

I thank my God and I thank you for the privilege to bring you God's Word today. Today, we will be looking at the topic of: ***Keep Your Heart***.

First we will take a look at What is the heart? And why is it so important, anyhow?

Then we're going to look at what it means to "keep" your heart. After we figure out what it is, then we will figure out what it means to "keep" it.

Finally, we'll go over just a few points about how you do that particular function, that thing of keeping your heart.

So first, What is the heart and why is it so important?

To start this off let's take a look at the first usage of the word "heart" in the Bible. There we will find some great clues about what God thinks the heart is.

Genesis 6:5,6

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

You know, when I was in fifth grade, I was learning how to do these things, like writing poetry and stuff. And I wrote a little diddy that I remember because my dad thought it was pretty good. But it says:

The Heart

The heart's a pump

And not a stump.

It pumps away

And always stays.

It has no fame

It has no dame

But pumps away without a brain.

That's your physical heart. It just beats, all the time, day in, day out, repetitively, no mind to it. It doesn't have any thoughts. But God says here that, "the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually".

That's pretty amazing, the thoughts of his heart.

Take a look at chapter 8 verse 21.

After, God had destroyed the earth, the living parts of the earth, flooded them out and they were destroyed. Noah had been saved, and he (God) had put a rainbow in the sky.

Genesis 8:21

21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour [*because Noah was sacrificing to him*]; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart [is] evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.

"The imagination of his heart."

You know, imagination. The heart has thoughts, and they are the innermost musings, the inner dialog. You think about things. And when you think complete thoughts, it is a dialog, going back and forth in your mind. That's those thoughts running through it.

Imagination is concepts, imagine it. It's a visualization, an assembling of thoughts into a form or construction. Kind of like I imagine it would be like Minecraft, or one of these games. You imagine something and build it up, and make it. We build things up in our imagination, assemble the thoughts to build a coherent construct or thing.

Then going beyond your thoughts, what do you have there? When you think about things, it puts a bias on the way things go right? There we have the intent, the intent of the heart. There's emotion.

Look at this Psalm that is so wonderfully descriptive of an emotion that grabs the heart:

Psalm 22:14

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

People in the military occasionally find themselves in situations of grave danger, and the adrenaline is high and the mind can be completely jumbled.

You don't know what this is. You can't put a whole thought together, because things are happening so fast around you.

And here he talks about how the heart is like wax, it is melted out. That's kind of like a physical description of what happens in our mind when that kind of stuff goes on.

It's an emotional response. You've been paralyzed, even the thoughts in your mind. It can cause you to go into a mental fibrillation. Just a Br br br brt. And nothing can get through.

But, there's also a positive side to this.

1 Timothy 1:5

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity [*the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation*] out of a pure heart, and [of] a good conscience, and [of] faith unfeigned:

The whole purpose of what God's Word commands us here is that we can have his love, express his love out of that heart that is pure.

So, there's a lot of things there. It comes down to, you could say in a sense that the heart comes down to an individual's response, in some respects.

So what is the work (function) of the heart?

Our physical heart is in the middle of our body, and what's it doing?

It's constricting and expanding, constricting and expanding.

Why? - <To give you life.>

How? <It moves blood through our veins.>

It moves blood through our veins. Why is it important to move blood through our veins, throughout our entire body?

Leviticus 17:11 tells us why it is important that the heart keeps beating.

Leviticus 17:11

11 For the life of the flesh [is] in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it [is] the blood [that] maketh an atonement for the soul.

The life of the flesh is in the blood. And your flesh heart beats to distribute it, your life, into your body.

What about the spiritual heart that we are talking about? What does it move?

It moves spiritual life, doesn't it. Mentally, the heart (mental heart) moves the mental, the spiritual life throughout the being.

You know, the physical heart moves blood through the veins. Do you know how long the veins are?

I've seen various references quoting 50,000 miles to 100,000 miles if all your blood vessels and capillaries were laid end to end, depending on where you read and the size of the person. That is between two and a half to four times the circumference of the earth. And your heart moves blood through all of it.

Your spiritual heart beat moves your thoughts and everything else in your spiritual body in the same way. It provides that spiritual life.

Ecclesiastes 7:12

12 For wisdom [is] a defence, [and] money [is] a defence: but the excellency of knowledge [is, that] wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

So, it gives physical life to your bones and flesh?

No, it is spiritual life. It gives spiritual life in your intellect, your ability to do, to think, to speak, to be in your spiritual being.

Wisdom is knowledge rightly applied. The ability to know what to do rightly at the right time.

2 Peter 1:3 tells us that God's Word has specific help for us in this respect.

2 Peter 1:3

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

God's Word, His power. He gives us all things in His Word, everything that we need.

So, what do you do with God's Word?

You read it. You put it into your mind. You think about it.

That gives us what we need to be Godly, to be powerful, to be living.

So consider: the thoughts, the imagery, is knowledge in motion.

We get knowledge when we read it. When we think about it, it puts that knowledge into motion. It goes through our body like our blood flowing. When we apply it, we actually physically do something with it.

Proverbs

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it [are] the issues of life.

Out of the heart, not the physical heart, but out of the spiritual, the soul life heart are the issues of life. It moves things through.

So it's an important part. It is what makes us the living beings that God has created in us.

So, what does it mean to "keep" the heart?

Let's go back and look at the first usage of the word "keep" in the Bible, in Genesis chapter 2. God has some specific things about the word "keep".

Genesis 2:15

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

How was he going to keep the garden? The garden was already there, right?

This word "keep" here means: to preserve, have charge of and take care of, retain, guard, protect, reserve, watch or watch over. That's the word "keep".

So, it's to preserve. When you dress a garden like that, you're taking care of it. You're going out and clipping the hedges when it needs to be done. You're clipping the grass, making sure the weeds don't take over. You harvest the fruit when it's needed. You're keeping everything decent and in order. That's keeping the garden.

So, how do we keep our heart? This mental thing that we have at the center of our being? This center of our emotional, our logical, how we respond to things?

Proverbs 4:3,4

3 For I was my father's son, tender and only [beloved] in the sight of my mother.

4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

"Retain my commandments." That's a form of keeping isn't it? We retain it, and the result is life.

So, there's our first clue on how we "keep" our heart. We retain what God's Word has to say.

Proverbs 4:20-23

20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

22 For they [are] life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it [are] the issues of life.

You do this. You retain it in your heart. You circulate the commandments, the things of God's Word by thinking about them.

You know, if you just read it without thinking about it, all you've done is received knowledge. You've got a blood clot. You've got to get rid of it. Because you need to circulate it, then you can move.

Retain it in your heart. Mentally examine in detail and visualize how they fit and work in your life. You consider it. You don't just read a bunch of words on a page and then go watch a video. But you consider how does it fit, how does it work for me?

This is part of integrating the Word into our lives. And that is part of having the heart doing its function, keeping it, preserving it. Because what you put into your heart, is ALL that you've got to work with.

If you have blood that has no oxygen in it, how long are you going to live? Not very long. Suppose you get a transfusion to help you get better, but all you get is plasma, there are no red blood cells. Or perhaps it's something like this. For a while kids were getting a thrill out of injecting weird stuff into their bloodstream. And do you know how much good it did them? Absolutely none at all.

What your heart is pushing through your bloodstream, needs to be the good stuff, the stuff that actually works. Otherwise Nope.

The blood does not just deliver energy and oxygen. It also takes the waste products out. That's part of the function of our spiritual body, too. It gets rid of the bad stuff. But yet, the blood has to circulate. You have to think it through. And you think it through by utilizing what you have. Examine each thought, keep the good, reject the bad. And you reject it by saying, "I'm not going to do that anymore."

You consider it and say, "Is that a topic I want to build my life on?"

That can be things like, "Do I really need to know what's going on in Charlotte, North Carolina? I really need to know that because,... well, I just want to know."

It is not profitable for you to know about what's happening in Charlotte, North Carolina, unless you have a vested interest in Charlotte, North Carolina. Otherwise it just occupies your thoughts and prevents you from thinking about the things that help you here and now.

But still, you need to think about what you are thinking about. You make the choice about what thoughts you keep and dwell on. It is your choice.

Jesus Christ talked about "keeping" in relation to the Word.

Luke 8:15

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep [it], and bring forth fruit with patience.

Remember, this is the parable of the seed. Some fell on good ground, some fell on stony ground, some were snatched away. But the ones that received the Word with a good heart, that was the good ground. They took it in, they kept it in their heart and allowed it to grow, to be considered, and thought about. And the result was the fruit.

We talked about this on Friday with the review of segment 2 (of the Foundational Class). When we grow in the knowledge of God, then we conduct ourselves in a balanced manner with what we have now learned of God and His Word, then we do things that are good and pleasing unto God according to what we know. We are fruitful in those works because that is what God's Word does for us. Then we learn more and repeat the process. And that's the cycle.

So how do we keep it? How do we tend to this garden in our mind?

Luke 6:39,40

39 And he [*Jesus*] spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect [*mature*] shall be as his master.

You can only go as far as the person that is doing the teaching. But you can get that far, to full maturity.

Luke 6:43

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

So if your thought patterns, the things that you determine, that you focus your life and thinking on are honest and good according to God's Word, then the fruit you bear in your life will be according to what those thinking patterns have been.

If, on the other hand, all we have been concerned with has been watching the latest action movie or death and destruction, or playing first shooter games. If we are focusing on death and the bad things in life, then where is the good going to come from?

You have to have a habit pattern of good to get good.

Luke 6:44,45

44 For every tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; ...

Maybe you remember being taught, once before, from Matthew 6 where it talks about the treasure, and equating it to being our thoughts. The people of that day and time when they heard about treasure, they would have been equating it to the thoughts of the man, the thoughts of the heart. What they considered to be a treasure were the thoughts of the heart. So out of the treasure, the thoughts of his heart, he brings forth that which is good.

... and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: ...

You aren't going to make good out of that which is evil, and you aren't going to make evil out of that which is good.

... for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

It's what you have put into your heart that comes out of your mouth. It's going to flow. It's going to be evident in your life, in your speech, in all that you do.

So you consider what you put into your mind, into your heart, what you retain for further thought, because that will help determine how you live.

Now maybe you're changing your life. Maybe you started out thinking about the bad stuff because it gave you a thrill or something, I don't know. But you recognize now, from looking at the past (and the Word), that there is something better. That means you have to put conscious effort into changing the direction of your thoughts.

But you can do it, because God's Word says you can. You can decide what you retain in your mind for further thought.

Now, when I get up in the morning and go to God's Word and start thinking about it. I read a few verses, maybe look up a topic. And maybe I don't stop and think about it right then, but I

put them on simmer in the back of my mind. And I'll check on it several times through the day and see where it's at, what's there. And towards the end of the day I'll take it out and look at it again. Maybe I'll do that again the next day.

But this is how you get that percolating through your mind. And then during the day something will come up, and that will be on the back of my mind on simmer, and it will be right there. God's good that way. Gives you what you need, when you need it.

Luke 6:46

46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Isn't that what you are supposed to do when you call someone Lord? When they tell you what to do, then you do what they say? Why are you calling me Lord if you are not doing it?

Luke 6:47-49

47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house [*little pig, little pig, let me come in*], and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

We've got tremendous building materials, with every beat of your heart. We've got the rock, the solid rock. Jesus Christ is a solid rock. Get it (the Word) in your hearts. Get it down deep. So that when the storms of life come, and they beat on you, that you will have the strength to live and prevail in all situations.

This is how you Keep Your Heart.