

# Guide Thine Heart

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[ 0 : 00 ] up. Proverbs 23, we're going to read verse number 15 through 19. We'll spend the majority of our time on verse number 19. My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.

What a wonderful verse. My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Parents should understand that. Anybody involved in discipleship relationship should understand the joy that is found in the person that you've been training, the person you've been discipling, that wisdom would come from them and that your heart will rejoice because it shows that they are growing. Somebody said something about introverts and extroverts and my son Thatcher said, I think both labels are dangerous because you can find pride in both of them. And somebody looked at me and had a big smile on my face because I'm thinking my words coming out of my son's mouth.

All right. Is that he's listening and growing. And verse 16, yea, my reigns shall rejoice when my lips speak right things. Let not that heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end and thine expectation shall not be cut off. Hear thou my son and be wise and guide thine heart in the way. Verse 19 is where we'll spend the majority of the time, even though it's just one verse, as we've been going through Proverbs, just read a little bit, get as far as we can before there's just so much that needs to be said. Verse 19, we'll spend some time on because hear thy son and be wise and guide thine heart in the way. That is a subject that is very much under attack and that is taught often. You may have heard it said the greatest lie is the one that is closest to the truth. Brother Brett, if you wouldn't mind putting that slide that I put in there on the screen. And when you take, if you take a saying and you put it to a nice graphic, it just seems so much more truthy, right? And so here you go. You have follow your heart and listen to when it speaks to you. It must be true. I found it on the internet. It has a nice background to it.

And so this idea of following your heart and the Bible would tell us to guide our heart. We really need to listen to what the Bible is saying in opposition to what the world is telling us.

And so this deserves some of our attention. Question I would ask you is, is the heart trustworthy? There's two views of self. The more traditional one that was held forever, for a long time, was that pride was the cause of so many problems. A legal term in classic literature would say even hubris is what they call it. H-U-B-R-I-S. Is that hubris? Am I saying that right? Hubris? Hubris. That's the word. All right. Now everybody's back with it. Hubris.

[ 2 : 56 ] Sound out all the letters in that. Hubris. And so it was given as the reason that somebody would do something wrong, that they lacked humility, that they were prideful, that people would recognize the cause of this offense to the law, was that they weren't humble. But more in modern times, the cause is a low self-esteem is the cause. And that's the reason, and I've shared with you many times how I was in the low self-esteem club at my school, and I didn't know what it meant.

And then after they explained it to me, I'm like, you're right. I do feel sad. You know, can I have my little Debbie cake now and stay after school? And so this low self-esteem is the cause.

But the gospel is the answer to the dilemma, and we will see this in 1 Corinthians 4. The gospel of humility blessed self-forgetfulness, not thinking more of myself as in modern cultures or less of myself as in traditional cultures, simply thinking of myself less. Now the answer isn't found in trying to balance back and forth between thinking too much of myself or too little of myself. Before we look at the answer, let's look at the problem just a little bit longer. 1 Corinthians chapter number 13, Paul is addressing a problem. I read verse 1, and this summarizes the problem for you.

And I, brethren, cannot speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as babes in Christ. And so there's a pride rooted in comparison. In this passage, it was a dispute. Instead of enjoying the relationship that they had with the Apostle Paul, they were using it as a place of comparison. Oh, you think you really know something? I studied at the foot of so-and-so, and it brought this pride and comparison that was there. Stephen and I were joking. We said, we shouldn't make the five-minute preacher go after Brother John teaching on how to prepare a lesson.

That wouldn't be very kind. I didn't consider that I was still going to go after Brother John. But there'd be like, I studied at the Bible Institute with Brother John, or I studied here, or I studied with this person. And pride always finds itself quickly going to comparison. You know, this pride is not just enough to be rich, but you have to have more than other people. It isn't just to be attractive. You have to be more attractive than somebody else. It's always being comparison.

[ 5 : 14 ] It's the building of an ego. Remember when some parents got in trouble a couple years ago because they were building fake resumes for their kids, that they were setting up green screens and pretending they played on soccer teams they didn't play, and that they were winning awards they didn't win because they were trying to get into college? That faking of building a resume is something that doesn't just happen with high school kids, but every one of us could fall into that trap of trying to build this fake resume. This is how one musician put it, a non-believing musician said, and all of my will has always been to conquer some horrible feeling of inadequacy. I'm always struggling with that fear. I push past one spell of it and discover myself as a special human being.

Then I get to another stage, and I think I'm mediocre and uninteresting, and I find a way to get myself out of that. Again and again, my life, my drive in life is from this horrible fear of being mediocre that always is pushing me. It's pushing me. And so the world would applaud that. That would push them on to newer and greater things, but I would think in here as a Christian that you would feel pity and compassion upon a person that says that never in their life would they ever be content with the way in which God had created them. So that's why we have, my son, be wise and guide thine heart in the way. My son, you better learn to guide your heart because if you just allow this world to do it, it's going to destroy you. There's so many forces in this world trying to push you in one direction or another. So many people coming to you, obviously pushing you towards evil, but that's not the great concern. There's other people coming to you with truth that would say things like, just follow your heart, and they would have a nicer message. And so you better learn how to guide your heart. Paul tells them, he says, his response in chapter number four, after they're talking about all their comparison, he says in verse number three, but with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or a man's judgment. And this next line you should underline, teenager, yea, I judge not my own self. So he said, I'm not going to allow you to judge me, and I'm not even going to allow myself to judge me. Because the world would say, follow your heart, don't listen to anybody else. If you want to be this or you want to be that, don't listen to your parents, don't listen to the authority, don't let people judge you, you just need to follow yourself. The apostle Paul says,

I'm not moving by fear of them, but I'm not even listening to myself, I'm going to be guided by something. For I know nothing by myself, yet I'm not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord. That the justification of the Lord is the way in which he is going to guide his heart.

He is not going to just live for his own judgment, which is such a common message today, is don't let man judge you, you be your own judge. Apostle Paul says, don't let man judge you, you not even be the one that judges yourself, but allow it to be the Lord. And so our view of self and our emotions is determined by proper thinking. Romans 12, 3, for I say through the grace given unto me to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. In college one time, I was driving from the dining hall back to the guy's house, and it was about 20 minutes away. And I picked up this guy, and he was known as being the troublemaker on campus for some things that he was teaching. And I said, Daniel Kearney, I said, you got 20 minutes to tell me what you believe and why I should believe it as well. All right? And so we take that, and I drive back, and I have two different guys sitting in the living room. And one guy just seems to be so intelligent, and he just was making such an academic case or something. And then this other kid, and he was on the other side, and he was just all emotion, completely just, I don't feel this is right. I couldn't worship a God like that.

And his heart seemed to be right. And I was looking at him thinking, I'm supposed to, I don't know what I'm supposed to choose here. Is Christianity really divided between those who can quote Bible verses and make an intelligent argument, but that God really seems cold. But this man over here, his heart is so full, but he isn't making a coherent sentence. He isn't being logical.

[ 9 : 51 ] Is Christianity really divided between those of us that can use our brain and those of us that can only use our heart? Are they really at odds with each other? And the Bible would say most certainly not that the guiding of your heart is going to be served by your mind, which is to say, if you really care for the hearts of people, if you feel compassion upon people, if you see them tossed to and fro by everything in this world, and you see all the emotions and problems that they're having, that what we just heard about teaching the Bible is the way in which you're going to help them. Because when I lost my dad at the age of 18 and I'm sitting on the steps of the front porch and I'm emotional and I'm very sad, I needed a basketball coach who was a mentor to me to sit there with me and to cry with me and to give understanding. But at some point I needed him to say something that would make a difference. I needed him to tell me something that was true. I needed him to take the word of God and to fight against all the lies that I was beginning to believe. And so the most loving thing for him was not just to give me a hug and to walk away, but it was to confront me with the truth of God's word. 1 Peter 1.13,

Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. So unlike my dorm room that seemed to be there was one side heavy on the brain and one side heavy on the heart, the Bible and verses will put them right on top of each other. It will command an emotion. It will command you to do something like have hope, but it will tell you to do this by protecting your mind and to be ready and on guard with knowledge. And so in this passage it tells us that we should have hope, be sober and have hope. And it starts off with verse number, with the word wherefore. And all of you know that when we see that, that the verses prior to it are going to give us some information, such as verse number three, abundant in mercy and begotten us. Verse four, an inheritance incorruptible. Verse five, who have kept by the power of God, which leads us to in verse six, rejoicing greatly. Verse seven, that through the trial of your faith be more precious than gold, that they may be tried, might be found in the praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. And so this hope that we are to have and we are to experience is based upon the knowledge that is given to us in the previous passage. And the book of first Peter is full of reasons of hope. First Peter 3 15 tells us, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always the given answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. Typically, when I had read that passage, I'd always thought like, be ready for debate, be ready for apologetics, be ready to give an answer to any well crafted question that somebody had given, that I was constantly so loaded down with scripture that if a person was to say something, I would be able to give them some reasoning behind it. I'd be able to be persuasive, but that is happening. But what also is happening here is the aspect of people that feel like they are completely without hope. I've just walked through first Peter. I know so many reasons to be hopeful that I can say, let me give you a reason that you should be hopeful. Let me give you a whole book of reasons that you should be hopeful. I should be always ready to give an answer to every man that asks us you a reason of the hope. And I'm able to do that. I'm able to help somebody on a heart level because I have been prepared with the knowledge of God's word and that has helped me be hopeful. And so how do we be ready? Gird up your loins, which means carry your mind for actions, be sober. It means to think clearly and the mind should serve the heart. Romans 12, 2 tells us that it's the renewing of the mind will prove what is good, acceptable and perfect will of God. And so biblically thinking, it will serve hope. Thinking clearly, thinking soberly and thinking biblically will help you. It's to say that your mind should take your heart by the hand and say, let's take a trip together and I need to walk you through the word. That's how you guide your heart is that you allow the knowledge that God has given you to lead your heart. And so we look to God to do the sanctifying work. Psalm 51 verse 10, create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. That's where we should be looking. Prior to that passage, David already said in verse number seven, that God would purge him with hyssop and shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. And so in this verse, he is talking about the work of sanctification. That thing that happens in Ephesians 1 11 that tells us that we're now predestined to a purpose. It's that it is the will of God for us in our lives that he will conform us to his image. And so that it is God that is creating inside of us a clean heart. It is God that is sanctifying us. It is God that is Romans 12 tomb that is renewing the mind. That as we are in

Romans 8 29, for whom did he foreknow we also did predestine to conform to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren, that he's doing this by giving us understanding. He's doing this by renewing our mind and teaching us. Have you ever took it, taken any of those personality tests and they come out and they tell you that you're whatever and they're really fairly accurate, right? I mean, because there's a humans have been the same forever and so that it wouldn't be surprising those tests would be. Well, Stephanie and I always come out as two different things almost every time.

There's the one that is the campaigner, all right? He or she, she, okay. All right. She wants you to feel what she is feeling, right? And so she is trying to get you to feel what she is feeling about a situation. If she is nervous and anxious, she wants to convince you that you should be nervous and anxious. Or if she's happy and excited, the same. And it serves a role. And I would be the debater, all right? I want you to think what I'm thinking, not so much caring what you feel. I just want you to believe what is true. I really want you to know this, which makes for a very lively household, all right? We have somebody campaigning and debating, but the Word of God applies the both. That I want you to feel and experience the joy that's available for you, but I want you to do that by knowing what is true.

It doesn't do us any good to get you to feel and experience something if you didn't get there by the knowledge of the Word of God. It also doesn't do us any good if you feel happy and optimistic and you got to that point, but you didn't come to it by knowing the truth of God's Word. And it is the gospel that gives us this ability. Romans 6, 11, and 12, likewise, you reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin. The gospel gives us this ability to reckon. The unbeliever is a servant to sin, but the gospel now has given us this ability. And so what is the key to reckoning this act of the will? Romans 6, 8, 9, now if we be dead in Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more and death has no more dominion over Him. This reckoning, this ability to make a choice over sin, this ability to choose the God our heart, to choose our emotion, to choose the way we should feel in a moment, this reckoning, comes from knowing, and the directing of our heart is how we yield our lives to God. Verse 16 of Romans 6, neither yield ye your members as instruments of righteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto

[ 17 : 46 ] God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto Him. We are now able to yield ourselves unto God because we're able to reckon based upon the knowledge that He has given us. So the fight to help people on a heart level is a fight to help them know something. It's a fight to help them know the truth of God's Word, the importance of the Word, and your need to teach it. I'll close here with just a couple quotes. I don't, the word is called polemics, is when somebody calls out somebody else that is doing something that's incorrect, and I don't often feel the need for that. Everybody's getting, sitting up real straight.

There's nobody in here, okay? That would be super awkward tonight, all right? I wouldn't do that personally. But in this town, and a person that has great influence, he recently said, listen to this and think of the logical conclusion, and I want you to listen to this and think logical conclusion. This is what he said, and I want to tell it because it's somebody that has influence, and I want you to realize that this kind of thinking, you need to prepare your kids how to respond to this kind of thinking when it comes to Christianity. The Christian faith doesn't rise and fall on the accuracy or the inerrancy of 66 ancient documents or books we call the Bible. It rises and falls on the identity of a single individual, Jesus of Nazareth. See, that is such a problematic statement.

It just really creates such a problem here because it creates this competition between the Word of God and Jesus, as if you have to make a decision between the two. Another man out in California, he says, we need to go off the map with the Holy Spirit. We need to lead this. He refers to this as the map, and we need to go off the map with the Holy Spirit. And I want to just encourage you in discipleship and in the way you think biblically, the way you train your kids is to not to believe, is to understand how necessary that the Word of God is for us to believe and even feel the way that the Bible would command us to think and to feel, that we need the Word of God. There's no understanding through Jesus and Nazareth's Word. There's no understanding of the resurrection. There's none of that without the Word of God. Let me take all of your Bibles, and a hundred years from now, let's see what this church believes, only by oral tradition of us passing it on one to another.

And we would be like the Jewish people with the Talmud that would just be growing and growing and growing. Because my grandfather said this, and my grandfather said this, and it would just be completely out of control. And we're so grateful for the Word of God that we need this, and we do not need to leave the map. And the Holy Spirit would never lead us to leave the map. A couple Sundays ago, how do you honor God? You do it by confessing Christ. There's no honoring God unless you confess Christ. How are you ever going to know to confess Christ if the Spirit doesn't guide you and teach you? And how would you ever have faith? How would the Spirit ever lead you if He didn't do it by the hearing of His Word? And so those statements are just so troubling. Because you say, if I reject it, I'm rejecting how wonderful and central Jesus is. But that's not the case. The testimony of Jesus is to tell you to go out into all the world and all nations and to teach them what He has taught us.

The Bible gives us clear indication that we are to be teaching the Word. As a church, we should understand the real issues of the world or of the heart. And we must say, as they did in Acts 20, 26, Wherefore, I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I am not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 2 Timothy tells us that this Scripture is by inspiration profitable for doctrine and proof for correction, instruction, and righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Everything that a man needs, that the Holy Spirit can furnish them through the teaching of this Word. And so we're not contesting that here, that Paul taught every verse of the Old Testament, but the Word was the content of his teaching.

[ 22 : 04 ] Acts 19, 10, He continued by the space of two years, so that all that which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greek. This was the content in which he taught. And then what was the result of the ministry? Acts 19, 20, So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed.

What is the primary ministry that we as a church want to grow in our community? It's the ministry of the Word. We call it many different things. We'll call it a want them. We will call it a Bible elective on Sunday night. We'll call it Sunday school. A couple weeks from now, we will literally put the Bibles together. But this is the ministry that we are all given to. It is the ministry of the Word. Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Before we sing a song together, I'll pray and we'll sing a song, be dismissed. But here, hear thou, my son, and be wise. Hear what?

The Word of God. When it comes to declaring the whole counsel of God, this is what we have. From beginning to end, this is the whole counsel of God. We don't get to pick and choose from it.

I don't get to ignore large portions of it. That we need to be teaching our way in the Bible and listening to it. And what is the result of them hearing the Word? Is that they will receive knowledge and they will be wise. And how does this change our lives? Is that the teaching of this will guide our hearts. So, the battle for the heart of the next generation is fought by helping them guide their hearts in His way through understanding and obeying God's Word. And church, we need you in this battle. And it is God's plan for you to be equipped unto this work. I really want you to pray about being part of that elective. I want you to be praying about every time an opportunity comes to help equip you to teach the Word of God. I want you to say, that's for me. You need to say, I need to consider, is this an opportunity that I need to take? Because your teaching of the Word of God is how we fight for the hearts of the next generation. And if we as a church don't stand up and we don't teach people the whole counsel of the Word, I can tell you that the world has all kinds of things that they're ready to teach them. They have all kinds of ways that they want to lead them.

They would love to tell them, follow your heart. But in so doing, they're not going to follow their heart. They're going to follow whatever agenda, whatever propaganda that the world wants from them and just turn them in consumers. But we can help the next generation by teaching the counsel of God's Word. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for your Word, Lord. We thank you for the testimony that Jesus would have towards him, that this is the Word of God. Thank you for the testimony, Lord, that it's self-attesting. It's complete. It is infallible. It's inerrant. And it matters so much to us, Lord. We are so grateful for it. Lord, without it, we would be without a guide. Without it, Lord, the Holy Spirit would, without the Word, Lord, guiding us through the Holy Spirit, our hearts would be constantly unanchored and be pushed all in different directions from this world.

[ 25 : 08 ] And so we are grateful for the ministry of the Holy Spirit and this Word to help us guide our hearts. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.