

GUARD YOUR HEART – Part 1

John 6:59-66

A. Foundation

1. **Proverbs 4:23 (KJV)** – Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.
2. **4:23 (NLT)** – Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.
3. **4:23 (NIV)** – Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

B. Our Text

1. As Jesus taught in a synagogue in Capernaum, He declared that unless they ate His flesh or drank His blood they have no life in them and could not have eternal life (6:53-58).
2. Many found this to be a “hard saying” and difficult to understand or accept (v. 60).
3. Jesus asked them, **“Does this offend you?”** (v.61). He knew that it did.
4. From that point, many of His disciples turned away and no longer walked with Him (v. 66).
5. **Point: Offended people cannot walk with (follow) Jesus.** This is why we can’t afford to get offended at the slights of life, at the hard or wrong things people say or do to us.

C. Offense Grants Satan Access to Your Heart

1. **Ephesians 4:26-27** – Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.
2. **Matthew 26:6-16** – the woman with the alabaster box anointed Jesus with the precious ointment while He and his disciples were at dinner. The disciples were indignant because they thought this was such a waste. The ointment, they said, could have been sold for much and the money given to the poor.
3. Jesus: **“Why trouble ye the woman? ... ye have the poor always with you; but me you have not always.”** Then Judas went to the chief priests and betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
4. **Mark 14:6/John 12:7** – Note that in Mark and John, both writers tell us that Jesus rebuked the disciples for their thoughts and comments about the woman: **“Leave her alone.”**

5. **Mark 14:7** – the “sneaky blessing”: “For ye have the poor with you always, **and whensoever ye will ye may do them good:** but me you have not always.” If we can do good to the poor whenever we want to, it means we are continually and abundantly blessed! *Receive that!!*
6. **Back to the message: John 12:4** – Judas is identified as the ringleader in criticizing the woman. Jesus’ rebuke was therefore aimed mostly at him. It was after this rebuke that Judas went out and betrayed Jesus. *But something happened before that ...*
7. **Luke 22:3-4** – “Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.”
8. Jesus openly rebuked Judas. Judas got offended. By taking offense, Judas allowed Satan entryway into his heart. Judas then turned his back on Jesus, betrayed Him to the chief priests and no longer followed Him. Judas’ betrayal was ignited when he got offended at being corrected by the Jesus!

D. Taking Offense Causes Division – Guard Against It!

1. **Proverbs 19:11** – The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. **Christian Standard Bible:** “A person’s insight gives him patience, and his virtue is to overlook an offense.” **World English Bible:** “The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger. It is his glory to overlook an offense.”
2. **James 1:19-20** – Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.
3. **Ecclesiastes 7:21-22 (NIV)** – Do not pay attention to every word people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you— for you know in your heart that many times you yourself have cursed others.
4. **Hebrews 12:15 (NLT)** – Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.

GUARD YOUR HEART – Part 2

Matthew 12:22-25

A. Foundation

1. Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. ²³ And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” ²⁴ Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, “This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”²⁵ But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.”
2. **Verse 25 (NLT):** “Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart.”
3. Division causes families, marriages and relationships to fall apart. Which is why Satan works constantly to cause division among us.
4. Contrast the will of God that counsels us to love one another; to support, encourage, build up, help, forgive, be patient with, and be there for one another.

B. Bitterness and Strife

1. The writer of Hebrews warns us to “watch out” for bitterness taking hold of us.
2. **Hebrews 12:15 (NLT)** – “Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.” Bitterness poisons our soul. If we allow it in, it will burrow into hearts, establishing its poisonous roots deep within us and ultimately causing trouble in our lives. Once rooted, bitterness is hard to remove.
3. Contrast the will of God: He wants us to be “rooted and grounded in love.” (**Ephesians 3:17**).
4. One Christian writer observed: When you are offended or disappointed by others and allow the hurt to germinate in your heart, bitterness and resentment will take root. Characterized by an unforgiving spirit and generally negative, critical attitudes, bitterness and resentment are sinful and self-defeating. They will color your conscious and unconscious thoughts and actions. Allowed to fester, they will destroy and kill. However, they can be dispelled with love.

Like depression and other emotional stress, bitterness and resentment can aggravate or cause physical problems such as arthritis. You can be affected mentally, spiritually, and otherwise. Your relationships will always suffer. God can free you from this sin. It is an oppressive and destructive emotion having its root in hate,

which is likened to murder. You must repent. No one can have peace and happiness with such emotions tearing at him.

5. **Proverbs 14:30 (NKJV):** A sound heart *is* life to the body, but envy *is* rottenness to the bones. **(AMP):** A calm *and* undisturbed mind *and* heart are the life *and* health of the body, but envy, jealousy, *and* wrath are like rottenness of the bones.
6. **James 3:14-16 (MEV)** – But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, do not boast and do not lie against the truth. ¹⁵This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, and devilish. ¹⁶For where there is envying and strife, there is confusion and every evil work.
 - a. Envy = a feeling of discontented or resentful longing caused by someone else’s possessions, qualities or luck.
 - b. Strife = angry or bitter disagreement
 - c. The Greek word for confusion (*akatastasia*) originally described thorn bushes or prickly plants. The idea being something that causes pain if you become ensnared in it. (Source: Rick Renner)
 - d. Bitterness and strife leads to us being trapped in severe heartache and pain and gives way for Satan to bring about his evil works in our lives.
7. **Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV)** – Get rid of **all** bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with **every** form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
8. **2 Timothy 2:24** – And the servant of the Lord must not strive [**NKJV: quarrel**]; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient ...
9. **Proverbs 10:12** – Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.
10. The antidote to bitterness, strife and offense is love. The God-kind of love that has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who has been given to us. (Romans 5:5).
11. **1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (AMPC)** – Love endures long *and* is patient and kind; love never is envious *nor* boils over with jealousy, is not boastful *or* vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. ⁵It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) *and* does not act unbecomingly. Love (God’s love in us) does not insist on its own rights *or* its own way, *for* it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy *or* fretful *or* resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong].⁶It does not rejoice at injustice *and* unrighteousness,

but rejoices when right *and* truth prevail.⁷ Love bears up under anything *and* everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].⁸ Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end].

12. John 13:34-35 – A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.