

GUARD YOUR HEART

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Illustration: The village and the water well!

GUARD YOUR HEART

Proverbs 4:23 NKJV **“Keep (Guard) your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”**

A. OUR HEART: THE VITAL ORGAN

לֵב HEART in Hebrew

לָמָד Lamed Shepherd Staff - **“Authority”**

בַּיִת Beyt Tent - **“What is Inside”**

“Authority Inside” *The heart is the controlling voice of authority inside of man – it is the place where emotions and desires begin and drives the will of man towards action.*

- Proverbs 27:19 ESV *As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.*

B. GOD OUR CREATOR HAS CLAIM TO THE UNDIVIDED LOVE AND WORSHIP OF MAN

- Exodus 20:5 NLT *You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods...*
- Matthew 22:37-38 ESV *And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.*

C. THE FALL OF MAN INTO SIN HAS CORRUPTED THE HEART OF MAN

- Jeremiah 17:9 ESV *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*
- Matthew 15:18-19 ESV *But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.*

D. THROUGH THE WORK OF THE CROSS GOD GIVES MAN A NEW HEART

- Ezekiel 11:19 ESV *And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh...*
- Romans 5:5 ESV *...God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

E. GOD LOOKS AT THE HEART OF MAN

- 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.”*

- Matthew 6:21 ESV *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*
- Acts 13:22 ESV *...he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.'*

F. GOD TESTS THE HEART TO SEE WHAT IS IN IT (OUR MOTIVES)

- Deuteronomy 8:2 ESV *And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.*
- Jeremiah 17:10 ESV *"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."*
- Hebrews 4:12 ESV *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

G. DISEASES OF THE HEART

1. EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF

Hebrews 3:12 ESV *Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.*

TPT *So search your hearts every day, my brothers and sisters, and make sure that none of you has evil or unbelief hiding within you. For it will lead you astray, and make you unresponsive to the living God.*

2. PROUD HEART

Proverbs 18:12 ESV *Before destruction a man's heart is haughty, but humility comes before honour.*

3. BITTER AND UNFORGIVING HEART

Hebrews 12:15 ESV *See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.*

4. CALLOUSED, HARDENED AND COLD HEART

Matthew 13:15 and Acts 28:27 NKJV *For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'*

Matthew 13:15 and Acts 28:27 ESV *For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'*

5. CONDEMNED HEART

1 John 3:20-21 ESV *for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.*

6. MATERIALISTIC HEART

Psalms 62:10 ESV *Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.*

7. TROUBLED HEART

John 14:27 ESV *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*

8. OFFENDED HEART

Proverbs 18:19 TPT *It is easier to conquer a strong city than to win back a friend whom you've offended. Their walls go up, making it nearly impossible to win them back.*

The Deadly Trap of Offense

- It basically occurs when we do not process our wounds and hurts in a Christ like way.
- We never mature if we do not deal with our offences, because offences will come.
- Luke 17:1 NKJV *Then He (Jesus) said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come..."*

SKANDALON

- The New Testament Greek **word for "offense"** is *skandalon*, it literally means the stick of a trap to which the bait is attached, and which when touched springs the trap.
- Illustration: Bob Mumford – **"The Box Dropped!"**

An offense can wound our pride when we are not recognised for our good works or ministry.

- Matthew 11:2-6 ESV *Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "**Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?**" **And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."***

When we allow an offense to remain in our hearts, it causes serious spiritual consequences.

- An offense in itself is not deadly if it stays in the trap. But if we pick it up and consume it and feed on it in our hearts, then we have become offended.
- Offended people produce much fruit such as hurt, anger, outrage, resentment, hatred, bitterness, strife, attacks, wounding, envy, jealousy, insults, gossip, division, separation, broken relationships, betrayal, mistrust, and backsliding.
- Many times, it is far more subtle – **but it always speaks..., justifies itself...**
- Often those who are offended do not realize they are trapped because they are so focused on the wrong that was done to them.
- Our response to an offense determines our future.

- Once an offence is taken, a wall is erected, not just between the parties, but also over the heart that makes us unyielding inside. No matter what good things the other party may do or say, you cannot receive it anymore.

How do we break free from offenses?

- Matthew 5:23-24 ESV *So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*
- Proverbs 17:9-10 TPT *Love overlooks the mistakes of others, but dwelling on the failures of others devastates friendships. One word of correction breaks open a teachable heart, but a fool can be corrected a hundred times and still not know what hit him.*
- Romans 12:16-18 ESV *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honourable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*

CONCLUSION - THE ESTABLISHED HEART

Psalms 112:6-8 ESV *For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever. He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD. His heart is steady (established); he will not be afraid...*

- We are not moved by what we hear, see, or feel.
- An established heart is settled and fixed on the Word of the Living God – God and His Word are the same!

DON'T FORGET!

Proverbs 4:23 TPT *So above all, guard the affections of your heart, for they affect all that you are. Pay attention to the welfare of your innermost being, for from there flows the wellspring of life.*