

**You don't  
protect your  
heart by  
acting like  
you don't  
have one.**



Daily Bread: Nourishment and Info from Your Pastors  
April 20, 2020

**Devotion: *The Heart of the Matter***

*Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*

– Proverbs 4:23

*As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart.*

– Proverbs 27:19

*A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*

– Proverbs 17:22

Things changed today. Until now, the COVID-19 news was outside the boundaries of Humboldt County. Until now, news reports about health care workers being at risk didn't seem to involve us. Until now, in the minds of some, we only observed the emotional impact of a pandemic from the sidelines.

Things changed today. COVID-19 is here. *Our* health care workers are at risk. We no longer observe this pandemic, we, like thousands of other towns and cities, are experiencing it.

I don't know about you, but this news has me focused on my heart...not the physical one, but the spiritual one. Humans have an almost infinite capacity for denial. Denial is partly a self-defense instinct and partly a way of emotionally isolating ourselves from certain aspects of reality.

Proverbs has some interesting things to say about the heart. We are to guard it, for the nature of our heart shapes our lives (Prov. 4:23). Building on that in Prov. 27:19, we're taught that our very life reflects the condition of our heart. And, we're taught that a cheerful heart has physiological effect on us (Prov 17:22).

I think the temptation is to use denial to isolate our hearts to the reality around us. Doing that, we run the risk of appearing heartless. That is not the intention of the Proverbs passage. The word found in Proverbs 4 as "guard" means to protect or maintain, not isolate. We protect our hearts by filtering what enters it not by walling it off from all around us.

Some of the best advice for "guarding" one's heart during this time begins with not allowing yourself to fixate on the news. Increasingly, I find myself watching only the local news – WHO, KCCI, WOI. Listen for what is happening and don't get sucked into having your heart filled with the talking heads that rehash the same opinions over and over.

But that's not enough...Proverbs talks about being proactive by having a cheerful heart. To be proactive in having and maintaining a cheerful heart, you have to wrestle with Marie Kondo's favorite question: What is it that brings you joy? There are lots of ways we answer this question. When in a group, we usually offer the "safe" answers like: my family, my job, my spouse, my hobbies. But, we aren't able to be in groups right now. We have the opportunity to dig deeper than the "safe" answers. What is it that brings you joy at the deepest levels of your heart? For some, it's serving others. For others, it's taking the time to dig deeply into God's Word and ask the difficult questions about the direction of your life. For others, it's exercise.

I pray we don't let this news dry up our bones. I pray that we protect and maintain a cheerful heart so our lives may reflect Godly joy to our families and

community. Yes, things changed today – let's not deny it. Rather, let us seek joy and reap the benefits of its "good medicine."

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Jon

- Thank you to those helping us put together weekly worship: Carolyn Ford on piano, Jim Kirkpatrick videographer, Elijah Collins sound and media, Gena Vinsand, Sandi Collins, Mary Jane Nostrom, Carol Christiansen, and Kennett Kuyper. We give thanks for your commitment.
- Thanks for all the positive comments you've forwarded to us concerning our "Daily Bread" emails and the online worship services. We're exploring other online ministries we can now do. Did you know that Facebook messenger has a way of doing group video meetings online? If you have a smart phone you probably can do it. Check out the Pastors' Facebook pages to see that it can be plenty of fun too!