



It Is Always a Heart Issue
Proverbs 4:23
10.11.20

Goals of the Proverbs Study:

1. To gain a clearer understanding of the book of Proverbs.
2. To offer a reading challenge for the Proverbs of the month.
3. To develop a deeper commitment to embracing God's plan for life.

God's commands reveal his plan for life.

- God's commands express His character.
- God's commands are *not* only right, but they are also good.
- God's Commands are *not* an end in themselves, but a means to point us to the command-giver.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

Our pre-conversion condition and position with God:

*Ephesians 2:1-5 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, **and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.** ⁴ **But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)***

*Ephesians 4:17-20 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, **because of the blindness of their heart;** ¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ **But you have not so learned Christ,** ²¹ **if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:***

Proverbs 28:26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool.

- **Hebrews 3:8** - Do not harden your hearts.
- **Hebrews 3:10** - Those who went astray in their hearts
- **Hebrews 3:15** - Do not harden your hearts.
- **Hebrews 4:7** - Do not harden your hearts.

Hebrews 3:12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Heart-work is hard work, but it is essential and rewarding work!

Steps to a Hard Heart:

1. Selfishness – I want my way.

We deny self *not* as an end but as a means to know, love, and serve Christ. To deny self is to surrender our right to go our way to follow Christ.

2. Stubbornness – I won't stop until I get my way.
3. Indifference – I don't care who it hurts or if people disagree with my life choices.
4. Resistance – I refuse to listen to Biblical guidance.

We have the freedom to dodge our responsibilities, but we cannot dodge the consequences of avoiding our responsibilities. **God in His love warns us and provides for us clear commands that will protect us from a great deal of spiritual, emotional, and physical harm.**

"I am a pastor. I spend my life trying to persuade people that God alone is worthy of their love, dreams, passions – essentially their lives. I often find this to be a tough sell. The primary reason is that for fallen humanity, God's desirability is in competition with His created beauties. His gifts get the worship." Dick Lucas

"There are two lessons for the Christian to learn; the one is to enjoy God in everything, the other is to enjoy everything in God." Charles Simeon (1759-1839)

1 Timothy 6:6 godliness with contentment is great gain.

"Pleasure is a tempting thing; what yields delight cannot but attract desire; it is next to necessity, so strongly doth it urge." Matthew Henry (1662 -1714)

Christ-centered desires create the happiness that feeds one's decision to know, love, and serve Christ more. Self-centered desires create the happiness that feeds one's decision to know, love, and serve sin more.

Hebrews 11:25 *There is pleasure in sin for a season...*

Psalms 37:4 *Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

When one's delights and desires are found in God, one discovers purpose and meaning.

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴And see if *there is any* wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

Prayer:

Dear God, we come to you asking for help to empty our hearts of any desires that dishonor you and can deceive us. Replace those desires with a hunger for Jesus Christ. Help our hearts do what it should do and was saved to do, knowing, loving, and serving Jesus Christ. Please help us to pursue Jesus as our greatest treasure in life. Amen