

# Keeping Ourselves

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Date: 21 March 2021

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     Now as the Lord enables us, let us turn to the book of Proverbs where we've read in chapter 4.
- And let us focus on verses 23 to the end of the chapter. Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.
- Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
- Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left. Remove thy foot from evil.
- As the Lord enables us, I'd like to say a few words on these verses. The Bible reminds us of the wisdom of Solomon.
- [ 1 : 24 ]     He was wiser than all who lived in his day. And it also tells us in the scripture that he wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs.
- Not only was he wise, but he was very skilled in speech and in writing.
- And we believe that we have here words which the Holy Spirit has inspired, having come from the mouth or the pen of Solomon.
- And in these particular chapters, he's talking a lot about wisdom. He's talking about how necessary wisdom is.
- In verse 7, for example, of this chapter. Wisdom is the principal thing. Therefore, get wisdom. And with all thy getting, get understanding.
- [ 2 : 30 ]     And then it says, exalt her. That is, exalt wisdom, and she shall promote thee. She shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her. She shall give thine head an ornament of grace.
- A crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. And so on. And there is only one kind of wisdom that will give you such honour.
- And that is the word of God. People seek after various kinds of wisdom. Wisdom in literature.
- Wisdom in technology. All of these aspects of learning, people clamour to embrace for themselves.
- But the Bible promotes itself as the source of all wisdom. The wisdom, it says here in verse 8. That will promote you and bring you to real honour when you embrace her.
- [ 3 : 33 ]     This wisdom shall give thine head an ornament of grace. That will give you grace in this world through faith in Jesus. And a crown of glory at last.
- When the Lord ushers his people into heaven. This is what the Apostle Paul looked for when he was in that prison in Rome. Henceforth he says, There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which that judge, the just judge, will give me at that day.

And not to me only, but also unto all them who love his appearing. And the Apostle Paul had embraced the wisdom of the Scriptures. And he wrote this when he is talking to Timothy.

From a child, he says in 2 Timothy 3. From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ.

And all Scripture is inspired by the Spirit of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

[ 4 : 46 ] The Holy Scriptures able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Jesus Christ. So it's worthwhile focusing on the Scripture, on the Word of God.

All the Scripture is inspired by the Word of God. And then in verse 10, I'm just saying these two or three words by way of introduction. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of thy life.

Shall be many. And then he goes on, and he contrasts the way of the righteous, or the man who has embraced the wisdom of the Scriptures, who has embraced the Christ of the Scriptures.

And it says here, that the way over the path of the just, is as the shining light. In verse 18, that shineth more and more, unto the perfect day.

The man who has embraced Christ Jesus by faith, the Christ of the Bible. And it says here, he walks in the light, and that light increases, and shines more and more, unto the perfect day.

[ 5 : 56 ] And then the contrast in verse 19, the way of the wicked, is as darkness, they know not, at what they stumble. And there is a sermon, even between these two verses, the contrast between, the way of obedience to the Scriptures, and, the path of those, who disregard the word of God, and the Christ of God, and who turn, to do their own thing.

Well now, coming to verses 23, to the end of the chapter. He talks there, about four things, that we have to note, as we journey through life.

First of all, he talks about the heart, in verse 23. Keep thy heart, with all diligence, for out of it, are the issues of life.

Secondly, he talks about the mouth, verse 24. Put away from thee, a froward mouth, and perverse lips, but far from thee. Thirdly, in verse 25, let thine eyes, look right on, and let thine eyelids, look straight, before thee.

And fourthly, in verse 26, ponder the path, of thy feet, and let all thy ways, be established. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left.

[ 7 : 24 ] Remove thy foot, from evil. Let's say a few words, on each of these. First of all, he says, keep thy heart, with all diligence.

Keep thy heart, with all diligence. Obviously, Solomon is talking, on a spiritual plane. He's not giving, physical or medical advice.

The doctors, tell us, that we have to look after, our heart, because, it is such an important, organ in our bodies. But Solomon here, isn't talking about, a medical aspect.

He's talking about, a spiritual thing. And he says, keep your heart, with all diligence. What is he talking about?

Well, if you look, in Jeremiah's prophecy, he says this, about the heart of man. That it is, deceitful, above all things, and desperately wicked.

[ 8 : 37 ] Who can know it? Who can know it? The Bible talks, about the heart, in various ways, and in various places.

And those who, know about these things, they have brought together, four elements, that they believe, constitute this word, heart.

In the spiritual sphere. First of all, they say that the heart, has to do with the mind. And then the will, of man.

And the affections, of man. And the conscience, of man. It's as if, that is, our deepest self. The very core, of our being.

As, we are, spiritual people, our heart, is made up, of mind, and will, and affections, and conscience. That is who we are.

[ 9 : 39 ] That is, the very center, of our being, as people. Our heart. Just as the heart, physically, is central, to our well-being, so the heart, spiritually, is central, to our spiritual, well-being, also.

And what does it say here? Well it says, keep thy heart, with all diligence. Keep your heart. Well, if the heart, is as bad, as Jeremiah says, that it is, desperately wicked, who can know it?

Why should we, keep such a heart? Why should we, care for such a heart? How can we, best care for it? Well, think of it, from this point of view.

the Lord, through Solomon again, in Proverbs 23, speaks to us. And he says, in Proverbs 23, 26, my son, give me, your heart.

My son, give me your heart. And what is he saying? Well it's as if he is saying, you cannot deal with your heart the way it is.

[ 11 : 04 ] It is beyond your knowledge. It's beyond your ability to rectify and correct it. You have to bring it to me. Bring yourself to me.

Bring yourself to me with all your woes, and all your sins, and all your shortcomings, and all your heartaches, and all your problems, and your awareness of your lost condition.

Bring yourself to me, and I will heal your heart. When he says that the heart is an aspect of our mind, listen to what it says in Colossians chapter 3.

If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

Set your affection, or in the original, set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. He's asking us to elevate ourselves and elevate our thoughts above the things that are tangible and worldly to the things that are spiritual and belong to our salvation.

[ 12 : 31 ] That's the first thing. My son, give me your heart. This is the best way of keeping it by giving it to him. Give your thoughts to him.

Think upon these things. Think upon the Lord Jesus Christ and yield to him because he's the only saviour able to heal and save.

Secondly, I mentioned that the heart was descriptive of man's will. Man's will. Now, in Galatians chapter 5 we read this.

The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh and these are contrary one to the other so that you cannot do the things that you would want to do.

That is the way our will is bent by nature. Our heart is at variance with God or the truth of God. It is turned away from God and if we have to keep our heart with all diligence then the best thing we do is bring ourselves to him so that our heart would be given a new beginning.

[ 13 : 51 ] He gives us a new heart a heart of flesh upon which his own law and commandments are written. That's the best way of taking care of your heart of keeping your heart giving yourself to him in submission to him.

What about your affections? Well we are asked by the Bible to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind and our neighbour as ourselves.

that's the affection aspect of our heart. That is what the Lord requires of us and he requires of us to keep loving him and loving your neighbour as ourselves.

But you know we find that some other things come into our hearts and we don't love the Lord the way we ought to do. We need the grace of God in order to keep our heart the grace of God to look to him and to wait upon him that our hearts and lives will be filled with his love and with his blessing.

And what about your conscience? Another department as it were another chamber of your heart. Well the Apostle Paul says that he has always sought to exercise a good conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.

[ 15 : 44 ] We need to come to terms with the waywardness of our fallen nature and we need to bring ourselves to the Lord as we are wayward as we are broken as we are unhealthy spiritually as we are and bring ourselves by faith to him the great physician and we say to him take my heart take my life take my all heal me keep me and bless me with eternal blessings.

Have you ever come to that point in your own life where you realise that you just cannot unravel the tangles of your life.

So many things wrong so many things out of place so many relationships so many this that and the other thing and you just cannot cope with unravelling it all and of course the most important thing of all is that you by nature and I by nature am not friends with God at all.

What do we have to do? Well he asks us to come to himself and that he will rectify our evil hearts and he will give us a heart of flesh upon which his own law and commandments are written and if we come and receive that blessing our heart will be delighting in him.

We will have a heart affection for him and for doing his work and following his ways. Oh I know that that will be difficult.

[ 17 : 43 ] Maybe that's partly why this is in the scripture that we have to be careful that our heart stays focused and without his grace and the spirit of God's influence upon us we cannot stay focused upon him.

We need his spirit to lead guide and enable us to walk in his ways. That's the first thing then. Keep your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life.

You see your outward lifestyle depends on where your heart is. Your outward lifestyle depends on where your heart is.

Out of the heart come all these evil thoughts all these nasty sins they have an out working in your life because they dominate your heart from time to time.

But if our heart is right with God he will correct these things and he will give us to be cleansed from our iniquities. So that's the first thing keep thy heart with all diligence.

[ 19 : 01 ] And the second point he has has to do with our mouth our heart and our mouth put away from thee a froward mouth and perverse lips put far from thee but away from thee a perverse or crooked or untruthful or inaccurate mouth.

Now we find the scripture telling us about the tongue that it is a little member but it boasts of great things. Behold it says how great a matter a little fire kindlet our wrong word here or there and it sets the whole thing alight.

It's an unruly evil it says full of deadly poison no man can tame the tongue and this is what he's coming to hear he's talking about putting away from you a froward mouth and perverse lips put far from you.

This is an important thing to remember when we're dealing with our fellow men dealing with people how we address them what we say Bible says keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile Jeremiah says these people bend their tongues like their bow for lies but they are not valiant for the truth we have to be so careful what we say when we say it that our words would be measured and weighed according to what the word of God says and you know we have to lay aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies and all evil speakings that's what

Peter says and instead of using our mouth for these activities and that kind of speech he says as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby desire the sincere milk of the word have ever seen a little baby and you hold his bottle in front of him when he or she is hungry they really go into top gear seeking that milk because they know it's going to please them and fill them and satisfy them that's what our mouth should be used for mostly eating and drinking at the word of God as the word of God feeds us in our souls it will influence us so that our life would be careful as to how we speak and how we address God and how we address men the psalmist said

[ 22 : 23 ] I'll hear what God the Lord doth speak to his folk he'll speak peace and to his saints but let them not return to foolishness and Solomon the wisest man in the world at the time he said put away from you a froward mouth and perverse lips put far from thee his advice and directive is so practical isn't it the book of proverbs a book of practical ethics and he tells us how we ought to live and we need to hear what he says thirdly he talks about the eyes in verse 25 let thine eyes look right on and let thine eyelids look straight before thee let thine eyes look right on well we must say that by nature our eyes are downwards aren't they our eyes are not upwards to the

Lord our eyes don't follow his direction but the psalmist said open mine eyes that I might behold wonderful things out of thy law and Jesus opened the eyes of the blind he opened the eyes of the man who was born blind and he gave light and direction to those who were around him turn thou away my sight and eyes from viewing vanity it is vanity that we by nature seek to feast our eyes upon things that are worldly things that are satisfying to the flesh these things that take our attention away from the word of God these are the things that we have to be careful about and this is what that man says let thine eyes look right on straight on you know that

Isaiah said look unto me I used the word of the Lord look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else he asked people to look to him there are so many voices calling us to look this way and that way focus on this this aspect of worldly activity bad aspect whatever it is but the Bible says let your eyes look right on because the Lord has opened a way a way of life to us a way of life in Christ Jesus and there are so many in the world who just do not care to look to the Christ who is able to save they don't look to the way of righteousness they don't look to the way of holiness they don't look to the word of

God which is as it were a map to enable us to make our way through life but you see the man of God here says let thine eyes look right on look unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith that's the way to go every step of the way there was somebody recently talking about what the disciples said of Jesus and they said we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and full of truth and that word beheld it is a word that's full of meaning from this point of view we feasted our eyes upon him and this man said looking at

Jesus saves you that is with the eye of faith it saves you to look at him but then beholding him feasting your eyes upon him sanctifies you sanctifies you makes you holy makes you Christ like more and more the more you look at him the more you consider him the more you find new things about him you become more and more like him and that's what this man here is saying let your eyes look right on and your eyelids look straight before you it's as if he is saying don't close your eyelids what we're talking about is so precious and so glorious and the person brought before us as our saviour is so winsome and beautiful it's as if you don't really close your eyes at all but always seek to see more and more of him as you journey on look to him look unto

[ 28 : 01 ] Jesus as you walk through life let thine eyes look right on and let thine eyelids look straight before thee then the fourth point is this ponder the path of thy feet and let all thy ways be established turn not to the right hand not to the left remove thy foot from evil he's talking about the feet where we go he's spoken about the eyes what do we look at he's spoken about the mouth what do we say how do we speak he's spoken about the heart what relationship do we have with the Lord at the very core about being now he's saying what about your feet where do you go well like Jeremiah said of our heart it was deceitful above all things desperately wicked who can know it

Isaiah talks about our feet and he says all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned every one of us into his own way that is the picture the Bible draws of us as we are by nature we are wayward our feet are out of the path of obedience our feet are out of the path of faith our feet are out of the path of duty that's the way we are by nature we're walking away from God doing our own thing but then it says ponder the path of your feet think about what you're doing think about where you're going is it safe to go here is it safe and wise to live like this it is safe and wise to do the things

I'm doing in the places I'm going just if he is saying way up where your feet are going is it safe is it wise is it God glorifying well if it is not we have to turn back from these paths whatever paths they might be you know wonderfully the Bible talks about the path of life and the psalmist says he showed me the path of life in psalm 16 we are walking by nature on the path of death and darkness and disobedience that's where our feet are walking as we are by nature but then the

Bible talks about another path another route another way and calls it the path of life the path of life just as the verse 18 here talks about the path of the just it is like a shining light Jesus Christ is the light of the world and he is the one who has come and he says I am the way out of your calamity out of your misery out of your lost condition I am the way the truth you can believe me I am able to do for you all that I promise and I am the life I give you eternal life better than the life you enjoy just now in sin it is a blessed life a holy life it is eternal life that you receive when you believe in me and he says here ponder the path of thy feet are you walking on this path of life that is full of light and full of blessing and full of salvation and full of the fellowship of

God God or are you walking on the path of darkness and the only one on that path with you is Satan himself Satan the prince of darkness and he will trick you into walking that path as long as he can he fills your mind with darkness fills your heart with a love for the world love for sin and all of these things that are so destructive will you not hear what the man of God says ponder the path of thy feet and let thou all thy ways be established ponder them think about it bring it to the Lord in prayer ask him Lord show me where I'm wrong show me how wrong I am and show me yourself the glorious God of light and life and salvation show me in the face of

[ 33 : 37 ] Jesus Christ the saviour who is able to save me from all the snares of sin the snares of the devil and the dangers associated with these things ponder the path of thy feet and let all thy ways be established in the song of Solomon we have this in chapter 1 and verse 8 tell me where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon and then the shepherd says if thou know not or thou farest among women go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents this was one who had come to the point where she wanted to be with the

Lord's people and she wanted to know where they are feeding where the Lord makes them lie down at noon in the heat of the day and he says you follow the footsteps of the flock not the footsteps of Satan or the footsteps of sin or the smart alecks of this world they're not worth following I'm telling you the scripture says that the end of these ungodly activities and lifestyles is death but here it says let all thy ways be established turn not to the right hand not to the left remove thy foot from evil isn't it a wonderful word to us this evening that the Lord here speaks to us and points us in the way that's going to be for our eternal good turn not to the right hand or to the left he says we find this in

Deuteronomy 28 thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I have commanded you this day to the right hand or to the left to go after other gods to serve them the Lord has given us a straight path a direction that he encourages us to follow and he encourages us to keep our eyes straight forward our eyelids same way our feet weighing them as we go on judging whether the path we are on is true or not in the light of God's word and he says turn not from the right or from the left remove thy foot from evil of course sin is the greatest evil it brings all kinds of misery if there was a snake if you noticed a snake just where you were going to put your foot down you would soon jump aside to save your life from snake bite well sin is just like a snake

Satan presented himself as a serpent in the garden of Eden and he uses other trickeries nowadays to trick people into sin it says here remove thy foot from evil whatever evil it might be remove thy foot abhor that which is evil love that which is true and just and pure and right the path of the person who is just or righteous is the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day there is a perfect day awaiting those who hear and obey God's word a perfect day the day of glory the day when their sun shall no more go down neither shall their moon withdraw itself there shall be no night there there shall be no danger no sin no disease no death what a day that will be that is for those who hearken and obey

God's word but those who refuse to obey it will be eternal night eternal night the sun will no more rise the night will never be dispelled sin prevails the consequences of sin will be ever present there be anoint conscience reminding people of the opportunity they had and that they did not use to come to the Lord Jesus Christ my friend we cannot describe the horror of hell but hell is a reality and somebody said once where is hell and the answer came hell is at the end of a Christless life at the end of a Christless life and while

[ 39 : 33 ] Christ speaks to us through the scripture this evening will you not respond and say to him take my heart correct it heal it make it a God fearing heart correct my mind may my thoughts always be of you correct my affections may I be in love with you every day and every situation of every day correct my conscience give me peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Spirit correct and renew my will that I be willing to do what pleases you rather than what pleases myself or give me a new nature make me a new creation in Christ Jesus that I may walk in your paths and walk in obedience and love every day of my life give me to walk with you and follow you the good shepherd

Jesus himself says my sheep hear my voice I know them and they follow me and I give them eternal life and no one shall pluck them out of my hand my father gave them to me and none shall pluck them out of my father's hand I and my father are one are you hearing the voice of Christ in the scripture this evening he is calling and he is saying come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you not the yoke of sin that you currently bear but the yoke of Christ take my yoke upon you and learn from me I am meek and lowly in heart you shall find rest unto your souls my yoke is easy and my burden is light and these are words of truth spoken by

Christ himself take them embrace them and ask him to give you grace to come and commit yourself to him the savior of sinners amen may the lord bless