

FBC POWELL, 4-29-18 AM NOTES  
"The Heart of the Family"  
Proverbs 4:23  
# 3 in Series, "Proverbs: Wisdom for the Family"

**1 Samuel 16:7b (NASB)** "...for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

**Matthew 15:18-20a (NASB)** <sup>18</sup>"But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. <sup>19</sup>"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. <sup>20</sup>"These are the things which defile the man..."

**Matthew 23:27 (NASB)** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."

**2 Chronicles 16:9a (NASB)** "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."

**Genesis 6:5 (NASB)** "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

**Proverbs 11:20 (NASB)** "The perverse in heart are an abomination to the Lord, but the blameless in *their* walk are His delight."

**Proverbs 16:5 (NASB)** "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, he will not be unpunished."

**Proverbs 26:23 (NASB)** "*Like* an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross are burning lips and a wicked heart."

**Proverbs 8:5 (NKJV)** "O you simple ones, understand prudence, and you fools, be of an understanding heart."

**Proverbs 10:8 (NASB)** "The wise of heart will receive commands, but a babbling fool will be ruined."

**Proverbs 14:30 (NASB)** "A tranquil heart is life to the body, but passion is rottenness to the bones."

**Proverbs 15:3 (NASB)** "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good."

I. The Pathway to the Heart

**Chronicles 22:19 (ESV)** "Now set your mind and heart to seek the Lord your God..."

**Daniel 10:12 (NIV)** "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you **set your mind** to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them."

**Colossians 3:2 (NASB)** "**Set your mind** on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

**Proverbs 23:7a (NKJV)** "For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he..."

**Philippians 4:8 (NIV)** "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things."

"What the mind attends to, it considers; what the mind does not attend to it dismisses. What the mind attends to continually, it believes. What the mind believes, it eventually does."  
- Quoted by Adrian Rogers

## II. The Pollution of the Heart

“Pornography is a hell-originated philosophy which teaches that sex can be divorced from love, from commitment, from morality, and from responsibility. It is the hellish belief that you can take sex alone, use it, and enjoy it apart from the guidelines set down by Almighty God, and still be successful. You cannot.”  
- Adrian Rogers

At age 11 the average child has already been exposed to pornography through the internet.

93% of boys and 62% of girls are exposed to internet-based pornography during their adolescent years.

96% of young adults are either encouraging, accepting, or neutral in their view toward pornography. Only 1 in 20 young adults say their friends consider porn a bad thing.

61% of pornography is watched on a mobile phone. That includes several countries, but in the USA it is as high as 70%.

80% of porn users feel no sense of guilt when using porn. [Statistics from “10 Ugly Numbers Describing Pornography Use in 2017 – Tim Challies]

### Eight Sins You Commit When You Look at Porn

1. *You commit the sin of idolatry.*
2. *You commit the sin of adultery.*
3. *You commit the sin of deceit.*
4. *You commit the sin of theft.*
5. *You commit the sin of greed.*
6. *You commit the sin of sloth.*
7. *You commit the sin of sexual assault.*
8. *You commit the sin of ignoring the Holy Spirit.*

## III. The Purifying of the Heart

### A. Stop Any Attempt to Justify or Soften Your Sin – Confess Your Sin

**1 John 1:9 (NASB)** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

### B. Admit That You Will Overcome This Sin Not by Willpower But with the Power of the Holy Spirit

### C. Surrender Completely to God and Reckon on Your True Identity in Christ.

**Galatians 2:20 (NASB)** “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

**Romans 6:11 (NASB)** “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

**1 Corinthians 10:13 (NASB)** “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

### D. Stay in the Word and in Fellowship with Other Believers

### E. Accept Your Forgiveness in Christ

## Sermon 3: The Heart of the Family

### Proverbs 4:23

We are in a series entitled *Proverbs: Wisdom for the Family*. A biblical proverb is a short wisdom statement that is inspired by God. God inspired this book called Proverbs to give us practical wisdom to guide our decisions in life. A large number of the Proverbs give wisdom in matters of family life. For instance, in Proverbs, we have wisdom related to raising children, avoiding sexual sin, being a God pleasing wife and mother, living a disciplined life and so much more. In Proverbs 4:23 we will learn how to guard or “watch over” our heart. I have entitled this message, *The Heart of the Family*. We will see how the heart, as it is used in Proverbs, is much more than the organ that pumps the blood to the body.

The word “heart” is a difficult word to nail down because it can have various meanings depending on the context. A short survey of the more than 800 uses of the word “heart” in the Bible will convince you of how important your heart is.

1 Samuel 16:7b: “... for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” God evaluates us based not on what is visible, but on the condition of our heart.

1 Kings 8:39b: “...You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men.” According to our text (Proverbs 4:23), whatever the heart is, out of it comes the “springs of life” (translated “issues of life” NKJV).

In the New Testament Jesus said that the heart is the source of what comes out in our behavior. Matthew 15:18-20a: “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man...”

So, the big question is, “What is the heart?” When you really dig into the uses of the Hebrew and Greek words you find that “heart” is a general word that can have some very specific uses in some contexts. Generally, the heart refers to the inner, immaterial part of man. The heart is like the command center of our lives. The way you think, talk, and act flows from your heart. The heart would include both the soul and the spirit. However, from the context, sometimes it is referring to our spirit (that part of us that allows us to know God and have communion with Him) and sometimes it refers to one of the three areas of the soul (mind, will, or the emotions). Most of the time, it simply refers to the inner person. Ephesians 6:6 speaks of doing the will of God from the heart. In other words, it is not just outward actions or rituals, but an inward love fueled motivation to do the will of God.

The Pharisees of New Testament times are a perfect example of people who focused on outward actions while the heart was wicked. Jesus rebuked them soundly in Matthew 23:27: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.” The “inside” refers to the heart. They had the outward actions, but their soul and spirit (inner person) were dry, and wicked. I wonder about you this morning. How about your heart? Are you here looking like you’ve got it all together, but your heart (inner person) is a mess?

Because the Lord looks on the heart and because the heart is the source of what comes out in our life, we need to be very careful in guarding our hearts. In fact, the word “watch” in Proverbs 4:23

literally means “to guard” (translated that way in the HCSB). If the heart is right, our actions will eventually be right. If the heart is wrong, it will eventually work its way out in our actions. Why? Because out of the heart flows the actions, the patterns of life. One of my top ten favorite verses in the Bible is 2 Chronicles 16:9a: “For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.” Is your heart completely His?

Allow me to say a few words to those with children still in the home. The heart of the family is constantly under attack. The enemy of our hearts, Satan, the devil wants your children. But let me hasten to say that he also wants the heart of every parent, every single adult and every senior citizen. We are in a real battle, a battle that never lets up for the family. The enemy we struggle with is real. The key to controlling your life is controlling your heart.

Before we dig deeper in verse 23, I want to make sure that we clearly understand what is included in the “heart.” Here is how important this is. Several thousand years ago God destroyed all of mankind on the face of the earth (with the exception of the eight people in Noah’s family). In reality, God wiped out almost all of humanity because of their severe heart problem. Here is a description of those destroyed. Genesis 6:5: “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Learn this: The heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart!

It is interesting to look at the kind of hearts that we find in the Bible. If we had time we could go deeper with each one of these, but let’s just name some of them. There is a “perverse heart” in Proverbs 11:20: “The perverse in heart are an abomination to the Lord, But the blameless in *their* walk are His delight.” That word translated “perverse” means crooked, bent, prone to deviate from the righteous path.

There is the “proud heart” in Proverbs 16:5: “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, he will not be unpunished.” A proud heart is one that seeks to live independently from God.

There is the wicked heart in Proverbs 26:23: “*Like* an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross are burning lips and a wicked heart.” The Hebrew word for “wicked” means fierce, evil, or giving pain. This kind of heart is really dangerous. Smooth flattering lips with an evil heart are like silver plating on a vessel of dirt.

There is an understanding heart in Proverbs 8:5 (NKJV): “O you simple ones, understand prudence, and you fools, be of an understanding heart.” An understanding heart is one that has skill and insight into making wise decisions.

There is a wise heart in Proverbs 10:8: “The wise of heart will receive commands, but a babbling fool will be ruined.” A wise heart is one that accepts and embraces the sovereignty of God.

There is a tranquil heart in Proverbs 14:30: “A tranquil heart is life to the body, but passion is rottenness to the bones.” The Hebrew word translated “tranquil” means unified or content. There is a joyful heart in Proverbs 15:13: “A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.”

It is God’s desire that we repent of, put away, reckon ourselves dead to a perverse heart, a proud heart, and a wicked heart. At the same time, we are to pray for, cultivate, and allow the Holy

Spirit within us to produce an understanding, wise, tranquil, and joyful heart. There truly is a battle for your heart and your children and grandchildren's heart.

As we look deeper into the battle for the heart, let's examine the pathway to the heart.

## **I. The Pathway to the Heart**

The route to the heart is through the mind, through the thoughts. The phrase "set your mind" is used multiple times in the Bible. Here are a few examples.

1 Chronicles 22:19 (ESV): "Now set your mind and heart to seek the Lord your God..."

Daniel 10:12 (NIV): "Do not be afraid, Daniel. since the first day that you *set your mind* to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them."

Colossians 3:2: "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

Proverbs 23:7a (NKJV): "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he..."

The heart, the inner man is penetrated, programmed and influenced through the mind. Our enemy knows that truth. Satan desires to capture and use your mind to set up his headquarters there. Our heavenly Father desires that you "set your mind" on that which edifies or builds you up. Philippians 4:8 (NIV): "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things."

Some time ago, fifteen prominent college professors took this challenge, "If all of the books on the art of moving human beings into action were to be condensed into one brief statement, what would that statement be?" Here is what they came up with. "What the mind attends to, it considers; what the mind does not attend to it dismisses. What the mind attends to continually, it believes. What the mind believes, it eventually does." [Quoted in Adrian Rogers, "God's Way to Health, Wealth, and Wisdom" page 67]

This explains why it is so important to spend time reading, memorizing, and hearing the Word of God. As the Word fills your mind, it begins to dominate your thinking and as your thoughts are saturated with the truth of Scripture it begins to affect your heart. Your affections and your actions begin to line up with Scripture.

## **II. The Pollution of the Heart**

All error that is given time in the heart pollutes the heart, but I want to focus in on the main source of that pollution in this day, in this nation. I am speaking of the plague from Hell called pornography. If your children are with you, I don't want you to be fearful. I will be discrete, but I cannot ignore this plague that is destroying so many lives, marriages, and families. Allow me to give you a very concise statement about this plague called pornography: "Pornography is a hell-originated philosophy which teaches that sex can be divorced from love, from commitment [marriage], from morality, and from responsibility. It is the hellish belief that you can take sex alone, use it, and enjoy it apart from the guidelines set down by Almighty God, and still be successful. You cannot." [Adrian Rogers, *God's Way to Health, Wealth, and Wisdom*, page 68]

With pornography being removed from a shelf behind the store counter, covered by a brown bag to the easy access of the internet through TV, tablet, and the most common, the cell phone.

Lest you think I am being melodramatic, allow me to give you some of the latest statistics that are from credible studies in 2016 or 2017. This first one makes me weep. At age 11 the average child has already been exposed to pornography through the internet. 93% of boys and 62% of girls are exposed to internet-based pornography during their adolescent years. Here is a shocker; 96% of young adults are either encouraging, accepting, or neutral in their view toward pornography. Only one in twenty young adults say their friends consider porn a bad thing. 61% of pornography is watched on a mobile phone. That includes several countries, but in the USA, it is as high as 70%. Here is the scariest statistic of all: 80% of porn users feel no sense of guilt when using porn. Sin repeated over time begins to deaden the conscience.

Tim Challies lists eight sins you commit when you look at porn. [@ Challies *Informing the Reformed* 4-25-18]

1. *You commit the sin of idolatry.* All sin is idolatry, an attempt to find joy and satisfaction not in God himself but in what God forbids (Exodus 20:3-6).
2. *You commit the sin of adultery.* This is the most obvious sin you commit when you use porn. In Matthew 5, Jesus draws a clear connection between lust and adultery. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (27-28).
3. *You commit the sin of deceit.* Deceit is the act of concealing or misrepresenting your actions. “No one who practices deceit shall dwell in my house; no one who utters lies shall continue before my eyes.” (Psalm 101:7).
4. *You commit the sin of theft.* Fully sixty percent of all illegal downloads are of pornographic content. While we can be glad that the industry is in dire straits, we have no right to participate in such theft, for God says clearly, “You shall not steal.” (Exodus 20:15).
5. *You commit the sin of greed.* Sexual sin is greed, a form of taking advantage of another person to defraud them of something that is rightly theirs. In 1 Thessalonians 4:6, Paul insists “that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter [of sexual sin], because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you.” (6). The word translated “wrong” in this context refers to greedily taking something from someone else.
6. *You commit the sin of sloth.* We are called in all of life to “redeem the time,” to understand that we live short little lives and are responsible before God to make the most of every moment (Ephesians 5:16). Sloth is laziness, an unwillingness to use time well, and reflects a willingness to use time for destructive instead of constructive purposes.
7. *You commit the sin of sexual assault.* A person who drives a getaway car for a band of bank robbers will rightly be charged with murder for anyone who is killed

in committing that crime. The person who voluntarily watches sexual assault for purposes of enjoyment is rightly guilty of that sexual assault.

8. *You commit the sin of ignoring the Holy Spirit.* As a Christian, you have the tremendous honor and advantage of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. One of the ways the Spirit ministers to you is in giving you an internal warning against sin. Paul assures that the Spirit warns against sexual sin in particular, then provides a stern caution: “Therefore whoever disregards this [warning], disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.” (1 Thessalonians 4:8).

### **III. The Purifying of the Heart**

What does a Christian do that has given in to temptation and polluted their heart with pornography or other sin?

#### **A. Stop Any Attempt to Justify or Soften Your Sin – Confess Your Sin**

1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The word “confess” means to agree with God. Stop rationalizing your sin; stop finding false comfort in statistics that show how prevalent the sin is. Lay it out and call it what it is – sin, wickedness, and rebellion against a Holy God.

#### **B. Admit That You Will Overcome This Sin Not by Willpower but with the Power of the Holy Spirit**

Ask the indwelling Holy Spirit to fill (empower, permeate, and control) you.

#### **C. Surrender Completely to God and Reckon on Your True Identity in Christ.**

In Christ, you are set free from sin’s dominion. Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” Reckon (count as true by faith) that you are dead to sin and alive to God. Romans 6:11: “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” Claim by faith the truth of 1 Corinthians 10:13: “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” Perhaps your way of escape is to do away with all devices where the temptation comes to you. Be drastic. Be ruthless in defeating sin.

#### **D. Stay in the Word and in Fellowship with Other Believers**

Make yourself accountable to other believers; memorize Scripture; meditate on the Word.

#### **E. Accept Your Forgiveness in Christ**

The power of the blood of Christ is greater than the power of your sin or addiction.

## **Conclusion**

There is no sin that is too difficult for God to forgive; there is no sin too strong for the power of the Holy Spirit to give you the victory over. For any person struggling with sin, there truly is victory on Jesus!

### **NASB** (New American Standard Bible)

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