

Message: “GUARD YOUR HEART” by Pastor Jon Whisner, 1/9/22

Description: When we look at our life—who and what we are at our core—the heart of the matter, is the matter of the heart. In this passage, Solomon directs his son to give priority to protecting his heart, because his heart is going to produce who and what he is and will become. The irony of this Scripture is that Solomon himself did not heed his own advice—all the more reason to apply this vital truth.

Key Scripture: Proverbs 4:20-23 (NIV was the Bible version used for this message)

Takeaway / Application: Am I tending to my heart well? Whether a golfer, surfer, body builder, trail guide—the strength they produce does not come from their biceps, legs, hands or feet—but their power is produced from their core, their center. Our heart is our spiritual core. Everything we are, and do, flows out of the condition of our heart. At the start of this new year, let's take the necessary steps to make sure our hearts are healthy and in good standing with God.

- Proverbs 4:20-21 tells us to **pay attention** and **listen up**. In verse 21 Solomon says to his son, “*keep the sayings I tell you in the midst of your heart.*” Share with your group something specific you’ve been hearing from God through His Word about an area of your life and walk that needs tending to (prayer, finances, mood/attitude, relationships, etc).
- Verse 22 states that the truth we receive from our Heavenly Father brings us our very life, and affects us not only spiritually, but blesses and enhances our physical health. As we kick off a new year, are there areas of Scripture that you need to heed to when it comes to the betterment of your physical body? We tend to gravitate towards those Scriptures that deal with the mind and soul, but there’s plenty of Scripture that address taking care of our bodies as well—not to treat them as *idols*, but take care of them as *temples* of the Holy Spirit. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 in your group. Discuss.
- Proverbs 4:23 is one of the most important Scriptures in all of the Bible. Myriads of marriages, families, churches, ministries and businesses have come to their demise because of the neglect or rejection of this one verse. Solomon tells his boy that his heart is a **PRIORITY**. The three enemies of our soul (the world, our flesh, the devil) are constantly aiming, scheming, and plotting to distract and detract us from tending to our hearts—in order to destroy us. Read 1 Peter 5:8. Can you name areas where you are actively guarding and **PROTECTING** your heart from the temptations, snares, and attacks of the enemy?
- Solomon tells his son that his heart will **PRODUCE**. What is your influence on your family, at your job, with your friends...what is your very life amounting to? Answer: Your life and influence is amounting to whatever condition your heart is in. Read Matthew 7:17-29 in your group. Talk about the contrast that is seen here between the produce of good and bad fruit. The key is in verses 21 & 24.