

Week 1: Guard your Heart

Overview: In the first week of our heart check series, we will help our students reflect on the condition of their hearts and examine what they are consuming and how scripture calls us to protect and steward our inward being. What we feed the heart motivates what comes out of our lives in actions, words, and deeds.

Key Scripture: Proverbs 4:23

Supporting Scripture: Matthew 15:10-20

Content

Key Takeaway: Your heart follows what you treasure. Your choices and decisions always point to what you love most.

Key Points:

- What are we Guarding?
 - The heart which is our “inner person”
 - It's the control center of our lives; it shapes everything we do.
 - It shapes our thoughts, desires, motives and actions
 - Thoughts and desires eventually become actions
 - Actions start as seeds in the heart
 - When the heart is unguarded, everything else becomes vulnerable
 - Relationships, decisions, and even integrity can suffer with an unguarded heart
- Why do we guard our hearts?
 - What defiles a person comes from the heart (Matthew 15:10-20)
 - Guarding your heart protects your relationship with God and others
 - A pure heart leads to peace and intimacy with God
 - A pure heart leads to pure actions
 - Spiritual battles are won or lost in the heart first
 - Victory starts internally before it's seen externally
- How do we guard our hearts?
 - Guarding is active, not passive- so be intentional!
 - Make a daily plan to check what influences your heart.
 - Media, conversations, environments
 - Fill your heart with Gods Word
 - Memorize scripture, and meditate on it to replace lies with truth
 - Prayer daily for cleansing and renewal

- Ask God to search your heart and remove anything that does not honor Him
- Stay in community for accountability
 - Surround yourself with believers who encourage and even at time challenge (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Gospel Application: We guard our hearts because Christ has already given us a new heart through his death and resurrection. Our efforts to guard are fully fueled by his grace!

Key Question: What might you need to surrender to the Lord to fully guard your heart?

Application

Activity suggestions:

- Have a student volunteer come up and read each passage of Scripture during the message
- At the end of the message, invite students to get in groups of 2-3 to pray for each other's hearts and that they would act based on the message
- In small group, set a goal to memorize one of the verses from the message for next week, and whoever completes it can get candy or a small prize.
- Read Psalm 51 and pray for a clean heart – this can be done with reflection prompts in large group or done within Community Group.

Community group questions:

- Over the last few months, what has had the most influence over your heart? Take a few minutes to journal about what those things are.
- Do you believe it's good to guard our hearts? Why?
- Leaders, share a story of ways that you practically guard your heart or have done so in the past.
- What does it mean for us that Christ has given us a new heart?