Keep Your Heart With All Diligence
Proverbs 4:23

Introduction:
A. The Bible “heart” refers to man’s three-fold psychological make-up.
   1. **Intellect**: Ability to think (Prov. 23:7), reason (Mk. 2:8), imagine (Lk. 1:51), understand (Mt. 13:15), believe (Rom. 10:10).
   2. **Emotions**: Ability to love (Matt. 22:37), desire (Rom. 10:1), rejoice (John 16:22).
   3. **Will**: Ability to purpose (2 Cor. 9:7), intend (Heb. 4:12), obey (Rom. 6:17).
B. The Bible warns us to keep (guard) the heart with all diligence against all abuses.

Discussion:
I. **We Must Diligently Keep Our Hearts From Defilement.** (Mark 7:18-23).
   A. A defiled heart produces evil thoughts. (V. 21)
   B. A defiled heart produces defiled actions. (Vs. 21-23)
   C. A defiled heart can be purified by the gospel. (1 Pet. 1:22).
II. **We Must Diligently Keep Our Hearts From Fatal Deception.** (Rom. 16:17,18).
   A. A deceived heart can be spiritually and eternally fatal. (2 Thess. 2:11,12).
      1. Eve believed a fatal lie: “Shall not die”.
      2. We must avoid believing fatal lies:
         c. Concerning the “works of the flesh.” (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).
   B. A heart is often easily deceived because error is often more appealing than the truth.
      1. Error often promises more for less time, effort and responsibility.
      2. Error often promises more with fewer unpleasant consequences and sacrifices.
      3. Error often unduly appeals to man’s desires and curiosity – “itching ears” (cf. 2 Tim. 4:3,4)
      4. Truth speakers and seekers are more concerned with profitable than pleasant (Acts 20:20,27)
III. **We Must Diligently Keep Our Hearts From Theft.** (2 Sam. 15:1-6; 13).
   A. Absalom stole people’s hearts and almost stole the nation from David, God’s anointed king.
      1. He told the people what they wanted to hear. (V. 3)
      2. He would “do anything in the world” for them.” (V. 4).
      3. He zealously courted the people with his charm and tactics. (V. 5).
   B. Absalom-like people are an ever-present danger to the Lord’s church. (Gal. 4:16. 17).
      1. Too many are swayed by emotion rather than facts and reason.
      2. Too many are influenced more by personality and style than substance. (Rom. 16:18)
      3. Too many think of men above that which is written–do not verify (1 Cor. 4:6; Acts 17:11).
IV. **We Must Diligently Keep Our Hearts From Hardness.** (Mark 16:14)
   A. Hardness of heart is expressed in various ways.
      1. Unbelief.
      2. Impenitence.
      3. Stubbornness
      4. Unforgiving.
      5. Prejudice.
   B. Christians are to be tender hearted. (Eph. 4:32).

Conclusion:
A. What a privilege to have the heart the Bible talks about!
B. What a responsibility to guard it with all diligence!