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MARCH 2017  
**GUARDING YOUR GARDEN**

Greetings friends and family of God!

We pray God's richest blessings be upon you and yours!

First of all, I am very excited to announce to you this month the release of another audio teaching series from our ministry entitled "Guarding Your Garden!"

This teaching series focuses on the importance of our heart and why it is so important that we guard our hearts above anything else that we guard in our lives.

Friends, the Word of God obviously has a lot to say about the heart- how God is looking at the heart, how He is looking for the perfect heart, and how we too are supposed to be looking at our heart (we will get more into that in a moment).

You see, in the beginning, God created a garden and then made man and put him in it, right? Well, now under this new covenant, God has recreated the spirit of man and then put the garden in him. Why? For the same reason He put the first Adam in the garden- to tend and keep it. Amen?

Now any of us who have ever had a garden understand well that it takes a lot of work to keep a productive garden. In many cases, if you do not spray your garden down with insecticides or put a fence around it, different kinds of bugs and animals will devour your harvest. Likewise, our hearts are like our gardens and must be kept with the same amount of effort and diligence.

In Proverbs chapter 4, we have a very important verse that teaches us this very principle: In Proverbs 4:23, the Holy Spirit inspired King Solomon to write these words: "Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."

**THE FOUNTAINHEAD OF OUR LIFE**

Notice, first of all, what Solomon says comes from the heart: He says "out of it spring the issues of life!" Now the words "spring" and "issues" give us a word picture that I believe is extremely helpful in understanding the significance of our hearts...

The word "issues" was oftentimes used in those times to describe the "outgoings" or "goings forth" of a body of water. In other words, this word "issues" described the "channels" that come from a larger body of water. So then when you combine this definition of "issues" with the word "spring," we have the picture being painted of water that flows up out of our heart like a fountain or a spring. So these "goings forth" of water are what outflows from the heart like a well spring.

But it is not water that Solomon says flows from our heart; he was saying that the issues of life are what flow out of our heart.

You see, many times the condition of our life is directly tied to the condition of our heart. Whew,

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that was a powerful statement right there! Let me say it this way since we are talking about a spring of water: The purity and satisfaction of our life is determined by the fountainhead of our heart! That's right, if our heart is corrupt and impure then our life will be corrupt and impure. It is that simple! Therefore, the currents and channels that come from a large body of water are symbolic of the influence (i.e. currents) and direction (i.e. channels) of our heart.

And doesn't the Bible teach us this same principle elsewhere? Proverbs 23:7 teaches us that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. What this means is that we are, in our life, a reflection of the way we think on the inside. And there are many other Scriptures that teach us the importance of how we think, what we meditate on and what we allow to come into our hearts.

### **GUARDING OUR HEARTS**

Now let's go back and camp on the first phrase in Proverbs 4:23- "Keep your heart with all diligence"...

The word "keep" here literally means "to guard, watch, protect and preserve." It describes keeping something in a safe, secret place, and then, guarding that place. So Solomon was saying here that we are to keep our heart in a safe and secret place similar to how we would keep our jewelry or other valuables in a safe and secret place.

Did you know that in the world, an extremely valuable jewel is oftentimes placed in a high security vault with all kinds of motion detectors etc.? And they do this for a rock which only has temporal value! How much more should we apply this same kind of diligent watch over our hearts which have eternal value? Amen?

But then notice what Solomon goes on to say in this phrase: He says that we are to guard our heart "with all diligence."

Now the word "diligence" describes "keeping or guarding; to keep in custody or to imprison." In fact, it is actually translated as a "ward" most of the time in the original King James Version.

So that's right- It has the same meaning as the word "guard" at the beginning of this verse! So what the first portion of this verse literally says is- "Guard your heart above everything else you guard!" In other words, the Holy Spirit through Solomon was saying that the most important thing you have to guard is your heart! Therefore, we ought to guard our heart more than we would guard our most valuable possessions! Amen!

So allow me to give you a great example of what Solomon was saying in Proverbs 4:23: In the Middle East- especially during the days of Solomon- fountains and wells were watched over with special care. Why? It was because if the source of their water was contaminated, then their supply of water was useless. You see, there were not many sources of water in those days, so they protected the ones that they had at all costs. It was vital for them to do that!

Likewise, the part of us that all the issues of our life stem from must be protected at all costs, lest we allow the enemy to contaminate our life. Therefore, with this understanding, we should strive

to protect our hearts with at least as much tenacity as they protected those wells thousands of years ago. Amen?

But not only do we see the analogy of a wellspring being used to describe our hearts in the Scriptures, but we also see the analogy of a garden...

### **THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER**

If you study Jesus' Parable of the Sower- the first of many parables about the kingdom of God that Jesus taught on His "sermon by the sea"- you will see that Jesus compared the ground that the seed was sown into to our hearts.

In fact, in His Parable of the Sower, Jesus focused primarily on the ground that the seed was sown into and not on the seed itself. So the fact that Jesus spent a lot more time talking about the various conditions of our hearts than He did describing the seed, teaches us an important lesson. What lesson is that, you ask? It teaches us that God's Word is not complicated! It does not take a rocket scientist to get it to work! All we have to do is be simple enough to read it, believe it and then sow it.

Have you ever noticed how most farmers do not usually have PHD's? No, in most cases, they are just hard workers with self-discipline that are simply capitalizing on the laws governing seedtime and harvest. Likewise, in God's kingdom it is not those with the greatest pedigree, the greatest resources or the most education that produce the most in the kingdom of God. Generally, it is those who are least in the kingdom that produce the most in the kingdom. Amen!

So the complications are evidently not with the Word or else Jesus would have spent more time talking about the seed in this parable. No, the complications are usually within us- that is, in our hearts. This is why Jesus spent a considerably longer amount of time in His Parable of the Sower talking about the ground of our hearts that the Word is sown into.

Now it is important for us to understand that all four types of ground that Jesus describes here are actually those who come to hear the word. This is not those who stay at home, who willfully reject the truth or who are enemies of the Cross of Christ. These are those who actually want to hear the words of the Master. So if you are reading this today, this parable describes you; and it describes me also!

I bring this up because this then shows us that the majority of people who come to church, study their Bibles etc. are not going to produce abiding fruit. So if only one out of every four believers will actually be considered fruitful in God's sight, then that means that only about 25% of believers who have God's Word sown in their hearts are considered productive. Now that's a sobering thought, isn't it?

Now in one of these four types of ground (i.e. the wayside heart), they never produced anything at all. In the next two (i.e. the stony ground & thorny ground), their vine did grow above the ground but they did not produce any fruit that lasted. It was only with the good ground that we see any fruit that endured, and even in that type of ground, there were

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varying degrees of production (i.e. some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred).

So what should we say to these things? Should we just throw our hands up in the air and say, "Que sera sera?" No, the purpose of recognizing this truth is to encourage us to change the condition of our hearts, so that we can become that "good ground" and begin to produce some thirtyfold, some sixty and some a hundred. Amen?

Friends, I cannot fully convey to you in this "Living Logos" just how important the condition of our heart is! Please do not miss the truth that your spiritual heart is just as important to your spiritual life as your physical heart muscle is to your natural life. Now that is the gospel truth!

And that is why I highly encourage you to get a hold of this new series that we just released entitled "Guarding Your Garden."

In this 9 CD series, you will learn:

1. More on just how important our heart truly is.
2. Practical ways in which we can guard our hearts.
3. The characteristics and remedies for all four different conditions of hearts from Jesus' Parable of the Sower, including:
  - a) How to not be conformed to the world and how to break up the fallowed ground of our hearts.
  - b) How a Christian can have a hardened heart and what the remedy is.
  - c) How to deal with the thorns that attempt to choke the production of God's Word.
  - d) What are the three ingredients of the good ground that will produce fruit.

Please use the enclosed insert and mail it to the address shown below or you can order it on our website @ [www.treydickerson.com](http://www.treydickerson.com), and we will happily send this 9 CD series to you today!

Until next month- Maranatha!

Victoriously,

