

October 23, 2022

## Seven Things To Keep

There are many things God expects His people to keep as they live their lives to His glory. This morning I want to call your attention to just seven.

### 1) Keep Your Heart Of Flesh

When we become a believing child of God, He says to us, “I will give them **one heart**, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a **heart of flesh**,<sup>20</sup> that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” (Ezekiel 11:19-20 ESV) God changes our heart to one of flesh, sensitive to God’s Spirit so we may walk in His statutes, obey them and He will be our God.

We must work to keep the heart God gives us and not return to the heart of stone of the world. We are instructed,<sup>23</sup> “**Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.**” (Proverbs 4:23 ESV) This truth was spoken by Solomon and his instruction continues in chapter 23 writing, “**For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.**” (Proverbs 23:7 KJV) We live out what is in our hearts; what we believe, what we treasure. As Jesus said when he was exposing the corrupt hearts of the Pharisees, “**For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**” (Matthew 12:34 ESV) It is impossible to entertain wrong thoughts and live holy before God. If we do not seek God in prayer, study His Word and take it into our hearts, surrendering to the Holy Spirit we will not live as God desires. To live other than God instructs is disobedience.

To have a heart that loves and seeks God, is as Paul says, “**Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things.**” (Philippians 4:8 CSB) God expects

Christians to think on the things that are true, honest, just, pure and lovely; we are to dwell on the things of God. If we have our minds full of thoughts of God, and His Word there will be no room for the thoughts that are vulgar and impure; thoughts the world seeks after.

## **2) Keep Your Body Disciplined**

We must keep our bodies under control. This is not always an easy thing to do. Paul said, **“But I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.”** (1 Corinthians 9:27 NASB) That does not sound like some of the overconfidence we hear in our day. That does not sound like “once in grace, always in grace.” No, if we do not keep our bodies under control and discipline it to the point it is our slave to live for the glory of God, we ourselves shall be disqualified. Some believers have allowed the lusts of the flesh to be their utter ruin and undoing. For the congregation; **“For this reason, we must pay attention all the more to what we have heard, so that we will not drift away.”** (Hebrews 2:1 CSB) Together we are better able to live the pure Word of God. Making sure what is preached and taught is the true Word.

It is so easy to drift away. Unless we keep our bodies under discipline, we shall drift into worldliness. Our natural nature is sin, it takes hard work to discipline ourselves for service to God. Submitting our minds and bodies to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit is the only way to maintain spiritual discipline. Without discipline believers can drift back into the current of the world’s river of sin. Like the athlete training for a marathon, we must put in the effort; the blood, sweat and tears to gain discipline over our fallen nature. Life for a believer is a marathon and road is the narrow road of God.

## **3) Keep Yourself Pure**

We must keep ourselves pure. Impurity denotes weakness. Paul, wrote to the young church planter, preacher and his spiritual son, Timothy, saying, **“Don’t be too**

quick to appoint anyone as an elder, and don't share in the sins of others. **Keep yourself pure.**" (1 Timothy 5:22 CSB) We must keep our hearts pure, our words pure, our lives pure. A real Christian is the purest person on this impure earth. As King David wrote, <sup>3</sup> "Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?" <sup>4</sup> He who has **clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.**" (Psalm 24:3-4 ESV) My beloved, are our hands clean? Are our hearts pure? Do we refuse to participate in the false things of the world and do we speak only truth? These should be some of the fruit and signs that mark the life of a true believer.

Jesus said, **"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."** (Matthew 5:8 ESV) The pure in heart enjoy God and the opposite is also true, the impure in heart **do not** enjoy the things of God. God is pure in all of His attributes. His words are pure. King David wrote, **"The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times."** (Psalm 12:6 ESV) All of God's statutes and commandments are pure. David said later in Psalm 19, <sup>8</sup> **"The precepts of the LORD are right, making the heart glad; the command of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up."** <sup>9</sup> The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are reliable and **altogether righteous.**" (Psalm 19:8-9 CSB) It is only by submitting to and obeying God's wisdom we remain pure. The Apostle James instructed, <sup>17</sup> **"But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without pretense."** <sup>18</sup> **And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who cultivate peace."** (James 3:17-18 CSB) I hope these are the spiritual fruit that marks my life and yours. Living in obedience to God enables us to live bringing glory to God. Because God is ever faithful and gives us everything we need to live for His glory, Paul wrote, **"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."** (2 Corinthians 7:1 NKJV) God gives believers everything they need to live pure; His Spirit, His Word, His Son and His Son's Church.

#### 4) Keep Yourself Unstained

Christians must keep themselves unstained from the world. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. There was a coal mine in Kentucky and some young people from town came to visit wearing white clothes. They asked whether they could go into the mine and see what a mine was like. The old mining superintendent told them they could go in white, but they would not come out that way. When they came out their garments would be soiled and contaminated. It might be possible for a Christian to enter the corruption and filth of the world, that can be so enticing, but one cannot come out an unstained Christian. His garments of righteousness will have been soiled. He has become contaminated with the things of the world. As the Apostle James made clear, <sup>26</sup> “If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup> Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” (James 1:27 ESV) Life’s path of sanctification takes us closer to heaven and the closer we come, the more like Christ we become making the things of the world less attractive; the path of a Christian is better traveled with other believers.

#### 5) Keep The Word

We must keep the Word of God deep within our hearts. We should be thinking on the Word of God continually. The Psalms begin with this wisdom and instruction, <sup>1</sup> “How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! <sup>2</sup> Instead, his delight is in the LORD’s instruction, and he meditates on it day and night.” (Psalm 1:1-2 CSB) Jesus our Lord said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Luke 11:28 ESV) The opposite is to hear and not obey and then we are condemned by our own actions. As James instructed, <sup>22</sup> “But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like

someone looking at his own face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does.” (James 1:22-25 CSB) From the heart comes out what we truly believe and this is evidenced in the way we live. I pray our lives exhibit the Fruit of the Spirit to the glory of God.

## 6) Keep The Unity Of The Spirit

One thing badly needed among church communities today is the unity of the Spirit. We should keep the unity enjoined by the teaching of the Word of God. There is no more damaging element hindering the Church from impacting the world with the Gospel than church infidelity to the Word of God. As a community God’s Word instructs, “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” (Psalm 133:1 ESV) Unity is founded on the Word of God and when brothers and sisters in Christ <sup>3</sup> “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:3-4 CSB) When we put Christ before all else it enables us  to serve others with humility and as Peter wrote, “Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.” (1 Peter 3:8 ESV) It is the love of Christ, God’s Word and Holy Spirit that brings unity to our community.

## 7) Keep God’s Commandments

If we have given our lives to God, as believers in Jesus Christ, our Savior, Lord and Master we are His slaves to serve Him with love and gladness. Paul stated what is essential, “For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.” (1 Corinthians 7:19 ESV) Our Master said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” (John 14:15 ESV) This is the crucial test of our love. If we do not keep His commandments, the reason is that we do not love Him with our heart and soul.

Jesus continued a few verses later driving home His point about obedience, “The one who has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. . . .”<sup>23</sup> “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (John 14:21 & 23 CSB) My beloved, it is clear from these simple declarations given by our Savior, Lord and Master to know whether we love the Lord or not. The question before each of us is, “Are you keeping His commandments?” My plea for myself and for each of you is, Lord, help us to do this very thing, keep Your commandments. You, Lord, are forever faithful, we plead with You, by Your Spirit, to increase our faith that we may live in such a way it brings You glory and shows the world You are our deepest desire. Amen!