



**Educate  
+ Engage**



THE  
WISDOM WAY ~~TH~~

The way  
to Guard Your Heart

### OVERVIEW

Have you ever thought about what it really means to “guard your heart”? It’s more than just keeping your feelings from getting hurt; it’s about protecting the core of who you are, your will, and your identity. This lesson is all about learning to prioritize what really matters and making sure we’re guarding our hearts, watching our words, training our gaze, and choosing our path wisely.

#### **Scripture Passage**

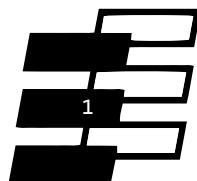
Proverbs 4:20–27 (NKJV)

My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.

### EDUCATE

Imagine walking through the grand halls of a castle, feeling the weight of its history and purpose. Unlike palaces, castles are built not just for luxury but for protection. They come complete with layers of defenses guarding what’s inside. Picture the deep trenches, towering walls, and inner fortification, all designed to safeguard something incredibly valuable—just like you.

Now, think about how these fortress defenses relate to our lives as followers of Jesus Christ. According to God’s Word, we’re in a spiritual battle with an enemy seeking to harm us. Spiritual warfare is more than just preacher talk. It takes place each and every day. And just as a castle defends its people, we’re called to defend something precious: our hearts. Proverbs 4:23 tells us to guard our hearts, but what exactly does that mean? Just as a castle’s defenses protect what’s inside, guarding our hearts means protecting our souls from harm. But how do we do that within the challenges and temptations of today’s life?



### Your Heart

Our heart involves more than just emotions; it's the core of our being, where our will and character live. In ancient times, the heart symbolized the soul, the eternal aspect of our existence that lives long past the physical body. While our bodies are visible to the world, our souls remain unseen, yet they are the most vital part of who we are. Sadly, we often prioritize the needs and desires of our physical bodies over the well-being of our souls. This imbalance leads us to spiritual harm as we compromise our values to protect our physical selves.

Think of it this way: your soul is like a hidden portrait. Your soul is influenced by every choice and action you make, whether good or bad. Jesus emphasized the significance of guarding our souls, recognizing their value and vulnerability to harm. In Matthew 10:28, He urged his disciples not to fear those who can harm the body but not the soul. We are to only fear God, who has power over both the body and soul.

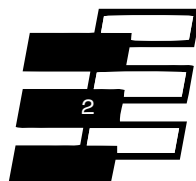
This teaching resonates with the call in Proverbs to guard our heart diligently, ensuring that no one compromises its integrity. Our soul is a sacred fortress, accessible only to God, ourselves, and those we allow inside. It's crucial to be discerning about those we grant access to our heart. That is one reason your dating decisions are so important. You should talk with your parents and spiritual leadership before making decisions to date, especially if you are too young to consider getting married.

The concept of guarding our heart extends beyond mere protection; it's about actively defending and fortifying our soul against the onslaught of worldly influences. Just as a castle's defenses are fortified to withstand enemy attacks, we must build spiritual barriers around our heart to ward off harmful influences.

*Discussion Question: How can you prioritize guarding your soul over protecting your physical body in your everyday decisions and actions?*

### Your Mouth

In Scripture, words are viewed as powerful indicators of what lies within our hearts. Matthew 12:34 teaches that our mouths speak from the overflow of our hearts, revealing our true selves. James further illustrated this idea by likening our words to a rudder that guides our lives, a fire that can cause great harm if not controlled, and a well that exposes the depths of our inner being (James 3:1–11). The analogy of the rudder highlights the influential role our words play in directing the course of our lives. Just as a small rudder steers a large ship, our words have the power to shape our actions and decisions.



## Lesson 3

Similarly, the metaphor of fire underscores the potential destructiveness of our words when used carelessly or maliciously. Just as a small spark can ignite a raging fire, our words can cause significant harm if not spoken with wisdom and kindness. If you've ever seen people go to war with words on social media, you know how quickly that fire can spread. Wounds wound and words heal.

The comparison to a well emphasizes how our words reveal the true condition of our hearts. Like water drawn from a well, our speech exposes what lies beneath the surface of our outward appearance.

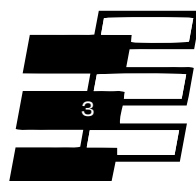
*Discussion Question: How can we ensure that our words reflect the goodness and wisdom we desire to have in our hearts? How can we guard against using our words in harmful or negative ways, and instead use them to build up and encourage others?*

### Your Eyes

In Matthew 6:22–23, Jesus highlighted the significance of what we see, stating that our eyes serve as the lamp of our bodies. He emphasizes that what we focus on shapes who we will become. If our vision is clear, our whole being will be filled with light. But if it's clouded, darkness will prevail. Therefore, we must be mindful of what captures our attention because it has the power to consume us.

Scripture repeatedly urges us to fix our gaze on what is good and virtuous. The next time you are deciding what to watch, ask yourself if you could watch it with your family there. With your youth pastor there. With your pastor there. If you feel conviction about what you are about to watch or have watched, repent and ask God to help you guard your eyes. Colossians 3:2 encourages us to set our minds on heavenly things rather than earthly concerns. Hebrews 12:2 prompts us to focus on Jesus as we navigate life. Philippians 4:8 provides a blueprint for positive thinking, advising us to dwell on whatever is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and praiseworthy. The Bible doesn't teach us to deny the existence of negative aspects of life, but to consciously choose where to direct our attention.

*Discussion Questions: How can we train ourselves to focus on heavenly things in a world filled with distractions and temptations? What practical steps can we take to guard our hearts and minds against negative influences and keep our focus on what is good and uplifting?*



### Closing

We need to make a commitment to guard our hearts. It's not a cakewalk. It's a constant commitment. Like a castle's defenses, we've got to fortify ourselves against the storms of life. Let's prioritize our soul. It's the essence of who we are, our core. Our words are like windows to our souls, so let's make sure they reflect the goodness inside. Focus is crucial. What we let into our minds shapes us. Let's choose wisely.

### ENGAGE

Pray that the Lord help us find the strength to defend our inner fortress. We need the Lord to give us wisdom to speak the right words and to focus to fix our eyes on the right things. We need Him to help us prioritize our souls over the desires of the world. Let's be intentional about embodying the concepts learned in this lesson and be beacons of hope in our community and in our schools. Guard your heart. Guard your words. Guard your eyes. You are worth protecting.

