

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 26)

Introduction:

1. "Pure and undefiled religion before God" includes "keeping ourselves unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).
2. The Bible addresses many activities that will help us to remain unspotted from the world.
3. In this lesson we are concentrating on an activity mentioned in Proverbs 4:23 -- "keeping our hearts."
4. In studying this important activity, we will examine:
 - a. 2 statements made in this passage
 - b. a number of other passages that teach us how to keep our hearts.
5. Let us first consider . . .

Discussion:

- I. THE 2 STATEMENTS MADE IN PROVERBS 4:23
 - A. (vs.23a) "Keep thy heart with all diligence"
 1. To fully appreciate this admonition, we must understand several key terms that are used:
 - a. "heart": the center of our thoughts and affections
 - 1) Each person has a heart.
 - 2) Each person is responsible for taking care of his own heart.
 - b. "keep": to guard, to protect, to look after
 - c. "with all diligence": to guard above all things that are to be guarded, including the mouth (vs.24), the eyes (vs.25), and the feet (vs.26-27).
 2. Something that should motivate us to keep our hearts with all diligence is realizing that God knows what is in them (Psalm 44:21; Proverbs 21:2b; Acts 1:24).
 3. The first statement made in Proverbs 4:23 teaches us to keep our hearts.
 4. The second statement shows us why we must keep our hearts.
 - B. (vs.23b) "For out of 'it' [the heart] are the issues of life."
 1. What we are, say, and do will be determined by what is in our hearts (Proverbs 16:9; 23:7).
 2. Jesus dealt at length with this principle.
 - a. (Matthew 6:21) A person's treasure will be where his heart is.
 - b. (Matthew 12:34-37) A person's words come forth from the heart.
 - c. (Matthew 15:18-20) All sins come forth from the heart.
 - C. Now that we understand the 2 statements made in Proverbs 4:23, let us turn our attention to a number of . . .
- II. PASSAGES THAT TEACH US HOW TO KEEP OUR HEARTS
 - A. In keeping our hearts we must hide God's Word in them (Psalm 119:11).
 1. (Hebrews 4:12) God's Word is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 2. Hebrews 4:13 shows us why we must allow God's Word to discern the thoughts and intents of our hearts.
 - B. In keeping our hearts we must allow God to search them regularly (Psalm 139:23-24).
 - C. In keeping our hearts we must allow Christ to dwell in them (Ephesians 3:17a).
 - D. In keeping our hearts we must think on the right things (Philippians 4:8).
 - E. In keeping our hearts we must allow God's peace to rule in them (Colossians 3:15).
 - F. In keeping our hearts we must not allow them to become hardened (Hebrews 3:12-13).

Conclusion:

1. If we will keep our hearts as the Bible teaches in Proverbs 4:23, we will be able to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.
2. Let us remember the 6th Beatitude: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).