

***Improving Our Marriages***  
***Lesson 3 – Guarding Your Heart (Part 1)***  
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***Introduction:*** How can we commit to anything for a lifetime?

- A. God tells us that the battle must be won by winning and keeping the heart. **(Prov 4:20-27)**
  - 1. By committing daily to seek God’s way, you will find strength to serve in your home.
  - 2. When both mates find a doctrinal core from the word then they will have a clear path.
  - 3. God’s word will teach you how to think! Faith, justice and mercy are keys to working with others. You are not tossed about by events! **(Hos 12:6; Mt 23:23; Eph 4:14-15)**
- B. How does Satan work to destroy us? **(Gal 5:19-21)**
  - 1. As a young Christian I thought that one could easily bounce back from sin.
  - 2. When I saw others turn away from what was clearly right, I thought that this person must be exceptionally weak minded.
  - 3. One of the most surprising truths I have observed is how these sins can take away the ability of a man to reason! Satan is very cunning and powerful. **(1 Pt 5:8)**
  - 4. Your heart can be changed and hardened where you could seek to do great harm to your loved ones. I have haunting memories of Christians who did this.
  - 5. Jesus as the master teacher that knew men’s hearts. He always saw the heart of the problem and sought to open the heart to expose it. **(Lk 2:34-35)**

***I. Learn how to find and apply God’s word to every step that you take***

- A. God’s word must become a part of your daily thinking. **(Heb 5:12-14)**
  - 1. God’s word will produce a godly character in you that is based on principle.
  - 2. Faith has no value until you are willing to stand under opposition. You must be willing to pay a price! Anything less than this will fail.
  - 3. Why is the application of scripture so challenging?
- B. You must never accept anything less than a full obedience. God says: “Let it not once be named among you.” **(Eph 5:3-5 KJV)**
  - 1. When you take this stand there is no compromise. You fight and will not yield.
  - 2. Satan wants you to take “gradual” steps away from such a commitment.
- C. Consider the lies that Satan makes concerning sin. Consider some common rationalization concerning the sin of divorce. **(Mt 5:32; Mal 2:15-16)**
  - 1. “There is nothing wrong with it!” – “.... As long as I do not remarry.”
  - 2. “You can do it one time and be forgiven!” – This is a hardened plotting heart!
  - 3. “I will call it something else and say it is not a sin.” – “I will separate and not divorce.” Under what conditions and for how long does the scripture speak of? **(1 Cor 7:3-5)**
  - 4. “I will not be happy and fulfilled without sin.” – **(Heb 11:24-26, 35)**  
Acting upon principle takes a faith that is willing to pay a price.
- D. How is trust built in a marriage relationship? The foundation of trust is marrying someone who really trusts God! **(Prov 31:10-11; 28-30)**

1. Once we step away from that commitment we in time could justify and rationalize anything. “I have offered sacrifices!” (**Prov 7:13-14; 30:20**)
2. If you are not committed to finding and applying truth you will believe a lie.
3. If you rationalize about the Lord’s will you will rationalize about your commitment to your mate.

***II. Find associates that will strengthen your commitment to God and to your marriage***

- A. Your associates will have an enormous impact on your marriage. (**1 Cor 15:33**)
  1. Who did Mary associate with before the birth of Jesus? (**Lk 1:5-6, 39-40**)
  2. Associates are one of the most powerful tools of Satan.
  3. How can relationships change you? (**Lk 14:26-27**)
  4. Some think that “yes men” make good friends. (**Lk 6:26**)
  5. Some will abandon you because you stand. (Ex. Dancing) (**Gal 6:12**)
- B. Associate with those who have stood and suffered. (**Heb 10:32-33; 11:24-26**)
  1. You will be tested in your marriage. You know how faithful men will respond!
  2. Paul talked about the danger of being ashamed of him. (**2 Tim 1:8, 16**)
  3. How did David and Jonathan become friends? (**1 Sam 18:1-3**)
  4. When we become people of integrity and principle then we are becoming like God. That kind of person *will never forsake us*.
- C. Do not let bitter scoffers come into your life! (**Ps 1:1; Prov 22:24-25**)
  1. There are those within the church who can secretly poison your mind.
  2. Do not share uncontrolled anger. (**Eph 4:26-27; 1 Jn 3:15; Heb 12:15**)
  3. A good woman became friends with a bitter divorcee with bad consequences.
- D. Be around thankful, faithful people.
  1. Do you have friend that can go on at length about how God has blessed them and others?
  2. I need people to help me lift up my eyes and see the eternal blessing given by our God! Are you with thankful men? (**Rom 1:21; Phil 4:6-8**)
  3. What can you learned about yourself by looking at your relationships?

**Questions**

1. How can you know if you and your mate have built a solid doctrinal core?
2. How can you tell if you are seeking to know and apply God’s will or are simply rationalizing? (**Jn 3:19-21**)
3. How does one act if he is committed to follow God’s law concerning divorce?
4. Why is trust greatly lessened when one is unwilling to know and stand upon God’s word?
5. How can your friendships both individually and together affect your marriage?
6. How can bitter people affect your marriage? How can thankful people help?