

“Heart”

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”
Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV)

“Keep *and* guard your heart with all vigilance *and* above all that you guard,
for out of it flow the springs of life.”
Proverbs 4:23 (AMP)

“To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a **Pharisee** and the other a **tax collector**. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ ¹³ “But the **tax collector** stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ ¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”
Luke 18:9-14 (NIV)

1. Tax Collector = A Self-Indulgent Heart

2. Pharisee = A Self-Righteous Heart

3. A Third Way = A Repentant Heart

“A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. ⁴⁴ A tree is identified by its fruit. Figs never grow on thornbushes, nor grapes on bramble bushes. ⁴⁵ A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.”
Luke 6:43-45 (NLT)

“You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. ³⁵ A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. ³⁶ And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. ³⁷ The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.”
Matthew 12:34-37 (NLT)

What’s your strategy for guarding your heart? (Good Heart vs. Evil Heart)

Integrity as used in the Old Testament is related to the word “blameless” in the New Testament. Integrity is that quality developed in a spirit-filled life which causes one to act, in ALL areas of life, according to God’s ethic.

A person with integrity doesn’t live one way under scrutiny, supervision, or observation, and another way when all backs are turned. When you’re watched, when you’re all alone, without the possibility of being discovered, you must live according to the commands of God, who sees all.

“Heart”

The word “integrity” derives from integer which is a mathematical term. Integer is a whole number as opposed to a fraction. When we walk in integrity we tell the whole truth and not just a fraction or one part of it.

“People with integrity have firm footing, but those who follow crooked paths will slip and fall.”
Proverbs 10:9 (NLT)

“The godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children after them.”
Proverbs 20:7 (NLT)

Three Areas Of Integrity

1. Public Integrity – who you are in the midst of people that know you on a casual basis and develop an opinion of you from a very limited perspective (e.g. work relationships, church relationships, community events).
2. Personal Integrity – who you are in the presence of people who know you on a close basis. These are people that you really feel comfortable with in expressing both positive and negative emotions (family, close friends, roommates).
3. Private Integrity – who you are when you are all alone.

“Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body?
¹⁸ But **the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart**, and these make a man ‘unclean.’ ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰ These are what make a man ‘unclean’; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean.’”
Matthew 15:17-20 (NIV)

If there are destructive things in my heart then they are going to make their way into my life and relationships. That means that everything is impacted by my heart.

Guilt says, “*I owe you.*” The guilty person has secrets. Guilty people live with the continual fear someone will find them out and it eats them from the inside out. The guilty person finds it difficult to trust because they are untrustworthy themselves. They assume everyone else has a secret.

The guilty person builds walls, not community. It’s not because they’re an introvert or private. It’s because they are hiding something. They come across as distant and distracted. They often overreact to people who share their weaknesses.

Do you have a secret ... from the past, ongoing right now?

Guilt goes with us everywhere we go. It reminds us, on a consistent basis, that we owe someone and have been in hiding. We lie, cover up and avoid getting close to others in an effort to hide our secrets.

“Heart”

What is it about me that I hope no one will find out? What is the question I hope no one asks? What is the discovery that I’m afraid that if it’s made would impact my family and friends?

The antidote to all of this is **CONFESSION**.

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”
James 5:16 (NIV)

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.”
1 John 1:8-10 (NIV)

How do you assess the well-being of your heart and soul? How do you promote “Glass House Living”?

Questions To Help You Guard Your Heart

1. Are you growing more easily discouraged? If so, why?
2. Are you growing more easily irritated? If so, why?
3. How are you loving God and others more deeply these days?
4. How are you cultivating a more authentic love for God in those who are a part of your group?
5. How have you been a good steward of God’s stuff?
6. What have you purposely done to build relationships with those who are spiritually hungry?
7. What have you done to intentionally further your marriage and family relationships?
8. How have you been battling temptations in your thoughts & actions? (lust, greed, pride, jealousy, lies, etc.) What guardrails (margins) do you have in place?
9. Have you been maintaining a balanced diet? What does that look like for you?
10. How have you been exercising? How many times? How long?
11. Have you been getting enough rest?