

the issues at the vortex of life. The soul is the seat of emotion while the heart is the origin and expression of emotion outwardly. It is a very important component of our makeup and a guarded heart is a great help in the concept of living for the Lord;. The following ideas are those that I think helpful in this vital area of our lives and they are set in the background of Proverbs 4:23 ff.

II. Discussion:

A. Recognize the problem: the heart is marred by and prone to sin.

The great text on this subject is Jeremiah 17:9 and this is enforced in the Lord's teaching by Matthew 12:34ff and 15:19 in context. We think and express evil. This is spoken of the fleshly heart and while we are new creations we bear the image of what we were in our capacity to revert and think in contrary ways. The deceitfulness of the heart is that one may think something that is very wrong but actually persuade oneself it is right, With all diligence the heart must be watched that discipline will rule instead of worldly or fleshly desires.

B. The heart must be set on the Lord.

Romans 10:10 is foundational in the whole matter of faith and then the truth expressed in Psalm 111:1 (108:1) where the heart is fixed on God (established on God) must be seen as a realistic way of living. Proverbs 3:5 gives us a good starting point as well in the orientation of daily living and the desire of the Psalm writer in Psalm 119:10 is also crucial. The heart must have some center point besides our own inclination and if that center point is the Lord, we are guarding it well.

C. One must watch the input to the heart

"Keep it with all diligence" says the Proverbs writer and to this we might add Ecclesiastes 11:9-10. We do read that out of it come the frightening things of Matthew 15 so it is doubly important that we are careful what we treasure in it. If we feed ourselves on greed and selfish ambition, it is hard to tell how the heart will release itself in ways contrary to spiritual life and holiness.

D. And in a watchful way we must police the expression