have you ever wondered why the truth of God's Word has not yet become reality in your life? To be honest, many times our experiences don't always line up with the Scriptures! Why doesn't the Word work?
- BECAUSE ALL TRUTH COMES IN SEED FORM! WHAT YOU DO WITH THE SEED AFTER IT IS PLANTED WILL DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT IT BEARS FRUIT IN YOU!

- We must plant the seed, and then work the process God has ordained! We must continually guard our hearts.
- The main reason people remain in bondage is that they refuse to make a permanent change in their actions!
- They make the false assumption that we can never change our actions until we first experience a change of feeling.
(changed feelings = changed thinking = changed behavior)
- But the practical truth for someone in bondage is the reverse!
(changed behavior = changed thinking = changed feelings)

Autobiography in Five Short Chapters (by Porcia Nelson)

Chapter 1 – I walk down the street. There's a deep hole in the sidewalk. I fall in. I'm lost, I'm helpless, it isn't my fault. It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter 2 – I walk down the same street. There's a deep hole in the sidewalk. I pretend I don't see it. I fall in again. I can't believe I'm in the same place, but it isn't my fault. It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter 3 – I walk down the same street. There's a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see that it is there. I still fall in. It's become a habit. My eyes are open, I know where I am. It is my fault. I get out immediately.

Chapter 4 – I walk down the same street. There's a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it.

Chapter 5 – I walk down another street.

- OUR WEAPON IN LAYING SEIGE TO STRONGHOLDS IS THE WORD!
- **Hebrews 4:12-13** ¹²For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.
- The word "opened" in verse 13 is the Greek word "trachelizo" which means, "to seize and bend back the neck, exposing the throat as with an animal being slaughtered or sacrificed." Graphic? Violent? VERY! WHY? Because this is serious business!
- **Psalm 66:18** If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:
- Being on guard consistently is the only solution. GUARD YOUR HEART!
- **WE MUST GET VIOLENT IN THE SPIRIT TO DEFEAT STRONGHOLDS IN OUR HEARTS!**
- **Matthew 11:12** And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.