

The Condition of Our Hearts

Proverbs 4:20-27

Introduction: Most of Proverbs 1-9 is written from a father to a son. Like any good father, the father in Proverbs wants his son to be wise and to be protected from dangers. Although the father warns his son about external dangers, he is most concerned that his son protect himself from internal dangers. In Proverbs 4, the father wants his son (and ultimately us) to pay attention to his heart, because the condition of his heart is the key to a good life. May this study encourage us to do a heart check up and make sure the condition of our hearts are good.

Opening Discussion: What is one piece of wisdom your father imparted to you?

Read Proverbs 4:20-27

1. The father urges the son to give attention to his words (v. 20) and ultimately to "keep them in the midst of his heart" (v. 21). What does it mean to keep wisdom in the midst of our hearts? (Read Deut. 6:6 and Colossians 3:16 for additional insight.)
2. Why does the father urge his son to keep wisdom in the midst of his heart (v. 22)?
3. According to this passage, why is it important to pay attention to the condition of our hearts?
4. What does it mean to watch over our heart with all diligence (v. 23)?

Steve said:

If I asked you, "What is the condition of your heart?" would you be able to give an answer? For some of us, paying attention to the condition of our hearts is the most strategic thing we can do at this point in our lives. Consciously paying attention to the condition of your heart might be the thing that humbles you before God and makes you consistently teachable before Him.

5. Would you be able to give an answer to the question, "What is the condition of your heart?" Explain.

Steve said:

The picture being painted here is that of a person whose heart and body are fully God's. This is a picture of "shalom" – of wholeness and health. In Paul's terminology, this person is alive to God and therefore presents the members of his/her body to God as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:13). It all starts with the heart. But if you want to monitor the condition of your heart, notice what you think, say, and do. Those are the tangible indicators of the condition of our hearts.

6. As you think about the things you think, say, and do, what is it revealing about the condition of your heart?

Steve said:

So often we hide from God. We organize our days so that we are never alone and quiet before God. We fill our lives with noise many times, I think, to drown out the quiet voice of God. But as followers of Christ, there's no need to do that. Jesus is the "great physician"; those who honestly, humbly admit that their hearts are sick will find healing in Jesus.

7. Is there any way you are hiding from God or trying to drown out the quiet voice of God?
8. What do we do if we sense from God that our heart is not fully healthy? How do we grow and change?