

Above All Else

Dave Buehring March 19, 2017

Above All Else

Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life.

Today's Assault on the Heart

- Our Own Sin, Hurts and Wounds from Others
- Deep Disappointments, Hope Deferred
- Injustice, Betrayal, People Offended Everywhere
- Gut-Wrenching Situations, Shattered Dreams, Unexpected Circumstances, Broken Hearts
- **Producing: Hopelessness, Discouragement, Cynicism, Isolation, Anger/Rage, Revenge, Overwhelmed Lives, Survival Mode, etc.**

The Heart in Scripture

Deuteronomy 6:5-6

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

Psalm 24:3-4

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, and who does not lift up his soul to what is false...

Psalm 51:10

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Psalm 66:18

If I cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Proverbs 3:1-6

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not

lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Proverbs 23:7

As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

Proverbs 27:19

As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.

Jeremiah 17:9-10

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? 'I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.'

Matthew 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

Matthew 6:21

Where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

Matthew 15:18-19

What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart...out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

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Realigning to God's Plumbline

Ezekiel 36:26-27

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Amos 7:7-9

This is what he showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumbline." Then the Lord said, "Behold, I am setting a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel..

- **God's plumbline:** His character, ways, truth in Scripture
- **Problem:** we've embraced false plumbines as truth
 - *From parents, authority figures, peers, the world's system, lies of the enemy of our soul, the circumstances of our lives, etc.*
- The result of embracing false plumbines is that our hearts have been deceived to believe something is true—when it actually does not line up to God's character and

ways in His Word at all. We must allow the Holy Spirit to realign our hearts with God's plumbline, as revealed in Scripture.

- **How does God help us get in touch with our hearts**, revealing where He desires to realign them?
 - *Through relational storms – difficult situations – challenging circumstances.*
 - Our reactions (motives, thoughts, actions and words) reveal what is really in our hearts.
 - Our reactions serve as **windows to our hearts**, revealing where we need to align to truth.

Responding in Obedience

Matthew 7:24-27

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

1. Revelation — God's job — can't make it happen
2. Obedience — man's response — not meant to be negotiated
3. Transformation — God's job

Resisting Offense

Skandalon – the Greek word for offense

- Moveable stick or trigger of a trap; bait stick
- An impediment placed in the way causing one to stumble or fall
- In the New Testament, **skandalon** is often used metaphorically of things that arouse **offenses, prejudice, or hindrances**.
 - These things cause an individual to be baited and trapped in their thinking

Opting Out of Offense

Matthew 16:21-23

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block (skandalon) to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Romans 16:17

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles (**skandalon**) in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

1 John 2:10

Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble (*skandalon*).

Proverbs 17:9

Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

- When we pick up an offense (take the bait) we become a carrier of offenses – *scandalizing* others!
- When we become offended, we are the one in sin (regardless of what someone did to us) and as a result we cause others to stumble as well, aiding Satan's cause.
- We don't ever have grace to carry an offense. Don't take the bait – don't pick-up an offense, yours or others'. Instead, aim to be unoffendable or offense-proof.

Above all else, guard your heart...

Realigning to God's Plumbline

Responding in Obedience

Resisting Offense

Discussion Questions

1. What steps can you take in your personal life to guard your heart?
2. Read Matthew 6:21. What do you give your best self, time, and resources to?
3. What storms or circumstances are in your life, revealing where God wants to work?
4. Can you identify one recent reaction (motive, thought, action, words) that revealed what was in your heart, that needs to be realigned?
5. What does it mean that "obedience is not to be negotiated?"
6. How can you learn to become unoffendable or offense-proof?

Before the Throne: Worship Night

Wednesday, April 5th

6:30 pm

Sanctuary