

# New Life Family Matters

## July 2008

**“Above all else, guard your heart,  
for it is the wellspring of life.”  
Prov 4:23**

**“Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man  
does not live on bread alone, but on  
every word that comes from the  
mouth of God.’” Matt 4:2-4 NIV**

Summertime provides an opportunity for most Americans to seek some time away from the normal routine to be with family for a time of relaxation and refreshment –this is a good thing. As we think about getting away and the refreshing we all hope for, I’d like to encourage you not to neglect what the Bible calls your “wellspring of life,” and to nourish our hearts with the only God-given resource that promises to be food for the soul – God’s Word.

Solomon’s admonition to us to “guard” our hearts is best understood by a word picture. In early American history, military forts were not much more than long timbers stood upright and fastened together side by side to form a walled enclosure. At the corners of this fort, were rooms that were constructed high on the inside of the wall so that the soldiers could stand guard over the fort and shout a warning if the fort came under attack. A “guard” protected and provided security for the inhabitants of the fort by standing on guard duty. They secured the fort by “watching over” the comings and goings into and out of the entrance.

In the context of Solomon’s admonition, he reveals to us the “how-to” of standing guard and value of “safe-keeping” God’s Word within our heart.

*“Pay attention, my child, to what I say. Listen carefully. <sup>21</sup>Don’t lose sight of my words. Let them penetrate deep within your heart, <sup>22</sup>for they bring life and radiant health to anyone who discovers their meaning.  
Prov 4:20-22 NLT*

Notice all the action verbs that could well describe a guard while on duty:

*“Pay attention... Listen carefully. Don’t lose sight of my words.”*

While we are away this summer, plan to intentionally “stand guard” over your heart by spending time with the Lord and His Word. Make time early before the activities of the day start, or in the evening before you head off to bed to “listen carefully.” We guard our heart by attending to what we “let into,” listen to, or focus our attention upon. The value to our lives of what we are called to guard is that it is where life is sourced. When our heart is nourished with what Jesus says is an eternal source of life, we will experience a sustained sense of peace, hope, joy, and empowered living that is refreshing and ever available. Such qualities of the heart are ours to experience everyday of our lives. Ours is to choose to “eat of this “food” that refreshes, relaxes, and revives –not “as needed,” but rather as a life style. These promises from God’s Word offer better rewards than the best vacation – lets pursue them while we “vacate” our normal routines this summer.

Pastor Dave