

Guard Your Heart!

God has a lot to say about our hearts. Through Jeremiah's pen God tells us that the heart of man is, "...desperately wicked" in Jeremiah 17:9. In Matthew 18:19-20, Jesus teaches us a viral lesson about the heart:

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, *acts of adultery*, *other* immoral sexual acts, thefts, false testimonies, *and* slanderous statements. These are the things that defile the person; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the person.

We like to think of our hearts as all nice and sweet and that evil things only come from outside. While evil can certainly come from outside our hearts, we must take Jesus at his word - our hearts can, indeed conceive evil and give birth to it! In many passages God warns us to keep our hearts set toward seeking God. Before Solomon built the first temple of God in Jerusalem, his father, David, called the people to "... set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God," 1 Chronicles 22:19.

Conversely, we see the actual *source* of the failure Solomon's son, king Rehoboam, "...he did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the Lord," 2 Chronicles 12:14. We simply *must* remember that God has delivered into the hands of each of us the ability to choose to *set our hearts to seek the Lord*, or not!

It is not as if our hearts are all bad, or all good - our choice is what makes the difference. In 2 Chronicles 19:3 we find an interesting balance. Jehu said to king Jehoshaphat, "But there is *some* good in you, for you have removed the Asheroth from the land and you have set your heart to seek God." Notice that by conscious effort each of us must both remove evil things from our hearts and then set our hearts to seek God!

Guarding our hearts has two parts. Part one is *our part*. Jesus told his followers, "But be on your guard, so that your hearts will not be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life...." The command is for us to guard our own hearts! Part two is God's part. When we follow His instructions in Philippians 4:4-8, "the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. If we do our part, we can always trust God to bless us with His part! The old saying, "Bless your heart" will mean more than ever before!

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