

## Guard Your Heart

Lesson 01 of the series, "Smart Life"

### A. The book of Proverbs says one of the smartest things we can do in life is guard our hearts.

"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life." Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)

*Heart* – The center of a person's hidden emotional, intellectual, and moral activity.

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

*Note:* We have a real and dangerous enemy who wants to destroy our hearts.

"The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life." John 10:10 (NLT)

"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

*Note:* The best way to guard our hearts is to align them with God's heart.

"So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace." Romans 8:6 (NLT)

"So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves." Galatians 5:16 (NLT)

"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." John 8:44 (NIV)

### B. Five areas where we would be smart to guard our hearts:

#### 1. From pride.

"Haughty eyes, a proud heart, and evil actions are all sin." Proverbs 21:4 (NLT)

*Life Application:* "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves." Philippians 2:3 (NLT)

#### 2. From being easily offended.

"A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense." Proverbs 19:11 (NIV)

*Life Application:* "Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others." Colossians 3:13 (NIV)

#### 3. From being a people pleaser.

"Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe." Proverbs 29:25 (NIV)

"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ." Galatians 1:10 (NIV)

*Life Application:* "Fear the Lord your God, and live in a way that pleases him, and love him and serve him with all your heart and soul." Deuteronomy 10:12 (NLT)

**4. From lust**

“Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes.” Proverbs 6:25 (NIV)

*Life Application:* “Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.” 2 Timothy 2:22 (NLT)

**5. From thinking I don't need God's help.**

“Those who trust their own insight are foolish, but anyone who walks in wisdom is safe.” Proverbs 28:26 (NLT)

*Life Application:* “Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.” Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

“My child, listen and be wise: Keep your heart on the right course.” Proverbs 23:19 (NLT)

“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.” Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)

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## Connect Group Questions

1. What is your favorite motto or saying?
2. What is the best advice you have ever been given?
3. In the area of pride, being easily offended, being a people pleaser, lust, or not needing God's help, which of these do you need to guard your heart from the most? Are there any other areas in which you need to guard your heart? (Ex. anger, gossip, envy...)
4. Read Romans 8:6, Galatians 5:1, and Philippians 4:8. What does it look like to let the Holy Spirit guide your life? Control your thoughts? On what type of things should we set our minds?
5. Read John 8:44: What are some lies the devil uses to get Christians off track? How have you been deceived by one of these?
6. Discuss the following quotations:

"The neglected heart will soon be a heart overrun with worldly thoughts; the neglected life will soon become a moral chaos." A. W. Tozer

"Lust is a captivity of the reason and an enraging of the passions. It hinders business and distracts counsel. It sins against the body and weakens the soul." Jeremy Taylor – English Clergyman – 1600's

"Be offended with God, and you will be offended with everyone who crosses your path."  
Elisabeth Elliot

"We must cease striving and trust God to provide what He thinks is best and in whatever time He chooses to make it available. But this kind of trusting doesn't come naturally. It's a spiritual crisis of the will in which we must choose to exercise faith." — Charles R. Swindoll

"Leaders who fail to prune their pride will meet demise. That's not a guess, it's a guarantee. With pride, it's not a matter of 'if' we will fall, but 'when.' There are no exceptions." John C. Maxwell