

Above All Else - Guard Your Heart

by Erlo Stegen

Guarding your heart is crucial for maintaining a strong spiritual life and relationship with God, and neglecting to do so can have severe consequences.

Scripture: Genesis 2:15-17, 1 Kings 11:1-4, Psalm 119:11, Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 15:18-19, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 6:11, Philippians 4:7, James 4:7-8, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Spiritual Vigilance", "Guarding the Heart"

Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes the critical importance of guarding our hearts, as they are the source of life. He illustrates this through a parable of a man who lost both his treasure and his faithful dog due to his failure to protect what was valuable. Stegen warns that neglecting to guard our hearts can lead to spiritual death, drawing parallels to Solomon's downfall and the moral decline seen in today's youth. He encourages believers to be vigilant and to seek God's guidance in protecting their hearts from defilement. Ultimately, he reassures that no matter past failures, forgiveness and renewal are available through Christ.

Transcript

"Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life." (Proverbs 4:23 - Amplified Bible).

There might be some very precious things that you guard, but the Bible says that even above that you should guard your heart.

Very precious crockery isn't just for everyday use but is placed in a special cupboard and only used for very special occasions.

A certain man had a very precious treasure of gold and pearls. He guarded it with his life. He kept it under his mattress and didn't want to leave it out of his sight. One day he had to go on a long journey so he took it along. On his way back he stopped for lunch under a tree, together with his horse and faithful dog. He was very hungry and thirsty and really had a good meal. Afterwards he mounted his horse to complete his journey home. He hadn't gone far or his faithful dog started to bark ferociously. He commanded it to keep quiet but it didn't obey. The dog's behaviour was strange since it was a very faithful obedient dog. Eventually it obeyed, but not for long. Then it started to bark again and even snapped at the horse's heels. The man lost his temper, pulled out his revolver and shot his dog. When he got home and felt for his treasure bag, it was gone! Suddenly he remembered where he had placed it next to him under the tree

where he had lunch. His dog tried to help him but he shot it! He felt miserable. In one day he lost his faithful dog and his greatest earthly treasure, because he did not guard it!

Now the value of your heart far exceeds any earthly treasure.

Solomon was blessed with a great intellect but we know of how he fell. He made alliances with the kings around him through marriage, but in that he did not guard his heart, and his wives led him astray after their gods.

He gave satan a little room by listening to the devilish wisdom to make alliances with the kings around him through marriage. He thought that it would bring him peace, but his wives were his downfall. The burden eventually crushed him, but thank God that in the end he saw the light and acknowledged his folly. That's why he could write what he wrote.

There's the article in the newspaper about the prevalence of sexual promiscuity in the schools. In one school alone 16 grade twelve girls were pregnant at different stages into their pregnancy. It's virtually impossible in these schools to find a single boy or girl who keeps themselves sexually pure. One boy was so possessed by demons of lust that he slept with 20 girls in a week. He would see a girl and become insane with lust. Later he married one of his beautiful girlfriends and now he had no sexual attraction to his wife. That's how upside down the devil makes things. Before marriage he could not be kept from sleeping around. After marriage he doesn't want to sleep with his wife.

These young people are this way because they do not guard their hearts.

You must keep your heart with diligence, above all else.

God in His Word has given us different ways to guard our hearts. He warns us of things that will defile us.

God placed Adam in a beautiful garden in paradise. God gave him the garden to keep. The garden was filled with all manner of fruit trees. But in the garden there was also the tree of knowledge of good and evil and another tree, the tree of life. God said to Adam, "of all these trees you may freely eat, except the tree in the middle of the garden, of the knowledge of good and evil. For if you eat thereof you will die". The devil came to Eve and questioned her about what they may eat and what they may not eat. So the devil comes to many today to know more about the opposite sex and they watch pornography and defile themselves. Others are inquisitive about drugs and so they try it out and die spiritually. They gain the knowledge of good and evil, but die spiritually.

We read that out of the heart are the well springs of life. But if you don't guard your heart those springs dry up and you die.

What do you spread to others around you, life or death?

When you become a believer God makes all things new and places you in paradise. But He commands you to guard your heart lest you die spiritually.

Some complain that they repeatedly consecrate themselves to the Lord, repeatedly confess their sins but there's no spiritual life. It's because they do not guard their heart as our text says.

If you don't guard your heart, all the good seed from God is eaten by the birds as soon as it is sown and your spiritual life cannot grow.

If you're unfaithful at school, don't do homework, are disobedient to your teachers and parents, mess around with the opposite sex etc., you're only hurting yourself, and spoiling your own future.

Guarding your heart includes guarding your soul and even your body.

Whatever your condition, even if you haven't guarded your heart in the past, you can come to Christ for forgiveness and He will make all things new.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/erlo-stegen/above-all-else-guard-your-heart/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net