

Guarding Your Heart on Social Media

Preview

What we allow our eyes to view is directly linked to what flows out of our hearts. Social media can be a great tool that we can use to glorify God, but it can also be an unhealthy and damaging stronghold in our lives.

Praise

Encourage everyone to share a time in their lives where God kept them from something bad.

Parable

We've all been there before: we're scrolling through our feeds online and then BAM, we see something that we know isn't pleasing to God. This can pop up in ads or in posts from our friends. With this culture's rampant focus on gratifying our sinful desires, it can seem really hard to guard our hearts and our eyes. If we go it alone, it is nearly impossible to conquer, but when we have God on our side, we can overcome.

Present

The Bible puts it in simple terms in Proverbs 4:23 (NIV © 2011): "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Here we see a direct commandment from the Word of God. Everything that comes from us, whether it be actions or words, comes from our hearts. In today's culture, we're told to follow our hearts. However, the Bible gives us some significant insights about our hearts. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things," and Mark 7:21-22 (NIV © 1984) tells us, "For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly."

Does that sound like something we should follow? While our culture wants us to follow our hearts, God wants us to give our hearts to Him. Psalm 51:10 is a prayer that says, "Create in me a pure heart, O God." If we want God to give

us a pure heart, we need to make sure that we guard it from the things that are not of God. This includes posts that have the potential to create a pitfall in our walk with God.

If we visit a website that brings us closer to our friends but also has ads that cause us to view men or women in a lustful way, then we need to stop visiting that website. If we follow an account that makes us overly jealous of someone else's possessions, we need to unfollow them. Our souls are much more important to God than the amount of followers we have.

Matthew 5:29-30 (NIV © 1984) says, "If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell." This sounds really serious but let me bring it into a modern context. If your Instagram feed causes you to stumble, delete it; it is better for you to lose a couple followers than for you to continue to lust.

The fight for our hearts is a serious one, and if we don't get serious about guarding our hearts on social media, we may lose that battle. When we go into this battle alone, we are almost destined to fail. However, when we allow God to hold our hearts in His hands, He will fight for us. Never forget Psalm 19:14: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." God gave us a way to win the war for our hearts, and it is by laying our lives at His feet.

Practice

Measure everything you follow on social media by the test in Philippians 4:8 (NIV © 2011). The verse states, "Finally, brothers and sisters, 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." It is hard to think about things that aren't noble or pure when we follow

things on social media that are noble or pure. We need to make sure we aren't intentionally placing stumbling blocks in our lives.

Pray

Lord, help me to guard my heart in all facets of my life. Create in me a clean heart, one that is pleasing to You. Thank you, Lord, for giving me a way to combat the sin inside of my heart. Thank you for giving Your life to give me freedom in this fight.

Plus

Encourage everyone to put the things in their life to the Philippians 4:8 test. Try and make it something you come back to and encourage in future lessons.