



# LESSON 3: GUARDING YOUR HEART

## WELCOME

What's a small daily habit that has a significant impact on how you feel?

## WORSHIP

Pray through *Psalm 26*...

- Ask someone to read *Psalm 26:1–3*. Have someone pray, asking God to examine motives, thoughts, and trust.
- Ask someone to read *Psalm 26:4–8*. Have someone pray, confessing areas where compromise, unhealthy influence, or divided loyalty has crept in. Then, reaffirm your love for God.
- Ask someone to read *Psalm 26:9–12*. Have someone pray, acknowledging your need for God's mercy and your commitment to trust Him.

**\*\*\*Below are seven discussion questions/prompts. There's no pressure to cover every question. As a Life Group, feel free to choose the questions/prompts that you want to cover and use the rest for personal reflection and deeper study during the week.**

## **WORD**

1. Why might **Proverbs 4:20** begin with a call to attention rather than a command to action?

2. Read **Proverbs 4:21**. What does it mean to internalize God's wisdom by keeping His words "within" the heart rather than just before us?

3. How does **Proverbs 4:22** challenge the idea that obedience to God's wisdom is merely obligatory rather than life-giving?

4. Proverbs 4:23 in the NCV reads, "Be careful what you think, because your thoughts run your life." How does the NCV's focus on "what you think" expand our understanding of the heart and wisdom?

5. How do words (v. 24), focus (v. 25), and actions/decisions (v. 26–27) serve as diagnostic indicators of what’s happening in the heart?

6. How does *Proverbs 4:20–21* (internalization) logically lead to *Proverbs 4:24–27* (direction and behavior)?

7. How does wisdom and faithfulness in everyday choices shape one's spiritual direction over decades?

## WITNESS

As a Life Group, go to [shepherdchurch.com/go](http://shepherdchurch.com/go) and consider an outreach project to participate in as a group during this series.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION & DEEPER STUDY FOR THIS WEEK

\*\*\*This section is designed to help you continue reflecting on what you discussed in your Life Group. Hopefully, these questions and prompts will inspire you to listen to God, apply Scripture, and take your next step with Jesus. Work through them at your own pace, and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you draw closer to Him.

- Review any questions/prompts in the WORD section that your Life Group didn't get to, or ones you'd like to explore more deeply on your own.
- Read *Proverbs 4* in one sitting every day this week.
- Memorize *Proverbs 4:23*.

### • Understanding the Unrepentant Human Heart

Read *Genesis 6:5; Genesis 8:21; Jeremiah 7:24; Jeremiah 17:9; Ecclesiastes 9:3; Matthew 15:18–19; and Ephesians 4:18–19*.

- What words or phrases are used to describe the heart's natural inclination in these passages?
- How do these verses challenge the assumption that people are morally neutral or basically good?
- Why does Scripture connect disobedience so directly to inward resistance rather than lack of information?
- How do these verses add emotional or psychological depth to the concept of sin?
- What implications do these verses have for moral decision-making apart from God's truth?

- **How God Renews Hearts**

Read *Deuteronomy 6:4–6; Psalm 51; Ezekiel 36:26; Matthew 11:28–29; Romans 5:5; Romans 10:8–10; Ephesians 3:16–19; and 2 Corinthians 3:3–6; 2 Corinthians 4:6–7.*

- What do these passages reveal about God's initiative in renewing the human heart rather than humans reforming themselves?
- List how these verses describe the means by which the heart is renewed. How are these means related to one another?
- How are love, obedience, repentance, and inner transformation connected at the heart level rather than merely through outward behavior?
- What do these verses say about the depth of change that God intends, not just forgiveness, but transformation of desire and capacity?
- How do these verses illustrate heart renewal as being rooted in relationship and submission to God, rather than human striving?
- What implications do these verses have for how we talk about spiritual growth, obedience, and change, especially when people feel discouraged by their inability to fix their own hearts?