

Message Ten

Living a Godly Life

JL Hymns: 398

Scripture Reading: Prov. 29:18a; 23:23; 20:27; 4:23; 10:12b; 17:9

- Prov 29:18a Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; ...
Prov 23:23 Buy truth, and do not sell it; / Buy wisdom and instruction and understanding.
Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.
Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.
Prov 10:12b ... But love covers all transgressions.
Prov 17:9 He who covers a transgression seeks love, / But he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

I. “Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint”—Prov. 29:18a:

- A. In the Bible *vision* denotes an extraordinary scene; it refers to a special kind of seeing—a glorious, inward seeing—and to the spiritual scenery that we see from God—Ezek. 1:1, 4-28; Dan. 7:1, 9-10, 13-14.

- Ezek 1:1 Now in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth of the month, while I was among the captives by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.
- Ezek 1:4 And I looked, and there came a storm wind from the north, a great cloud and a fire flashing incessantly; and there was a brightness around it, and from the midst of it there was something like the sight of electrum, from the midst of the fire.
- Ezek 1:5 And from the midst of it there came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the likeness of a man.
- Ezek 1:6 And every one had four faces, and every one of them had four wings.
- Ezek 1:7 And their feet were straight feet, and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like the sight of burnished bronze.
- Ezek 1:8 And the hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides. And the four of them had their faces and their wings thus:
- Ezek 1:9 Their wings were joined one to another; they did not turn as they went; each went straight forward.
- Ezek 1:10 As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and the four of them had the face of a lion on the right side, and the four of them had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four of them had the face of an eagle.
- Ezek 1:11 And thus their faces were. And their wings were spread out upward; two wings of each were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.
- Ezek 1:12 And each went straight forward; wherever the Spirit was to go, they went; they did not turn as they went.
- Ezek 1:13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches; the fire went to and fro among the living creatures, and the fire was bright; and out of the fire went forth lightning.
- Ezek 1:14 And the living creatures ran to and fro like the appearance of a lightning bolt.
- Ezek 1:15 And as I watched the living creatures, I saw a wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures, for each of their four faces.
- Ezek 1:16 The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship were like the sight of beryl. And the four of them had one likeness; that is, their appearance and their workmanship were as it were a wheel within a wheel.
- Ezek 1:17 Whenever they went, they went in their four directions; they did not turn as they went.
- Ezek 1:18 As for their rims, they were high and they were awesome; and the rims of the four of them were full of eyes all around.
- Ezek 1:19 And whenever the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and whenever the living creatures were lifted up above the earth, the wheels were lifted up also.
- Ezek 1:20 Wherever the Spirit was to go, they went—wherever the Spirit was to go. And the wheels were lifted up alongside them, for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.
- Ezek 1:21 Whenever those went, these went; and whenever those stood still, these stood still; and whenever those were lifted up above the earth, the wheels were lifted up alongside them; for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

- Ezek 1:22 And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.
- Ezek 1:23 And under the expanse one pair of their wings went straight out, one toward the other; each had another pair covering their bodies on this side and on that side.
- Ezek 1:24 And I heard the sound of their wings, like the sound of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, as they went; it was the sound of a tumult, like the sound of an army. Whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings.
- Ezek 1:25 And there was a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads. When they stood still, they dropped their wings.
- Ezek 1:26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.
- Ezek 1:27 Then I saw something like the sight of electrum, like the appearance of fire encased all around, from the appearance of His loins and upward; and from the appearance of His loins and downward, I saw something like the appearance of fire. And there was brightness all around Him.
- Ezek 1:28 Like the appearance of the rainbow that is in the cloud on a day of rain, such was the appearance of the brightness all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and I heard the voice of someone speaking.
- Dan 7:1 In the first year of Belshazzar the king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head upon his bed. Then he wrote down the dream; he related the sum of the matters.
- Dan 7:9 I watched / Until thrones were set, / And the Ancient of Days sat down. / His clothing was like white snow, / And the hair of His head was like pure wool; / His throne was flames of fire, / Its wheels, burning fire.
- Dan 7:10 A stream of fire issued forth / And came out from before Him. / Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, / And ten thousands of ten thousands stood before Him. / The court of judgment sat, / And the books were opened.
- Dan 7:13 I watched in the night visions, / And there with the clouds of heaven / One like a Son of Man was coming; / And He came to the Ancient of Days, / And they brought Him near before Him.
- Dan 7:14 And to Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, / That all the peoples, nations, and languages might serve Him. / His dominion is an eternal dominion, which will not pass away; / And His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.
- B. In order to have a vision, we need revelation, light, and sight—Eph. 1:17-18a.
 Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,
 Eph 1:18a The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, ...
- C. The heavenly vision governs us, restricts us, controls us, directs us, preserves us, revolutionizes us, keeps us in the genuine oneness, and gives us the boldness to go on—Prov. 29:18a.
 Prov 29:18a Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; ...
- D. When we see this vision, our entire inner being has an inward turn, and we are changed in thought, concept, and attitude.
- E. The heavenly vision motivates us, energizes us, holds us, gives us endurance, brings us into the Lord's up-to-date move, and causes our life to be full of meaning and purpose—Heb. 1:8; 12:1-2; Eph. 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; 3:10; Rev. 1:9; 3:10.
 Heb 1:8 But of the Son, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.
 Heb 12:1 Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us,
 Heb 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.
 Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

- 2 Tim 1:9 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages
- 2 Tim 3:10 But you have closely followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, endurance,
- Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
- Rev 3:10 Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth.
- F. Everyone who serves the Lord must be a person with a vision; the inner vision will revolutionize the way we serve the Lord—Acts 26:13-19; Rom. 1:9.
- Acts 26:13 At midday, on the way, I saw, O King, a light from heaven beyond the brightness of the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me.
- Acts 26:14 And when we all fell to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.
- Acts 26:15 And I said, Who are You, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.
- Acts 26:16 But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you;
- Acts 26:17 Delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I send you,
- Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.
- Acts 26:19 Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,
- Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,
- G. Under the heavenly vision we are directed toward God’s destination, and our life is controlled according to God’s economy—Phil. 3:13-14; 1 Tim. 1:4.
- Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,
- Phil 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.
- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- H. The governing vision of the Bible is the Triune God working Himself into His chosen and redeemed people in order to saturate their entire being with the Divine Trinity for the producing and building up of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem—Eph. 4:4-6; Rev. 21:2, 9-10.
- Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
- Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;
- Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.
- Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

II. “Buy truth, and do not sell it”—Prov. 23:23a:

- A. Truth is something that we have to buy, something that has a price—v. 23a:
Prov 23:23a Buy truth, and do not sell it; ...
1. Buying requires the paying of a price.

2. If we want to please the Lord and stand for the truth, we must pay the price—cf. Rev. 3:18.
 Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.
 3. If our hearts are ready to receive the love of the truth and buy the truth at any price, we will be blessed—2 Thes. 2:10-11; Prov. 23:23.
 2 Thes 2:10 And in all deceit of unrighteousness among those who are perishing, because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.
 2 Thes 2:11 And because of this God sends to them an operation of error that they might believe the lie,
 Prov 23:23 Buy truth, and do not sell it; / Buy wisdom and instruction and understanding.
- B. The divine truth is absolute, and we must be absolute for the truth and uphold the absoluteness of the truth—John 14:6; 18:37; 3 John 3-4, 8:
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- John 18:37 Pilate said therefore to Him, So then You are a king? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.
- 3 John 3 For I rejoiced greatly at the brothers' coming and testifying to your steadfastness in the truth, even as you walk in truth.
- 3 John 4 I have no greater joy than these things, that I hear that my children are walking in the truth.
- 3 John 8 We therefore ought to support such ones that we may become fellow workers in the truth.
1. To be absolute for the truth means to set aside feelings, to ignore personal relationships, and to not stand for the self—Matt. 16:24-25; 1 Pet. 1:22.
 Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
 Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
 1 Pet 1:22 Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from a pure heart fervently,
 2. The truth is the unique standard, and we must stand on the side of the truth to oppose ourselves; upholding the absoluteness of the truth is possible only when we are delivered from ourselves—John 8:32; 2 John 2; 3 John 3-4.
 John 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.
 2 John 2 For the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:
 3 John 3 For I rejoiced greatly at the brothers' coming and testifying to your steadfastness in the truth, even as you walk in truth.
 3 John 4 I have no greater joy than these things, that I hear that my children are walking in the truth.
 3. We should honor God's truth, take the way of the truth, and not compromise the truth in any way—2 Pet. 2:2.
 2 Pet 2:2 And many will follow their licentiousness, because of whom the way of the truth will be reviled.
- C. For the consummation of the divine economy, we need to be absolute for the present truth—1:12:
- 2 Pet 1:12 Therefore I will be ready always to remind you concerning these things, even though you know them and have been established in the present truth.
1. The present truth is the truth that is present with the believers, which they have already received and now possess—v. 12.
 2 Pet 1:12 Therefore I will be ready always to remind you concerning these things, even though you know them and have been established in the present truth.

2. The present truth includes the revelation concerning the eternal economy of God (Eph. 1:10; 3:9), the Divine Trinity (2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5), the person and work of the all-inclusive Christ (Col. 2:9, 16-17; 3:11), the consummated life-giving Spirit (John 7:39; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 22:17), the eternal life of God (John 3:15-16), the church as the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), and the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 10-11).
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
- 2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
- Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood
- Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,
- Col 2:16 Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath,
- Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.
- Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
- John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
- 1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
- Rev 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.
- John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.
- John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
- Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.
3. The present truth includes the high peak of the divine revelation—the revelation that God became man so that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead—to produce and build up the organic Body of Christ for the fulfillment of God’s economy to close this age and bring Christ back to set up His kingdom—John 1:12-14; 1 John 3:1-2; Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; 12:4-5; Rev. 11:15.
- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
- John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
- 1 John 3:1 Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. Because of this the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

- 1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been manifested what we will be. We know that if He is manifested, we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is.
- Rom 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,
- Rom 1:3 Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh,
- Rom 1:4 Who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;
- Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.

III. “The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being”—Prov. 20:27:

- A. Man’s spirit is God’s lamp within man—Matt. 25:1:
- Matt 25:1 At that time the kingdom of the heavens will be likened to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.
1. The light shining within man’s regenerated spirit is God Himself—1 John 1:5.
1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
 2. Just as a lamp contains light and expresses it, man’s spirit was created to contain God and express Him.
 3. In order for the divine light to shine into man’s inward parts, God’s Spirit as the oil must soak (mingle with) man’s spirit as the wick and “burn” together with man’s spirit—Rom. 8:16; 12:11.
Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
 4. If we respond to the spirit’s shining, we will walk according to the spirit—8:4.
Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
- B. The Spirit of God is also a lamp, with a sevenfold intensity to His shining—Rev. 4:5:
- Rev 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;
1. Our regenerated spirit is a lamp indwelt by the Spirit of God, who is also a lamp.
 2. Man’s spirit and God’s spirit are both lamps, together enlightening the inward parts—Prov. 20:27; Rev. 4:5.
Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.
Rev 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;
 3. The spirit wants to enlighten every part of our soul.
- C. When we exercise our spirit to pray properly, there is a lamp shining—Eph. 6:18; 1:17-18; 5:8-9:
- Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
- Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,
- Eph 1:18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
- Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light

- Eph 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
1. As we pray, our spirit functions as a shining lamp, searching all the parts of our soul—Prov. 20:27.
 Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.
 2. The more we exercise our spirit in prayer, the more we are enlightened—2 Cor. 4:6:
 2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
 - a. The lamp may shine on our thoughts, emotions, and will.
 - b. Our inward parts will be thoroughly searched by the Lord—Psa. 139:23-24.
 Psa 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; / Try me, and know my anxious thoughts;
 Psa 139:24 And see if there is some harmful way in me, / And lead me on the eternal way.
 3. After such a time of prayer, we will feel bright and transparent, filled with God—Eph. 5:8-9.
 Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light
 Eph 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

IV. “Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life”—Prov. 4:23:

- A. The soul is the person himself, but the heart is the person in action—Luke 1:66; 2:19, 51; Acts 11:23; Eph. 3:17; 1 Thes. 3:13:
 Luke 1:66 And all who heard these things put them in their heart, saying, What then will this little child be? For indeed the hand of the Lord was with him.
 Luke 2:19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.
 Luke 2:51 And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And His mother carefully kept all these things in her heart.
 Acts 11:23 Who, when he arrived and saw the grace of God, rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart;
 Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
 1 Thes 3:13 So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.
1. We have something in our inner being that represents us, and this representative is our heart—Luke 6:45; John 16:22; 2 Cor. 3:16.
 Luke 6:45 The good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth that which is good, and the evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaks.
 John 16:22 Therefore you also now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.
 2 Cor 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
 2. The relationship that we have with God first depends on our heart, because the heart is the organ by which we express ourselves and by which we make decisions to receive or reject things—Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10.
 Acts 8:37 And Philip said, If you believe from all your heart, you will be saved. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
 Rom 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;
 Rom 10:10 For with the heart there is believing unto righteousness, and with the mouth there is confession unto salvation.
 3. Although our spirit is pure, what is expressed from our spirit depends on our heart—2 Thes. 2:17; 3:5.
 2 Thes 2:17 Comfort your hearts and establish you in every good work and word.
 2 Thes 3:5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ.

- B. The heart is the entrance and exit to our whole being—Matt. 13:19; 15:18-19:
- Matt 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way.
- Matt 15:18 But the things which proceed out of the mouth come out of the heart, and those defile the man.
- Matt 15:19 For out of the heart come evil reasonings, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessings, blasphemies.
1. It is through our heart that our real being comes out because the traffic of our being is through our heart—Luke 6:45.

Luke 6:45 The good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth that which is good, and the evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaks.
 2. Our spirit is the source of our being, but our heart is the passage, the entrance and the exit, through which the traffic in our being passes—Matt. 12:34-35.

Matt 12:34 Offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Matt 12:35 The good man, out of his good treasure, brings forth good things, and the evil man, out of his evil treasure, brings forth evil things.
 3. In order to be a proper Christian, we need to exercise our spirit and guard our heart by keeping it with all vigilance—Prov. 4:23.

Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.
- C. The Hebrew word rendered “keep” in Proverbs 4:23 means “guard”:
- Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.
1. We should guard our heart above all because out of it are the issues of life.
 2. *Issues* in Proverbs 4:23 implies sources and springs as well as issues:

Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.

 - a. The issues of life are the flowing out of life—cf. John 4:14.

John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water springing up into eternal life.
 - b. The heart is related to the sources of life, the springs of life, and the issues of life—cf. Isa. 12:3.

Isa 12:3 Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing / From the springs of salvation,
 - c. The fountain, the source, of what we are, of our real being, flows out from our heart—cf. John 7:37-38.

John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.
- D. We guard our heart by caring for our heart and having a thorough dealing with our heart before the Lord in the way of life; the more we deal with our heart, the more we guard our heart—Psa. 26:2; 139:23-24; Prov. 4:23; Rom. 8:27; Rev. 2:23; Matt. 13:18-23; 5:8.
- Psa 26:2 Examine me, O Jehovah, and try me; / Test my inward parts and my heart.
- Psa 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; / Try me, and know my anxious thoughts;
- Psa 139:24 And see if there is some harmful way in me, / And lead me on the eternal way.
- Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.
- Rom 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.
- Rev 2:23 And her children I will kill with death; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the inward parts and the hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your works.
- Matt 13:18 You therefore hear the parable of the one who sowed.

- Matt 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way.
- Matt 13:20 And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;
- Matt 13:21 Yet he does not have root in himself but lasts only for a time, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he is stumbled.
- Matt 13:22 And the one sown in the thorns, this is he who hears the word, and the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches utterly choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
- Matt 13:23 But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.
- Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- E. In order to grow in life for God’s building, we need to love the Lord, take heed to our spirit, and guard our heart with all vigilance to stay on the pathway of life—1 Pet. 1:8; 2:2, 5; 3:4, 15; Prov. 21:2; 4:18-23; Deut. 10:12; Mark 12:30.
- 1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
- 1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,
- 1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- 1 Pet 3:4 But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.
- 1 Pet 3:15 But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, being always ready for a defense to everyone who asks of you an account concerning the hope which is in you,
- Prov 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, / But Jehovah weighs the hearts.
- Prov 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.
- Prov 4:19 The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; / They do not know what they stumble over.
- Prov 4:20 My son, be attentive to my words; / Incline your ear to my sayings.
- Prov 4:21 Do not let them depart from your sight; / Keep them in the midst of your heart.
- Prov 4:22 For they are life to those who find them, / And healing to all their flesh.
- Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.
- Deut 10:12 And now, O Israel, what does Jehovah your God ask of you except that you fear Jehovah your God so that you would walk in all His ways and love Him and serve Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul;
- Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

V. “Love covers all transgressions”—Prov. 10:12b:

- A. “He who covers a transgression seeks love, / But he who repeats a matter separates close friends”—17:9.
- B. To cover is love; to uncover is not love—James 5:20.
James 5:20 Let him know that he who turns a sinner back from the error of his way will save that one's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.
- C. Covering brings in blessing, but uncovering brings in a curse—Gen. 9:22-27:
Gen 9:22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.
Gen 9:23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders, and they walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. And their faces were turned backward, so that they did not see their father's nakedness.
Gen 9:24 And Noah awoke from his wine and learned what his youngest son had done to him.
Gen 9:25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan: / A servant of servants / Shall he be to his brothers.
Gen 9:26 And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, / The God of Shem; / And let Canaan be his servant.
Gen 9:27 May God enlarge Japheth, / And let him dwell in the tents of Shem, / And let Canaan be his servant.

1. Those who uncover others suffer the curse.
 2. Those who cover others' sins, defects, and shortcomings enjoy gain and receive blessing.
- D. "Love covers all things" (1 Cor. 13:7a), not only the good things but also the bad things:
1. "The elders need to realize that in their shepherding, they have to cover others' sins, to not take account of others' evils"—*The Vital Groups*, p. 72:
 - a. "Whoever uncovers the defects, shortcomings, and sins of the members of the church is disqualified from the eldership"—p. 72.
 - b. "Our uncovering of the members under our eldership, our shepherding, annuls our qualification"—p. 72.
 2. We need to shepherd others according to God, with a love that covers all transgressions—1 Pet. 5:2; Prov. 10:12b.

1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

Prov 10:12b ... But love covers all transgressions.
- E. "Above all, have fervent love among yourselves, because love covers a multitude of sins"—1 Pet. 4:8.