Lesson Three – Guarding the Heart

*“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)*

Proverbs 4:23 is perhaps the most important verse in all of scripture. As we make choices regarding diet and exercise to protect our physical heart, the heart as the moral center of spiritual life must be continuously guarded as well. To ignore God’s admonition or to not take seriously what the lord says about the heart is to give Satan direct access to the very place where God desires to reside within man.

1. **Guarding the heart — My most important task.**
2. The heart is the wellspring of life. Proverbs 4:23, 14:30
3. Although the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Mk 14:38, Romans 7:18-25
4. We are soldiers in the Lord’s army involved in a spiritual conflict:
   * Our enemy—Satan: Ephesians 6:11-12, 1 Peter 5:8-9
   * Our battlefield—The heart and the mind: Ephesians 6:12, 1 Peter 1:13
   * Our weapons—Mighty: 2 Corinthians 6:7, 10:3-6, Ephesians 6:11-18
   * Our Commander—The Lord: Hebrews 2:10, Joshua 5:13-15
   * Our mindset—Resist: 1 Peter 5:8-9, James 4:7-8, 1 Thes 5:5-11, 1 Timothy 1:18
   * Our outcome—Victory: 1 John 5:4, 1 Corinthians 15:57

## The human heart bends toward what the eye sees. Today’s image makers fling into the world digital spectacles of power, wealth, sex, and popularity. Those images get inside us, shape us, and form our lives in ways that are contrary to God’s design.

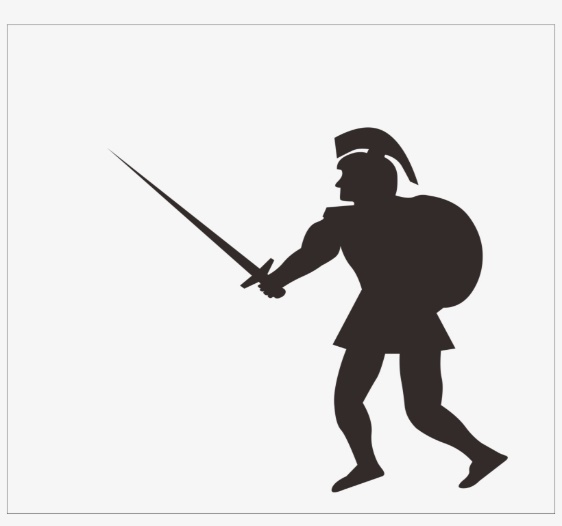
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**Question: What did the Apostle Paul say about our adversary in Ephesians 6:12? What chance does flesh and blood have in this fight? What *“must have”* do I need to be successful?**

**Question: What other weapons has the Lord provided to us to help us in our spiritual conflicts?**

1. **What can Christian’s do to guard their hearts?**
2. Guard with all diligence! (Above all else). Proverbs 4:23
3. “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Romans 12:1-2
4. Control our thoughts and thinking. Proverbs 23:7, Philippians 4:8, 2 Corinthians 10:5
5. Put on the protective armor of God. Ephesians 6:10-18
6. Heed the advice from the Psalmist. Psalm 119: 9-16
7. **Pay attention to the “portals!”**

1. By guarding what we look at. Job 31:1-12, Psalm 101:3-4, Psalm 119:37
2. By guarding what we listen to. The de-sensitizing affect upon our hearts.
3. By guarding what we think about. Philippians 4:8, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
4. By guarding where we walk: Proverbs 4:26-27, 1 John 1:7, Ephesians 5:8-10

**Question: When we consider the portals by which sin can enter the heart, what do the young man of Proverbs 7 and King David in 2 Samuel chapter 11 have in common?**

**SENTINEL**

**One whose job is to stand and keep watch**

* Sentry
* Guard
* Defender
* Watchman
* Protector
* Keeper

1. **The necessity of staying alert.**
2. When? – Always!
3. When we are having problems with pride. 2 Chronicles 32:24-26
4. After “Mountaintop Experiences.” 1 Kings 18:20-46
5. During times of discouragement. Numbers 21:4-6, Hebrews 12:1-6
6. When prosperity comes. Deuteronomy 6:10-12, Nehemiah 9:20-26

**Question: Why are our hearts so vulnerable after “mountaintop” experiences?**