

Keeping the Heart
(Proverbs 4:23)

Introduction:

1. In Proverbs 4:23 a very important responsibility is revealed -- "keeping the heart."
 - a. "The heart" is the inner part of us that is the center of our thoughts, our feelings, and our affections.
 - b. Keep: to guard, to protect
2. "Keeping the heart" is something we are to do "*with all diligence.*"
3. The reason why we must keep our hearts with all diligence is that "*the issues of life*" proceed forth from the heart.
4. When a year comes to an end we often think about resolutions for the new year.
5. I can think of no greater resolution for 2013 than to keep our hearts with all diligence.
6. In our lesson we are examining a number of passages that will help us fulfill this responsibility.

Discussion:

I. ADDITIONAL PASSAGES IN PROVERBS

- A. Several verses indicate that the condition of our hearts affects our physical and spiritual wellbeing.
 1. (14:30) "*A sound heart*" is healthy, but a heart that suffers from a disease, such as envy, is unhealthy.
 2. "*A merry heart*" will have a positive effect upon the disposition (15:13, 15; 17:22).
- B. Several other verses indicate that the way we think in our hearts will determine what we are (16:9; 23:7).

II. PASSAGES IN THE PSALMS

- A. (24:3-5) To be in good standing with God, the heart must be pure (Matthew 5:8).
- B. (44:21) God knows our hearts.
- C. We must allow God to search our hearts (26:2; 139:23-24).
- D. God can cleanse our hearts (51:10).

III. PASSAGES IN MATTHEW

- A. (6:21) A person's treasure will be where his heart is.
- B. (12:34-37) A person's words come forth from his heart.
- C. (15:19) All sins originate in the heart.

IV. PASSAGES IN THE EPISTLES

- A. The epistles contain instructions that will help us to keep our hearts.
- B. We must:
 1. allow Christ to dwell in our hearts (Ephesians 3:17)
 2. allow the peace of God to keep our hearts (Philippians 4:6-8)
 3. allow God's peace to rule in our hearts (Colossians 3:15)
 4. not allow our hearts to become hardened (Hebrews 3:12-13).

Conclusion:

1. The Bible certainly has much to say about the heart, and we must pay close attention to it.
2. Let us allow Solomon to illustrate the importance of keeping our hearts with all diligence.
 - a. When he was young, Solomon was very careful to keep his heart, and God blessed him abundantly.
 - b. Unfortunately, as he grew older Solomon did not take care of his heart, and he paid a high price for it (1 Kings 11:4, 9).
3. As you think about worthwhile activities for 2013, consider keeping your heart with all diligence.
4. Lord willing, if 2014 arrives, you can continue the same resolution.