

Course Title: GUARDING YOUR HEART

Goal of This Lesson: The purpose of this lesson is to emphasize the importance protecting the most important part of who you are; the heart.

Note: This lesson contains important principles about protecting yourself against wild thoughts, ideas, emotions, the world, the flesh, and the devil. Protecting your heart is essential to living in victory in Christ.

GUARDING THE GATES

We are going to be dealing with the four main areas of our spiritual being that impacts our thoughts, choices, actions and reactions. We are calling this “Guarding the Gates”.

Gates serve a dual purpose. Gates keep things in and they also keep things out, and we need to learn, as Christians, what to let into our spirits and what to get rid of.

Reading Assignment: Proverbs 4:20-27 NET

²⁰ My child, pay attention to my words; listen attentively to my sayings. ²¹ Do not let them depart from your sight, guard them within your heart; ²² for they are life to those who find them and healing to one's entire body. ²³ Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it are the sources of life. ²⁴ Remove perverse speech from your mouth; keep devious talk far from your lips. ²⁵ Let your eyes look directly in front of you and let your gaze look straight before you. ²⁶ Make the path for your feet level, so that all your ways may be established. ²⁷ Do not turn to the right or to the left; turn yourself away from evil.

Steve Irwin, the Crocodile Hunter was always dealing with poisonous, dangerous, and deadly animals. So many times he could have been fatally bitten by a snake, crushed and killed by a crocodile, or mauled to death by some wild beast. It was a shock and surprise to learn how he died. He made it a point to be extremely alert and guard his body from any surprise attacks by the animals and things he encountered. The one area that he thought would not be vulnerable turned out to be the most vulnerable. It was not his limbs or head but his heart that was unprotected. The 44-year-old, Irwin's heart, was pierced by the serrated and poisonous spine of a stingray.

The Word of God instructs us to keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it (the heart) spring the issues of life.” In other words, guard your heart above all else for it impacts everything you do.

This is not talking about the physical organ of the heart but is referring to the core of an individual's intellect, emotions, and will.

Standing Guard

Guarding your heart is more important than anything else you do. Your physical heart determines how and what your body can or cannot do. Your spiritual heart will determine what you will or can do spiritually.

The word 'heart' is used in Scripture as the most comprehensive term for the true inner person. It is the part of our being where we desire, think, and decide. It has been described as the place of conscious and decisive spiritual activity. It's the comprehensive term for a person as a whole; his or her feelings, desires, passions, thought, understanding and will, are at the center of a person.

This is the place where God speaks and dwells. It is the place where the Lord convicts and converts. The heart is where God directs, and protects. This is our innermost being, and is the place where the Lord wants to be.

According to the bible, you are what your heart is. It means that you become what is in your heart.

Reading Assignments: Please Read the Following Passages

(Proverbs 23:7 NKJV) For as he thinks in his heart, so [is] he. "Eat and drink!" he says to you, but his heart is not with you.

(Proverbs 27:19 NLT) As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person.

(1 Samuel 16:7 ESV) But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

People judge one another by the way we look. Looks can be deceiving, so the Lord looks directly at our hearts. There is no hiding, or pretending. We are who we are, based on what is inside our heart. This may be a harsh reality for some.

- It is out of our hearts where sin comes from.

Reading Assignments: Please Read the Following Passages

(Matthew 15:17-19 ESV) ¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? ¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

(Jeremiah 17:9-10 ESV) ⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? ¹⁰ "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

A Spiritual Heart Attack

Reading Assignments: Please Read the Following Passages

(Acts 5:3 ESV) But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?"

(John 13:2 ESV) During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,

There is a war being fought in the world today. It is a supernatural war fought between God and the devil, between heaven and hell, and it's being fought for your heart.

Reading Assignment: Please Read the Following Passage

(Luke 22:31 ESV) "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat.

The Conditions of The Heart

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, is a condition that will cause the walls of the heart chamber (left ventricle) to become thicker than normal. The thickened walls may become stiff and this can reduce the amount of blood taken in and pumped out to the body with each heartbeat. This condition can be treated but often goes undetected according to medical experts. It is simply called a hardening of the heart.

A spiritual hardening of the heart is a condition that creates the hardening of the conscience and lowers spiritual sensitivity due to an increase in carnality, and worldly ways. This condition can be treated, but unlike the medical side of things, it is apparent who's dealing with carnality and who isn't.

(Hebrews 4:5-7 NLT) ⁵ But in the other passage God said, "They will never enter my place of rest." ⁶ So God's rest is there for people to enter, but those who first heard this good news failed to enter because they disobeyed God. ⁷ So God set another time for entering his rest, and that time is today. God announced this through David much later in the words already quoted: "Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts."

These verses reveal that, when our hearts become hardened toward the things of God, it gets easier to be disobedient.

Disobedience leads to stubbornness, and stubbornness leads us to take our eyes off the Lord and make somebody or something else our main focus (1 Samuel 15:23). This is called idolatry. When we put our focus and personal devotion on people, places, and things, we are essentially moving our worship from the Lord onto to something else.

Pastor Ken Crockett says that when he first enrolled in seminary, he found an apartment room next to a railroad crossing. He wondered why the apartment rent was so cheap—and found out the first night. A train came through in the middle of the night, blasting its horn. It didn't just wake him up, but also nearly gave him a heart attack! Every night when the train came through, it blew the horn. At first he thought about changing apartments, but then he started getting used to the nightly awakenings. He would wake up for a few seconds, then go right back to sleep. Eventually he got where the train horn didn't even wake him up.

He said that experience caused him to realize that the same can happen spiritually. He hardened his heart to the train and couldn't hear it any more. The same hardening process occurs when God speaks to our hearts and we don't respond. Eventually, we stop hearing His voice because our hearts have become hard.

Reading Assignment: Please Read the Following Passage

(Proverbs 28:14 NET) Blessed is the one who is always cautious, but whoever hardens his heart will fall into evil.

The Heart Murmur

Reading Assignment: Please Read the Following Passage

(Philippians 2:14 ASV) Do all things without murmurings and questionings:

We have to be very careful what we allow to flow out of our hearts. Our children hear what our heart says. When living for the Lord and going to Church is not a priority for you, then it won't be a priority for those you love either.

Reading Assignment: Please Read the Following Passage

(John 6:43 NLT) But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about what I said.

In the Book of Exodus, the children of Israel murmured against God. They didn't realize that their grumbling was the result of selective memory (Exodus 16:3). Did they forget that they were also slaves? Grumbling was the result of a lack of vision and faith; they saw only death as the prospect. Grumbling against God's appointed leaders was grumbling against God.

Reading Assignments: Please Read the Following Passages

(1 Corinthians 10:6-10 NIV) ⁶ Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." ⁸ We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. ⁹ We should not test Christ, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰ And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel.

We have to be careful about what we allow to flow out of our heart. We have to be careful about allowing the murmuring to effect the condition of our heart.

Congestive heart failure is a life-threatening condition in which the heart loses its ability to pump enough blood to the rest of the body. With heart failure, many organs don't receive enough oxygen and nutrients, which damages them and reduces their ability to function properly.

There is spiritual congestive heart failure. When we allow things to build up inside, it begins to shut down our spiritual condition, and we begin to lose out with God.

Reading Assignment: Please Read the Following Passage

(1 Corinthians 12:26 ESV) If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Just like physical heart failure, spiritual heart failure is not an overnight condition. It takes time. A lifetime of wrong choices and decisions made by the heart results in heart failure. The danger of heart failure can result in stubbornness and resistance to the Holy Spirit.

Reading Assignment: Please Read the Following Passage

(Psalm 81:11-12 ESV) ¹¹ "But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. ¹² So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.

More good people will be lost because of stubbornness than because of blatant sin. There are backsliders who know they are lost. They know that if God comes back today, they are going to hell, yet their stubbornness will send them there.

Don't let stubbornness be the reason you are lost. Get pride out of the way and come home to the Father.

Reading Assignments: Please Read the Following Passages

(Proverbs 16:18 NKJV) Pride [goes] before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

(James 4:6 NKJV) But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

CONCLUSION

Please understand that the heart is the filter for every emotion, for every action, for every reaction, and for every decision. That is why we have to guard our heart. We have to guard the gates of our heart.

We need get closer to God and give Him your heart for safekeeping. Make Him the supreme object of your heart's affection and He will keep you. Give the Lord your heart, and every secret part.

Reading Assignment: Please Read the Following Passage

(Ephesians 4:16 ESV) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Love is concentrated the most in your heart. That's why it's so important to guard it.

**Assignment
WORKSHEET**

Student Name: _____
Print Full First Name Middle Initial Print Full Last Name

Church Name: _____ **Pastor:** _____

Date: _____

Take your time to review the lesson before you provide your answers.

1. According to the lesson, we are dealing with the four main areas of our spiritual being that impacts our thoughts, choices, actions and reactions. This is called what?

2. According to the lesson, what is the place where God speaks and dwells?

3. According to the lesson, there is a supernatural war fought between God and the devil, between heaven and hell, being fought. What are they fighting for?

4. According to the lesson, disobedience leads to stubbornness, and stubbornness leads us to take our eyes off the Lord and make somebody or something else our main focus. What is this called?

5. According to the lesson, we have to be careful about what we allow to do what?

6. According to the lesson, don't let stubbornness be the reason you are what?

7. According to the lesson, The Word of God instructs us to keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it (the heart) spring the issues of life.” In other words, guard your heart above all else for it impacts everything you do.

Please select the best answer: ☐ True ☐ False

8. According to the lesson, which verse is referenced that states “as a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person”? Please circle the best answer below:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| A. John 3:16 | D. Proverbs 23:7 |
| B. Acts 1:8 | E. Proverbs 27:19 |
| C. 2 Corinthians 5:17 | F. Matthew 15:17-19 |

9. According to Jeremiah 17:9-10, the _____ is deceitful above _____ things, and desperately sick, who can _____ it.

10. According to Proverbs 28:14, it states “blessed is the one who is always cautious, but whoever hardens his heart will fall _____”. Please select the best answer:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| A. into sin | D. into hell |
| B. into evil | E. into fear |
| C. into love | F. into faith |

11. According to the lesson, when we allow things to build up inside, it begins to s_____t down our spiritual condition, and we begin to _____ o _____ e out with God?

12. According to the lesson, you must give the Lord your heart and every _____ part. Please select the best answer:

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| A. wholesome | D. secret |
| B. consecrated | E. hopeful |
| C. dedicated | F. fearful |

Congratulations on completing this lesson. While some lessons may seem harder than others, you must always study to show yourself approved unto God, and reveal to others, what God has given you.
