

Defining Moments | Part 1 | Pastor Steve Wells | 03.08.2020
Replay message at: <http://www.northpointeFL.org/messages>

Memory Verse: Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

Proverbs 4:20-27

"**20** My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. **21** Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; **22** for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body. **23** Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. **24** Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. **25** Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. **26** Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. **27** Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil."

This passage tells us that everything we do, is a result of what is in our hearts. When we see or hear things we shouldn't- we cannot help but repeat these things verbally or mentally. The Bible clearly tells us in Exodus 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before me." When we put anything before God we are doing just that. Idolizing things, people, or ideas and putting those things before God. Idolatry is a problem and is devastating to our relationship with God and our relationships with our families.

Often, the feelings that we allow into our hearts are feelings like jealousy, lust, discontentment, anger, and sadness. We can experience all of these feelings with one scroll through Facebook or Instagram. Feeling like we cannot live up to the standards that our "friends" or other people live up to. We idolize a person on TikTok, Instagram or YouTube--counting how many "followers" they have compared to us- instead of focusing on following Jesus and how many followers we are bringing to Him. We worry about how much Instagram or the internet loves/likes us instead of focusing on how much He loves us and sharing His love with those around us.

- What does it mean to guard your heart?
 - What are we guarding our hearts from?
 - Why/how do we allow these things into our hearts?
- What do you need to guard your heart from on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or other websites?
 - Our accounts aren't the only things we see; we see friends accounts and posts, ads or suggested pages. How often do you see something on your feed that you know you should not see?
- What do you need to guard your heart from on Netflix, Hulu, movies or cable?
 - How hard or easy do you find it to pick the right shows?
 - We do not only see what we normally watch. We also see suggested or trending shows and commercials. Sometimes these start playing before you realize it. Have you seen a suggested movie or clip of a show you know you should not watch?
 - How hard is it for you to not watch these shows?
- What are other ways to guard our hearts?

What do you do to try and guard the hearts of those you love?

- Do you use parental controls for your children?
- Do you discuss with your family (Kids and Spouse) and friends why you are stopping something?

Often one person in a family may decide to take a break or stop watching certain shows or stop looking at social media. This is a hard challenge for most people. It is hard to do this alone, especially when those around you are watching the show or spending their time on social media.

- When someone in your family chooses to cut back screen time-do you stop or cut back as well?
 - Why or why not?
- Have you tried to cut back your screen time?
 - Why did you make this decision?
- Did you find it difficult to cut back?
- What made it hard(er) for you?
- What could have helped you to do better?

It is easy to think that it is their commitment and their battle and not join them, but we should not be the reason someone else stumbles in their relationship with God. If someone in our family or a friend is refraining from looking at and/or watching something we should be supportive and not make it harder. Use that time to be with each other and build one-another up instead of tempting the person to join you in what causes them to stumble.

Another way to guard your heart is to fill it with the right things. Proverbs 4:20-23 says "**20** My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. **21** Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; **22** for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body. **23** Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." We should fill our hearts with God's Word. If our heart is filled with the Word of God and He is our focus--what flows from our hearts will be things that please and honor God.

- Does your heart overflow with things that please and honor God?
- How do you (can you) fill your heart with God?
- What is something you will begin to do to fill your heart with God and keep Him first in your life?