

Spiritual Exercises for Guarding your Heart

Our heart is the essence of who we are, the deepest part of what is truly us. It is the source from which our dreams, desires, passions, motives, thoughts, emotions, decisions and actions arise – so it only makes sense that we consider another way to care for our hearts by spiritually guarding them. The Bible tells us that our heart determines the course of our life. Proverbs 4:23 tells us:

“ABOVE ALL ELSE, GUARD YOUR HEART, FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO FLOWS FROM IT.”

We’ve been reminded today about caring for our hearts physically but now here with our last few minutes I want to talk just a bit about “Spiritual Exercises for Guarding your Heart”.

- How many of you remember a song that you sang as a child or maybe you sang with your kids? It goes like this:

Oh be careful little eyes what you see, Oh be careful little eyes what you see, There’s a Father up above looking down with tender love, Oh be careful little eyes what you see.

I’m sure the person who wrote this didn’t intend for it to be a spiritual exercise for guarding your heart but I think it’s a powerful one....especially for any of us who own a TV set.

Proverbs 4:25 says this:

“LET YOUR EYES LOOK DIRECTLY AHEAD [TOWARD THE PATH OF MORAL COURAGE] AND LET YOUR GAZE BE FIXED STRAIGHT AHEAD IN FRONT OF YOU [TOWARD THE PATH OF INTEGRITY].

Many distractions enter our hearts through our eyes. I'm sure you can all think of examples of things that we take in with our eyes that may elicit strong emotion in us and we know it's probably not God's BEST for us. There are so many choices for us when it comes to what we view and most of them are right in our living room. You're eyes see, your mind processes what you see and the message can settle into your heart. We always try to shelter our kids from things they shouldn't see on TV right, but make certain to shelter yourself also. I don't mean we need to throw the TV out the window but in order to Guard our Heart, because everything we do flows from it, we have to remember: Be careful little eyes what you're looking at!

- Do you remember another verse to that song?

Oh, be careful little mouth what you say, Oh be careful little mouth what you say. There's a Father up above looking down with tender love, oh be careful little mouth what you say.

Another spiritual exercise to help us guard your heart:

Proverbs 4:25 says this:

DON'T TALK OUT OF BOTH SIDES OF YOUR MOUTH: AVOID CARELESS BANTER, WHITE LIES AND GOSSIP.

And another verse in the book of Matthew Chapter 12 verse 34 uses some pretty strong language from Jesus himself:

“THE MOUTH SPEAKS FROM THE OVERFLOW OF THE HEART. A GOOD MAN PRODUCES GOOD THINGS FROM HIS STOREROOM OF GOOD AND AN EVIL MAN PRODUCES EVIL THINGS FROM HIS STOREROOM OF EVIL. **I TELL YOU** THAT ON THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO ACCOUNT FOR EVERY CARELESS WORD THEY SPEAK. FOR BY YOUR WORDS YOU WILL BE ACQUITTED AND BY YOUR WORDS YOU WILL BE CONDEMNED”

What comes from our mouth reveals what is in our heart so we must guard our hearts so that what comes out of our mouth are only words that are life giving to others, words that encourage and build others up not destroy and knock others down. Our tongues are powerful tools that can be used for good, or not for good. So: *Be careful little mouth what you say!!!*

- One more spiritual exercise for Guard our Hearts: no song on this one: Choose to forgive those who may have hurt you. Choose to let go of any bitterness, anger, or resentment. Colossians 3:13 says:

Make allowances for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you so you must forgive others.

Unforgiveness can cause a root of bitterness in your heart and it can make you angry and resentful, it can make us HEART SICK spiritually. To guard your heart is to choose to forgive.

Guarding your heart spiritually is pretty serious business I'd say. Let me finish with 1st Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or his stature, because I have rejected him. Man does not see what the LORD sees, for man sees what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart."