



Guard Your Heart

Proverbs 4:20-27

The importance of the heart

- Mentioned almost 1000 times in scripture.
- Not the organ/muscle, but the seat of our lives.
- The control centre of our being.
- The spiritual part of us where our affections, emotions, and desires dwell.

The paradox of the heart

- We have a sick, sinful heart.

(Matthew 15:19; Jeremiah 17:9)

- God gives us a new heart & a new spirit.

(John 7:38; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:17)

The paradox of the heart

21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

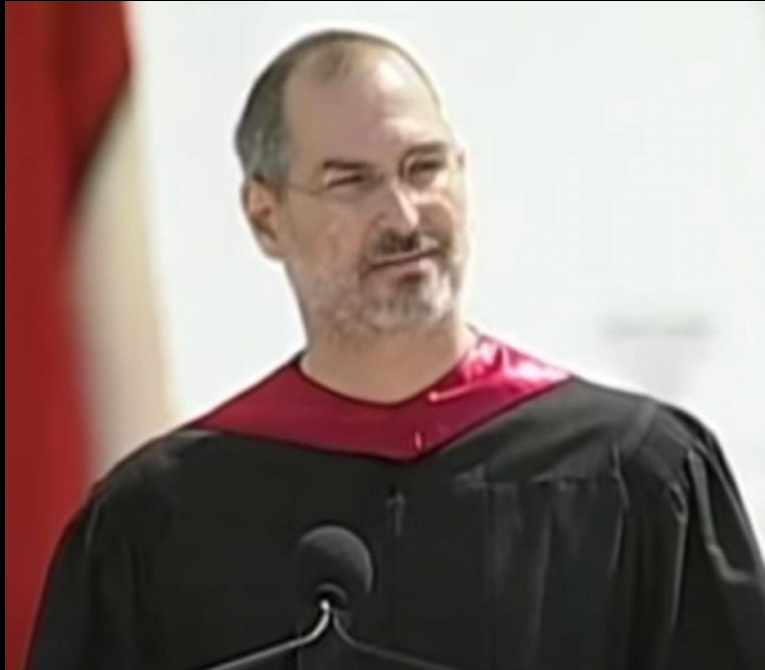
Romans 7:21-23 (NIV)

The danger of blindly following our heart

The world says...

- *Follow your heart.*
- *Listen to your heart.*
- *The heart wants, what it wants... etc.*

The danger of blindly following our heart



"...most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."

Steve Jobs (Apple Computer CEO)

The danger of blindly following our heart



*When will my reflection show
Who I am inside?
There's a heart that must be
Free to fly*

The world says... **The Bible says...**

- *Follow your heart.*
- *Listen to your heart.*
- *The heart wants, what it wants.*

Etc.

- *The heart wants what we feed it.*
- *Above all else **guard your heart!***

Proverbs 4:20-27 (NIV)

*20 My son, pay attention to what I say;
turn your ear to my words.*

*21 Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;*

*22 for they are life to those who find them
and health to one's whole body.*

Proverbs 4:20-27 (NIV)

*23 Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.*

*24 Keep your mouth free of perversity;
keep corrupt talk far from your lips.*

*25 Let your eyes look straight ahead;
fix your gaze directly before you.*

Proverbs 4:20-27 (NIV)

*26 Give careful thought to the paths for your feet
and be steadfast in all your ways.*

*27 Do not turn to the right or the left;
keep your foot from evil.*

Proverbs: 1-9 (a summary)

- King Solomon to his son => Get wisdom...
- Seek it and find it (2:5, 3:13-15, 4:7-9)
- God will grant it (2:6)
- Wisdom fills (1:23), protects (2:11), instructs (2:11), & delivers from evil (2:11)
- True wisdom runs from evil & runs toward God!



*Above all else,
guard your
heart, for
everything you
do flows from it.*

Proverbs 4:23



*Keep your heart
with all vigilance,
for from it flow
the springs of
life.*

Proverbs 4:23 (ESV)



*Above all else,
guard your
heart, for
everything you
do flows from it.*

Proverbs 4:23

*How do we
guard our
heart?*



How to guard our heart?

1. Listen to the right instructions (v20-22)

*²⁰ My son, pay attention to what I say;
turn your ear to my words.*

*²¹ Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;*

*²² for they are life to those who find them
and health to one's whole body.*



*Whose voice are
you listening to?*

How to guard our heart?

1. Listen to the right instructions (v20-22)

Proverbs 28:26

*Those who trust in themselves are fools,
but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe.*

Proverbs 21:2

*A person may think their own ways are right,
but the Lord weighs the heart.*

How to guard our heart?

1. Listen to the right instructions (v20-22)

John 6:63, 67-68

⁶³ The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

⁶⁷ Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life.

How to guard our heart?

1. Listen to the right instructions (v20-22)
2. Look in the right direction (v25)

*²⁵ Let your eyes look straight ahead;
fix your gaze directly before you.*

How to guard our heart?

2. Look in the right direction (v25)





*Am I looking in
the right
direction?*

How to guard our heart?

1. Listen to the right instructions (v20-22)
2. Look in the right direction (v25)

²² *"Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light.*
²³ *But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!*

Matthew 6:22-23 (NLT)

How to guard our heart?

1. Listen to the right instructions (v20-22)
2. Look in the right direction (v25)
3. Watch what you say (v24)

*²⁴ Keep your mouth free of perversity;
keep corrupt talk far from your lips.*

How to guard our heart?

3. Watch what you say (v24)

Proverbs 15:2

*The tongue of the wise commends knowledge,
but the mouths of fools pour out folly.*

Proverbs 15:28

*The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer,
but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.*



*How is my
speech?*

How to guard our heart?

3. Watch what you say (v24)

Luke 6:45 (NIV)

A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Luke 6:45 (ESV)

... out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

How to guard our heart?

3. Watch what you say (v24)



How to guard our heart?

1. Listen to the right instructions (v20-22)
2. Look in the right direction (v25)
3. Watch what you say (v24)
4. Watch how you walk (v26)

*²⁶ Give careful thought to the paths for your feet
and be steadfast in all your ways.*

How to guard our heart?

4. Watch how you walk (v26)

- *Psalm 1*
- *Proverbs 3:5-6*
- *Deuteronomy 5:33*
- *Galatians 5:16*
- *Colossians 2:6*

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."



*How is my
walk?*

How to guard our heart?

4. Watch how you walk (v26)

John 8:12

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

How to guard our heart?

1. Listen to the right instructions (v20-22)
2. Look in the right direction (v25)
3. Watch what you say (v24)
4. Watch how you walk (v26)
5. Be wary, lest you drift away (v27)

How to guard our heart?

5. Be wary, lest you drift away (v27)

*²⁷ Do not turn to the right or the left;
keep your foot from evil.*

How to guard our heart?

5. Be wary, lest you drift away (v27)

⁴ As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. ⁵ He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁶ So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

1 Kings 11:4-6



*Am I
drifting?*

How to guard our heart?

5. Be wary, lest you drift away (v27)

Matthew 6:24

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

How to guard our heart?

1. Listen to the right instructions (v20-22)
2. Look in the right direction (v25)
3. Watch what you say (v24)
4. Watch how you walk (v26)
5. Be wary, lest you drift away (v27)

What if we fail to guard our heart?

Matthew 13:10-15, Jesus warns us...

- We run the risk of our hearts going hard
- We become desensitized to the things of God
- We stop hearing God speak



*Above all else,
guard your
heart, for
everything you
do flows from it.*

Proverbs 4:23