

"The Missing Ingredient" Part 1

Mount of Olives | September 7, 2025 | Proverbs 4:20-23

Pastor John Steward

Prayer of the Day

Oh Lord, the cacophony of voices blaring at us in our world today delivers such mind-numbing and spirit-exhausting costs upon us that we need to diminish their presence. Help us, beginning in this hour, to quiet our minds, to be still, and to devote our entire attention upon You and Your divine presence. And as we move forward this week, remind us that it is only in Your wisdom and power that we can rest in peace and truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture Reading

Proverbs 4:20-23

My child, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Message Notes

Proverbs 4:20-23

My child, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Matthew 26:36-39

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

Study Questions – Read Proverbs 4:20-27

ICEBREAKER – Getting started:

1. What's one piece of advice you've received that has really stuck with you over the years?
2. If you had to pick one part of your body (ears, eyes, mouth, feet) that most influences your daily choices, which would it be and why?
3. Have you ever had to change direction in life because you realized the path you were on wasn't good for you? What was that like?
4. What's one practical way you try to stay focused on what's right, even when distractions come?

Based on Proverbs 4:20-27, answer the following questions:

OBSERVATION – What does the text say?

1. As you read **Proverbs 4:20-27**, what comes to mind? What stands out? What is interesting to you and why?
2. In one sentence, how would you summarize this text?

3. What lesson or message do you think the author is trying to convey?

INTERPRETATION – What does the text mean?

1. In verse 20, why does the writer emphasize listening closely and paying attention to wisdom?
2. What does verse 21 suggest about the importance of keeping God's words in our hearts rather than just hearing them?
3. How does verse 22 describe the benefits of holding onto God's words? What do "life" and "health" mean in this context?
4. Verse 23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart." Why is the heart described as the "wellspring of life"?
5. What are some practical ways we can guard our hearts today?
6. In verse 24, why does the writer warn against a corrupt mouth and perverse lips? How do our words affect our spiritual lives?
7. Verses 25–27 emphasize eyes, feet, and paths. How do each of these body parts symbolize different aspects of living wisely?
8. Why do you think the passage uses physical imagery (ears, eyes, mouth, heart, feet) to describe spiritual wisdom?
9. How does focusing on the "straight path" (v. 25–27) relate to resisting distractions in life?
10. What dangers might come from turning "to the right or the left" (v. 27)?
11. How can these verses help us make decisions in moments of temptation or uncertainty?
12. If you had to summarize the main message of Proverbs 4:20–27 in one sentence, what would it be?

APPLICATION – How can you apply the text?

1. What steps can you take this week to "keep God's Word in your heart" (v. 21) in a practical way?
2. How do you currently guard your heart, and what changes might help you protect it more intentionally?
3. In what ways do your words (v. 24) reflect the condition of your heart, and how can you use your speech to build others up?
4. What distractions tend to pull your eyes or feet away from the "straight path" (v. 25–27), and how can you avoid them?