

Security on High Alert

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- [0 : 00] Let's turn to the book of Proverbs this evening and we're going to look at some verses in chapter 4. Proverbs chapter 4 and at verse 23.
- Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you the crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forwards, and your gaze be straight before you.
- Under the path of your feet, then all your ways will be sure. Do not swear to the right or to the left. Turn your foot away from evil. Particularly the words of verse 23, but we'll look at how the other words relate to it.
- Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of the issues of life. Last week we looked at a very brief study of wisdom, and how wisdom in Proverbs is such a prominent feature, and how it becomes such a basic feature of the Christian life.
- A wisdom that God himself possesses in his own being, but a wisdom that he gives to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through his spirit.
- [1 : 20] And we saw that the wisdom that he gives, the wisdom that we are to take for ourselves, and prize, and also exercise, that wisdom has in it the fear of God, and other related issues as well.
- Now it's very important that we notice in these chapters, right through from the beginning of Proverbs, how it is the young who are being addressed. That doesn't mean, of course, there's nothing in this for older people.
- The principles, and the things that are set out for our practice, apply to every stage of the Christian life, of our experience as Christians.
- But you notice, right back in the beginning at verse 8 of chapter 1, Chapter 2 begins, My son, if you receive my words.
- Chapter 3 begins, My son, do not forget my teaching. Chapter 4 begins, Hear, O sons, a father's instruction. Chapter 5, My son, be attentive to my wisdom.
- [2 : 23] Chapter 6, My son, if you have put up security. And verse 20, My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Chapter 7, My son, keep my words.
- You can see all the way through there that it's reiterated, it's brought up again and again for emphasis, that he is particularly concerned to address those who are young, those who are learning from their parents, or from a previous older generation.
- And it's one of the great privileges that we have, one of the causes of thankfulness that we have, is that we have young people, some very young people, in our prayer meeting, in our church membership, in our communicant membership.
- And it's our privilege not only to have them, but to be there, hopefully, to teach them, to nurture them, to give them the things that will shape their lives as they grow. That, of course, doesn't leave out those who are young in the faith, even if they're up in their later years, in their natural life.

We are all young in the faith, whenever we begin to follow the Lord. And so you could say that, these are really addressed to those who are young in the faith, too, but it's primarily, I think, those who are young in the years, so that their lives will be patterned, and set from the beginning, in the right way.

[3 : 49] I remember when looms were very common, and when you used to have to watch the weaver setting the loom for the next tweed that was coming, it would almost certainly be a different pattern to the previous one, so it was so important that the setting of the loom, which to us as young children then seemed such a mysterious thing.

How did this machine produce all these different patterns with the weaver just working the pedals? It almost seemed a miracle. But, of course, it was all due to the fact that he set the tying of the threads to begin with, and then the little part of the loom, I can't remember the name of it just now, that had a kind of chain on it, that determined which shuttle went across, bearing which colour, and so on.

All of that was set in the beginning, and if that wasn't set properly, the pattern was not what it should be. And what Proverbs is really saying to us is that, for our young people, it's so important that the pattern of their lives is set in their youth, so that that pattern, as it develops, as the loom of life, if you like, weaves its way, that we will have a pattern to our life that will be God-pleasing, God-honouring, and good for ourselves.

And that's basically what it really is doing, is setting us this path. And, of course, it shows that there are two aspects to wisdom, or to following the path of wisdom, and that is that that path of wisdom, on the one hand, is a very rewarding thing.

It's a very rewarding path, because wisdom bestows honours, and beauty, and security, for example. But the other side of it is also important, and all the way through Proverbs, you actually find both sides, not just the fact that wisdom bestows these honours, but that wisdom is also very demanding.

[5 : 49] It requires our surrender to the principles of wisdom, to the things that have to do with practicing wisdom in a godly life, in a life that shuns sin, and seeks to follow the pattern that God has set us in His entire world.

So, at the same time, you've got the reward promised, you've got the benefits bestowed, but that's accompanied by the demands made, by the surrender required, by our hearts being given, and devoted to wisdom, and that we're devoted, of course, to God.

So, what are the two things, then, in this passage we're looking at tonight? Well, the main thing is guarding our heart, keep your heart with all vigilance, or diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

So, let's look at what that means, to guard the heart, to keep the heart with all diligence, or vigilance, and then there's the explanation as to why that's important, for from it flow the springs of life.

What is the heart? What is the writer here talking about when he says, keep your heart with all vigilance? What does he mean by our heart?

[7 : 05] Well, think of your body, and your heart, in that natural sense. The heart, as a part of your body, is not what's meant here, but there is an analogy, there's a correspondence.

And, as you well know, your heart is really vital, to the rest of your body. If your heart stops functioning, then you die, although there are artificial ways, of keeping people alive, and sure, but just looking at it, in its natural functions, once your heart becomes diseased, you've got problems, once your heart ceases to function, you die.

Life is no longer possible. In other words, the heart is important for every single part of your body, the blood supply that's pumped by the heart, and thrown in by the heart, and through the lungs, all of that is important for the health of your body, for the working of every part of it.

And the heart, that's meant here, the spiritual heart, that's our soul, our spiritual side, that's really, just like the natural heart is, if you like, the center of the body, that crucial center controlling mechanism, of the functioning of the body, it's so true is our soul, which is what is meant by our heart, in this context.

We keep our heart, we keep our soul, we have a guard upon our soul, because it is the center of life, it is the center of the person, it is really what makes us distinct, from other creatures.

[8 : 45] And despite what you find, nowadays taught, that we are not really essentially, any different from other creatures, around the ones we call animals, those that have animate life, that's of course, an atheistic or humanistic view, of human life, but when you go to Genesis, and you believe your Bible, yes there's a correspondence, of course, with every other creature, that God made, but the difference is this, that when God had created Adam, of the dust of the earth, he breathed into him, and the man became a living soul, that is not said of any other creature, that is what distinguishes human life, from all other life, out with God himself, that is what places man in correspondence, to God, because that man, that we are, that human being, was made for God, and was made for communion with God, and was made to, have life and connection with God, in communion and interaction, and fellowship, and that's not true, of any other creature, so the heart, in that sense, our soul, is what's meant there, in other words, that means, things like, our mind, our understanding, our will, our affections, emotions, all of these things, that you associate with, our spiritual side, all of these things, are included in the sense of, the heart here, the word heart, when it's used in this context, so it's really saying, pretty much the same, as if it said, keep your soul, and all the things, that belong to your soul, your mind, your will, all the things we've mentioned, keep that, with all vigilance, and how then, do we guard it, what does it mean, by keeping it, well the word keep, is a word, which really includes, as we'll see, something to do, with placing a guard, over it, and, we're assuming from, for our purposes, of our study tonight, that, our soul, is renewed, we all of course, know the importance, of being a new creation, of being born again, of having our souls renewed, of having our will, and our understanding, enlightened, and, and, quickened, and brought, to proper spiritual life, by the spirit of God, and our regeneration, and our conversion, in our new birth, all of that is, so critically important, you cannot, actually have any of this, without, having that to begin with, but assuming, that that's in place, how do we actually, keep, our soul, how do we, guard it, well it includes,

I think you could say, it includes, what goes in, as well as, what comes out, of your soul, or from, your soul, because, in verses, verse 20 there, defined, be attentive, to my words, in other words, the words that God, speaks in wisdom, we are to let these, into our hearts, and keep them there, and prize, and treasure them there, and in verses 24 to 27, it talks mostly about, what comes out, from the heart, what the eyes do, what the feet do, what all of, the things that have to do, with our actions, that are seen outwardly, particularly, that's what's, what's meant there, so in other words, if we let things, into our souls, into our heart, that are spiritual, and our soul, that are spiritual, pollutants, then that's going to affect, not only the condition, of our heart, but also, the way in which, we live our lives, because as we'll see, all of the issues of life, all of the things, that we do, in life, flow from, the heart, from this heart, from our soul, flow, the springs of life, the issues of life, the tributaries, of our life, so just as it is, in the natural, sense of the heart, the body, we're told things, by those that know, medically, we're told things, that are bad, for your heart, that you should avoid, things that you know, that have been, proved to be bad, for your heart, and will lead to a heart condition, if you abuse them, things like, drugs, or an overindulgence, in alcohol, or tobacco, or whatever it is, things which, have been proved, to affect you, adversely, in your heart, in your heart's condition, and the same, we could say, goes for lack of exercise, as well, which is not something, you're putting into, your heart, but it's still, nevertheless, something that's affecting it, well for your soul, it's the same, and it's no accident, that later on, it talks about the eyes, and verse 20, talks about the ears, the things that you actually, let into your soul, are very much, going to affect, its condition, what you see, what you actually, give attention, to the terms, of what you hear, how much, you actually, let all of these things, into your heart, that you know, are not in accordance, with the will of the Lord, they're not pure things, they're not things, which the Lord, is pleased with, and the world, is full of that, and the internet, is full of that, and our televisions, are full of that, and magazines, are full of that, and books, are full of that, and ordinary conversation, is full of that, and that's why, it's so challenging, and so difficult, though it is a privilege, and rewarding, at the same time, to be a Christian, in this society of ours, to actually have, a consistent,

Christian life, lived, is a huge challenge, because, all the time, you are tempted, to let things, into your mind, into your heart, and let them dwell there, and ponder them, which you know, are going to be, pollutants, for you spiritually, and that's why, we have to, guard our heart, with all diligence, that's why, we have to set, a guard, in, over it, as a security guard, as we'll see, in a minute, but of course, it doesn't just mean, the things that you let, into your heart, the problem for us, is, as fallen human beings, that we have enough, in our heart already, even without, letting anything else, into it, and as you well know, in Paul's writings, especially, in the New Testament, he frequently talks, about this thing, called the flesh, and the flesh, is not, as you know, something physical, although it could involve, the use of our physical, our physical, elements like our eyes, or our ears, or whatever, but the flesh itself, is a spiritual entity, it is that, remaining sin, in the believer, that is still active, even though God, has forgiven our sins, our sin, has not been eradicated, from our beings, from our persons, from our actions, from our minds, from our thoughts, from our words, from our decisions, from our practical lives, sin has not been, completely removed, from that, and will not be, until we're glorified, and that's why, in the New Testament,

Paul is so adamant, that, the flesh, lusts against the spirit, there's a warfare, between, this spiritual entity, called the flesh, and it's only there, in the believer, because, there is no flesh, in, the unbeliever, in the unregenerate person, that person, is already controlled, by sin, it becomes, the flesh, in the believer, because, the believer, is no longer, controlled, by, the sin, but by the spirit, of God, but the flesh, is still there, the flesh, as that remaining, sin, in the believer, wars against, that spirit, wars against, what controls, your life, doesn't want you, to have that, in control of your life, and, through, its own motions, and through it being, stirred, by the devil, it actually engages, with the spirit of God, in your soul, and you have to, guard, your soul, in the sense, that you watch, the flesh, that you actually, deal with the flesh, and, one of the, just to give, one of the, passages, that Paul, mentions this in, is in,

Romans chapter 6, a great passage, as you know, that deals with, our death to sin, and our being, alive, in union with Christ, let not, therefore, sin, reign in your, mortal bodies, to make you, obey their passions, do not present, your members to sin, as instruments, for unrighteousness, but present, yourselves to God, as those who have been, brought from death, to life, and your members, to God, as instruments, for righteousness, in other words, he's saying, all your faculties, whether they're, spiritual, or physical, as you are joined, you are united, to Christ, therefore, he says, present, these members, these faculties, not as servants, to sin, any longer, but as servants, of righteousness, as servants, of holiness, as servants, that follow, God's way, of wisdom, in Christ, we keep, our heart, we are under, the constraint, of union, with Christ, to live, to his pleasing, and to his glory, and you notice, it says here, keep your heart, with all vigilance, just in the bank, the other day, and as, standing there, who comes in, but a security guard, picking something up, there, from the bank, with a strong box, of course, in his hand, and wearing, this protective helmet, helmet, and whatever else, was worn around, his waist, just in case, he was attacked, and the box, of course, secured, and tied, to his wrist, or whatever, that is the vigilance, or that's a picture, of the vigilance, with which you, and I should guard, our hearts, that guard is saying, about that security box, with whatever it contains,

[19 : 33] I will do, my very utmost, to protect this, to guard this, to stop this, falling into the wrong hands, I am employed, I am paid, I have vowed, I have signed a contract, that that is what I am up to, that's what I am about, and therefore, that's the kind of language, you see, that Proverbs is using here, with regard to, setting a guard, upon our hearts, upon our souls, guard it, with all vigilance, with the vigilance, of a security guard, going about his business, with the vigilance, that says, I have been given this, by God, to look after it, for him, and if I don't do it, it has serious consequences, if it falls into the wrong hands, if I give it over, into the hands, of my enemy, if I give it over, to the flesh, if I give it over, to Satan, then my life, is going to be, the opposite, of what it should be, keep, your heart, with all, diligence, with all, vigilance, it's, high security, it's, high alert, for this, security guard, that we each, need to be, as we guard, our heart, for God, in the ways, of his wisdom, and, why is guarding it, so important, well the second half, of verse 23, really answers that, for us, for from it, flow the springs, of life, now, it's a very interesting, illustration, because, what, the writer, has in mind, there, is, picturing the heart, like, the source, of a river, river, and, that river, then, as it goes along, on its way, eventually, going into the sea, but, before it reaches the sea, it's probably, most rivers, actually, major rivers anyway, they actually come, to divert, their waters, into various tributaries, they actually, go along, and perhaps, it's known as, another river, somewhere else, so, from that one source, which is usually, very small, you actually have, a whole host, of other, rivers and streams, and tributaries, emanating from it, the problem is, if you've got a pollutant, where it begins, it's going to run, through all the tributaries, through all the branches, of that river, that develop, as it goes along, what it's saying, about our heart, is this, because the heart, is the source, the center, of our being, spiritually, because the heart, is the center, of our person, morally, and spiritually, if there's, a pollutant there, that's active, that is being allowed, to fester there, then all, the issues, of life, that flow from it, are going to be affected, your mind, your understanding, your decisions, your practice, your words, your language, your relationship, to others, it's all affected, if the heart, is not kept, with all vigilance, there's the great challenge, there's the way, that it's, the challenge side, of it, comes to the fore, for from it, are all, flow the springs, of life, if you find, that, a river, even the, the stream, that was passed, here itself, or over at the church, at Garibos, if you find, that, the waters, of, of, of that stream, is polluted, at the very source, of it, it doesn't matter, what you do, to the water, that's further down, the stream, you can try, and clean that bit up, you can try, adding something, to it there, that will actually, clean up, the pollution, or will disinfect it,

or whatever word, you use, it's not going, to make any difference, because the problem, is at the source, and that's how it is, with life too, people try and, deal with, the issues of life, without going, to the source, now you as Christians, know better than that, and we are given, the wisdom from God, to know, that all the streams, of life, flow from the heart, and that if the heart, is not kept, with vigilance, then the springs, of life, the various, tributaries of life, that flow from it, are themselves, then going to be, adversely, affected, that means, of course, that the Christian life, is a disciplined life, it's not, a disciplined life, in the sense, that it's a legalistic life, in the sense of being, the kind of life, that simply follows, a certain, set of rules, and commandments, and then, that really, as you press yourself, into them, that's a Christian,

Christian, is someone, who has, at their heart, a new life, given to them, and that new life, has in it, a desire for God, a desire after God, a desire to be, with God, and a desire, to be like God, and it's, that desire, to be like God, as much, as anything else, that brings us, constantly, back to the heart, and to keep the heart, and to have us, on high alert, as a security guard, over our own heart, because it's so crucial, that it is kept, that it, is guarded, that's, in many ways, related to what Jesus said, in that beatitude, in Matthew, chapter 5, verse 8, blessed, are the pure, in heart, for they shall see God, none of us, is perfectly pure, in this life, but the pure, in heart, are those, who, daily make it, their business, to keep their heart, with all vigilance, knowing that, from it, are the issues of life, now we all, we all get, times, when we're careless, to a greater degree, or less, we saw that, with Abraham, on the Lord's day, coming back, from failure, in Egypt, having to retrace, his steps back, to Canaan, and he made his way, to where he had originally, set his tent, near Bethel, we saw how that was, when we know, that we have failed, we make our way back, and we trace our steps, back to God, and to the beginning, of things, and we go over things, carefully, with him, and then we, come to repent, of the failure, acknowledging that, this is what he's done, for us, that he's brought us, to know himself, and here is, what you do, when you keep your heart, with all diligence as well, there will be days, when you look at your heart, and when the guard, that you are, looks in on your heart, and says, there's been a security breach, something's got in there, and it's my own fault,

I wasn't vigilant enough, I wasn't on guard, in a way, that was alert enough, I slipped up, I slipped up, before I go any further, I've got to deal with it, I've got to throw out, the intruder, and I've got to set the guard again, that's what we need to do, spiritually, that is what, an aspect of, what following holiness, really, is about, and we are all aware, of the fact that, holiness is not, a popular subject, but the Bible goes so far, as to say that, without it, no one shall see God, blessed are the pure in heart, for they, shall see God, well, that's, what it says, in principle, to keep it, and this is, why it's important, to guard our hearts, because from it flow, the springs of life, and then let's look, just in closing, at the issues, that surround that, the ear, the mouth, the eyes, and the feet, because they're all, related to our heart, and to the importance, of guarding it, he says here, in verse 20, my son, be attentive, to my words, incline your ear, to my sayings, let them not escape, from your sight, keep them, within your heart, see that's part of, how we keep, our hearts, and guard our hearts, is that we let, the words of God, the words of wisdom, into our hearts, and keep them there, we actually, treasure them there, we're all aware, at times,

I'm sure, of, giving, half an ear, to what's being said, by someone, someone that's busy, trying to tell us something, something that, to them is important, and, you know, they know, you're not listening, you've been in that situation, so have I, and, you'll hear that, part of the way, through the conversation, the voice, speaks up, you're not listening, are you listening, we all know, what that's like, well in the old testament, the word, here, especially, when it was used, by God, or, a servant of God, like Moses, or one of the prophets, the word, here, in Hebrew, has built into it, the idea, of giving obedience, the old testament, doesn't know anything about, hearing, if it's just simply, an outward listening, that does not let, what you're hearing, into your heart, to remain there, to be pondered there, to act, in its own way, as part of, the security mechanism, for keeping your soul, in good condition, my son, be attentive, to my words, preachers are guilty, of not listening, just as much as, others, but it's, it's, it's quite easy, sometimes, in preaching, to know who's listening, and who isn't,

[30 : 03] I'm not going to pause there, because you all, listen, but, it's important, spiritually, that we listen, to God, it's important, especially, in the kind of generation, that we live in, because, if ever, there was a generation, that has a tendency, not to listen, or not to make time, to listen, it is this generation, that we belong to, this time, in this world, that we are set in, there are so many things, that really, call for your attention, but do so, in a way, that will make you rush, that will not give you, the time, to do, what you need to do, for your spiritual condition, to be maintained, and you cannot, maintain your heart, and your soul, in good condition, without making time, to listen to God, and to listen, to his words, carefully, my son, be attentive, to my words, incline your ear, to my sayings, let them not escape, from your sight, in other words, he is saying, here are my words, that I am giving to you, make sure, that when you are hearing them, you are actually, gathering them in, like a fisherman, who doesn't want to, lose any of his precious catch, or her precious catch, they are actually making sure, that they are all reeled in, that none of them, escape back, and the words of God, are like that for us, that we take in, and harbor, and treasure, keep them, within your heart, let them be a part of, how your soul, is kept in good condition, now of course, there are a whole lot of branches, to that too, you see how the issues of life, come from the heart, and are related to the heart, listening to God's words, means well, how do you listen to God's words, well it's when you read your Bible, now it's important too, to be, where the word of God, is preached, all of these are, different avenues, if you like, that are attached to, the element of listening itself, secondly, he talks about, putting away from you, verse 23, put away from you, crooked speech, and put devious talk, far from you,

Jesus said that, it's not the things, that go into, the man, into the person, into the stomach, into the heart, indeed, these are not the things, that defile a person, but the things, that come out, and bad speech, is one of them, and we have a generation, that's given to, bad language, to coarse language, to blasphemous language, people take pride, in abusing, the name of God, and the name of Christ, where they wouldn't dare, to do it, to Mohammed, we should have, far more, concern, for the name of Christ, and the name of God, and the reputation, of God, and the reputation, of our Lord, than any mere human being, and we live in a generation, in which, our language, must be distinctive, as a language, that is, different, to the language, of the coarse, worldly, sinful, ungodly person, now I know, that's, something that you know already, but the Bible, reminds us of it, and,

Colossians chapter 4, for example, as it says, there is, let your speech, always be with grace, seasoned, with salt, chapter 4, verses 5, to 6, conduct yourselves wisely, towards outsiders, making the best use of the time, let your speech, always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know, how you ought to answer, each person, you see the context there, is to those who are outside, to those who are not in the church, to those who are, looking in on your life, to those who interact with, let your speech, always, be gracious, or be marked by grace, seasoned with salt, in other words, he's using, the imagery of, taking salt, and applying that, to your food, as a, as a flavoring, as a seasoning, and, in the right measure, therefore, the food is made tasty, professional, professional, chefs, if you watch, master chef, you'll always find them, or frequently find them, saying, well it's, it's very good, it looks very nice, but, you've missed out, on the seasoning, and the seasoning, is so important, to the whole dish, and it is, to the Christian, the seasoning, is largely, through your speech, let your speech, always be gracious, with grace, seasoned with salt, let it be, flavorsome speech, that means, don't just avoid, but it's not just a matter, of avoiding, bad language, it is, on the other hand, using very positive, flavorsome language, it's not enough, for us to avoid swearing, and taking the name, of God in vain, though that's, of course, important, you have to go further, than that, and say, my speech, has to be positive, constructive, helpful, encouraging, as well, as sometimes, critical, in the right way, but it's saying here, put away from you, all crooked speech, all devious talk, everything that would, manipulate, or cause suspicion, or sow suspicion, or, that sort of stuff, put it away from you, you see, and then, also he's saying, let your eyes, look directly, forwards, let your gaze, be straight, before you,

Psalm 119, verses 15, and 37, and other places, where he says, keep my eyes, from viewing, vanity, or worthless things, I remember, first of all, going to, leaving home, and going to work, on a farm, beginning my course, in agriculture, in those days, and, I thought I knew, when I left home, reasonably well, how to plough, with a tractor, in a straight line, but that was, relatively easy, really, once you learned, how to drive the tractor, and do the ploughing, in a small croft, like you have in Lewis, or in the Aired Town, but then, when you're set, in a huge tractor, in the middle of a field, that's like the whole, of Aired Town, it's not as easy, to go in a straight line, either with a plough, or with a moor, and one of the things, that farming people, look at, it's a bit of a sort of, who's best, sort of thing,

I suppose, but, if you make a mess, of a farmer's field, when you're, mowing it, for hay, or whatever, if it's all over the place, that person knows, that others round about, are going to be saying, what kind of employment, employees does that man have, that's pathetic, that's terrible, well, how do you plough, in a straight line, how do you mow, in a straight line, in a large field, well, the first thing, you're taught is, you put something, at the far end, white bag, or a marker, of some kind, and you keep your eye, on that marker, in the distance, not, down, at the plough, like this, because that's when, you'll go all over the place, you keep your eye, on that marker, don't let that marker, out of your sight, unless something happens, that you have to stop, ploughing, and if you keep your eye, on that marker, and then you look behind you, you'll have a relatively, straight line, or should have, the same for us, spiritually, you keep your eye, on that marker, ahead, ponder the path, of your feet, watch the tracks, that you're making, where they're heading, what sort of, line you're following, and to make sure, that it's as straight, as possible, keep your eye, on the marker, in the far distance, not on what's happening, immediately, because the marker, in the far distance, is your Lord, he's your example, he's your motivation, he's the one, who lived a perfect life, he's the one, who faced temptation, and overcame it, and you keep your eye, on Jesus, and you run, the race that is set, before you, with perseverance, looking, to him, and then finally, it says, ponder the path, of your feet, that your eyes, took directly forwards, ponder the path, of your feet, that all, then all your ways, will be sure, well what that means, the word ponder, really means, study, it means, weigh it up, doesn't mean, you just, take a casual glance, at your tracks, once you've kept your eye, on the Lord, ahead of you, and you've tried to, go in a straight line, and at the end of every day, you look back, and you actually look, where your feet have been, you assess your life, but you don't do it lightly, you don't do it just casually, the word, that's used here, ponder, is the word, that means, study it, give time, to weigh it, go over it, between yourself, and God, and deal with, what needs to be dealt with, so all of these things, are great challenges, but attached to them, are all the great rewards, and benefits, that wisdom bestows, chapter 16, let's just finish, with a verse from Proverbs, chapter 16 says, verse 32, whoever is slow to anger, is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, better than he who takes, a city, in other words, if we rule our hearts, and keep our hearts, we are like the conqueror, who takes a city, from those who are holding it, and we have, the honor of being, even better, than those who take, a city, security, high alert, security guards, on your heart, so important, so vital, so necessary, for every Christian, let's pray, eternal God, we do give thanks, that your word,

[41 : 10] keeps us on that path, that we know, is true to yourself, and when we stray from it, we know Lord, that it is not, the fault of your word, of your spirit, of any of the counsel, that you give us through these, but rather, our own, Lord, we thank you, that you have reminded us, of how important, that central, issue of our soul is, how important, it is, that we keep it, and guard it, and watch over it, and that we, have all the other issues, of life, attending upon it, grant these mercies, to us we pray, and hear our prayers, this evening, so accept us now, for Jesus sake, Amen.