

SUN CITY SERMON NOTES

11.08.19



'As a man thinks in his heart, so he is' Proverbs 23:7 Caleb spoke according to his convictions Joshua 14:7 Sometimes called a moral compass point, conviction resides in our heart. What we allow into that sacred place depends on how we operate as a **gatekeeper** – with our thoughts.

We are aware of the pattern: sow a thought, reap an action; action - habit; habit - lifestyle. This is powerful in the positive and in the negative. James describes the process in Chapter 1 from both sides: He starts with 'count it all joy' when trials come... because the testing of your faith produces things – patience when finished has worked a maturity in us, completion. God tests our faith for holy outcomes. James follows this with the temptation process.

James 1:14-15: **¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.** See the parallel.

Briefly expounded: Each one – every person is tempted (tested from the other side if you like – a 'piercing' Luke 10:19) when (not if) we are lured by our own (no one else's) longings and entrapped by them. Then (process), when conception occurs (union is formed – the lust, the longing clasps or seizes or captures us) (the thought has come and we've agreed to go ahead), as with any conception it brings forth or births something, in these cases sin (missing the mark, an offence). He goes on to explain that when this sin (Gk: 'hamartia') is finished, it brings forth (breeds forth, generates, bursts) death/separation from God.

Desire, deception, disobedience, death... disobedience works in us and the wages of sin is death / separation, Romans 6:23.

Stimulating
Wholesome Thinking

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1. What we allow into our hearts, that sacred place, depends on how we operate as a gatekeeper.
2. Your thoughts are the gateway to your heart; out from it flows the issues of life.
3. We are not exempt from temptation, but we can close the gate.
4. Our thinking matters. Our convictions matter.

Examples:

- David: saw, looked, union, death;
- Adam & Eve: saw, rationalised, ate, separation;
- Achan: saw and took;
- Caleb: spoke 'as it was, in his heart';

Strong issue here – what proceeds out of our heart.

If we will **gate keep** at thought entrance level (be careful little eyes what you see; be careful little ears what you hear; be careful little lips what you speak), we will be able to direct traffic by capturing our thoughts: (note: four main sources of thought: my own (I know), others (external, what I see and hear), God (still, small voice as a witness internally – always lines up with His Word, character and purpose) and the devil (fiery darts from left field that can catch us off guard):

- Choose the ones that are worth developing, chewing on, Philippians 4:8
- Correct those that aren't quite right 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 'make them obedient', quench with faith. Matthew 12 – make the tree good by bringing forth the good treasure stored in our heart, bringing forth good things including a good report. (David! Look away. Eve! What did God say? Achan! What were you instructed?).
- Disregard those that are wrong – direct your mind
- Turn around those that are wrong but need attention (e.g. someone has hurt us and every time we remember them our thoughts head right down that garden path we've created; each time they come to mind we pray – forgive, release, bless. This releases them, releases us, trains our thinking, obeys the Word and blesses them)

Two very helpful steps in Philippians 4:6-9

1. **Thankful prayer guards and brings forth the peace of God:** v6-7 Gatekeeper instruction included: do not let fear in (be anxious for nothing) but in everything pray with thanksgiving... heart and mind guarded by peace.
2. **Right thinking and living brings the presence of the God of peace:** v8-9

Make no mistake – fleshly lusts wage war against the soul. Peter knew about it, bled about it – we have his journey and he shares the answers. 1 Peter 2. Why so much detail about thinking – because it is the gateway to our heart; out of that *sacred place* issues of life flow – **desiring holy issues / holy outcomes**. When we gatekeep there is a good flow into the heart. Proverbs 14:12 says: '*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*' So, if we've let a few get away, here's some help, for those who choose to apply it.

Proverbs 23. Many verses we could choose from as this chapter has strong keys in how convictions are developed.

Verse 12: '*Apply your heart to instruction, and your ears to words of knowledge.*' (Parents first).

- 'Apply' - set it, bring it forth, employ, bring it in, bring it forth, bring it to pass
- 'your' – **your** 'heart' – courage, understanding, willingness, intellect, emotions.
- 'unto instruction' – to instruct is to: teach, chasten, chastise, reprove, warn, restrain, bond, check, correct, discipline, indoctrinate, rebuke (2 Timothy 1:7, a sound mind proofs)
- 'apply your ears to words of knowledge' What the Word of God says.

Instruction is a beautiful word. Isaiah 54:13-14: '*All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children. ¹⁴In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear*' ('shall not fear' Philippians 4: 'be anxious for nothing' abates oppression).

As in Joshua and Caleb's day, there is a generation that need to see something different. 'Taught by the Lord' – instructed – taught not just what to do but the how and the why of it; conviction

planted. Beyond behaviour or performance or compliance, the heart is taught – established in righteousness; in other words, able to guide their own lives in the way that leads to life. Matthew 7:14. The promise – great peace for our children; what ‘seems right’ is not enough, the heart is at issue. There is a way that leads to life. If we can teach our children to hear, they will be able to obey, apply. If we can teach our children to find out what the Lord says, they will stay, or return; in other words, we can and must plant conviction in our children, our children’s children.

Internet: Statistics from **Aust. Institute of Family Studies**, April 2018. Includes some data from 2016.

Information technology is now used in virtually every home in Australia. Ninety-seven per cent of households with children aged under 15 years have access to the internet, with an average number of seven devices per household. Ninety-nine per cent of young people aged 15–17 years are online, making this age group the highest users. They spend an average of 18 hours per week online (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2016).

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/online-safety>

*Privacy Australia state that for those children allowed online, it becomes their source of news, entertainment and communication. Bulk of younger teens are spending that time on social media apps; ‘above all else, the key to protecting your children online is to keep them **engaged in the real world**. As long as they feel comfortable coming to you about issues or fears they have, then together you will be able to create a safe space on the internet. Start right away when your children are young by making the computer into a tool that you use together. Then keep a schedule of regular check-ins to see what else your child wants to explore online.’ Study in Victoria quotes teens spending 6.5hrs each day screen time.*

<https://www.inspiro.org.au/blog/5-signs-your-child-too-much-online> ‘Screenagers’

Something missing. Internet should be a tool – but for some has turned into obsession – a web of superficial and unreal relationship/s – shaping/influencing (and often negatively impacting) thoughts, values, decisions and convictions ... very real capacity to set up addiction – why? The gate is wide open.

Proverbs 23:29-35 (speaks of wine but could easily be applied to anything that people run to instead of Jesus or His Word). See the process outworking here from James 1.

‘Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? ³⁰ Those who linger long at the wine (or any other addictive thing), those who go in search of mixed wine. (Desire – what are our convictions about our social life (real/online?). ³¹ Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; (lure and enslavement). ³² At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper (Brings pain and death). ³³ Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. (Corrupts mind and speech). ³⁴ Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, (losing control of our bodies and thoughts) or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: ³⁵ “They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. (numbed; no healthy sense of pain or danger); When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?” (willing slaves).

Enticed, entrapped, enslaved.

This is our watch; our generation to bring forth good things. We are not exempt from temptation, but we can close the gate. Our children are not exempt from temptation, but we can teach them how to gatekeep. There is a deceitfulness of sin that hardens the heart. Hebrews 3:12-19. Our thinking matters. Our convictions matter. We must guard our heart for out of it flow the issues of life.