

## MAINTAINING A RIGHT HEART

The bible makes it clear that having a right heart with God is the key to having an intimate and fruitful walk with Him



### **Jesus Himself said,**

“‘And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.” **(Mark 12:30)**

What is in our heart will greatly influence the way that we live our life and relate to others and the way that we speak.

### **Jesus Himself said,**

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” **(Luke 6:45)**

As leaders what is in our heart will also greatly influence the lives of those that we have been called to care for and shepherd, either for the good or for the bad

As we influence the lives of many others as leaders, we will also receive stricter judgment from God when we appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of our life here on earth. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

### **In the book of James we read,**

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” **(James 3:1)**

For this reason the Apostle Paul emphasised to the young pastor Timothy the importance of modelling in his own life what it was to live a God glorifying life.

**The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy,**

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” **(1 Timothy 4:12)**

The bible clearly emphasises the importance of having a right heart if we are to experience the fullness of life that God has planned for our lives

**In the book of Jeremiah we read,**

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

“Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.”

“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” **(Jeremiah 29:11-13)**

**The Psalmist wrote,**

“Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!” **(Psalm 119:2)**

With the imminent return of the Lord it is crucial that we protect our heart and remain steadfast in our faith

**In the book of James we read,**

“You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!” **(James 5:8-9)**

So as believers it is crucial that we keep our heart with all diligence and that we do not allow the influences in this world to draw us away from a whole hearted devotion to Jesus Christ.

Without Christ the heart is deceitful and even as Christians can be very much affected in a negative way by the lifestyle choices that we make and the people that we associate with

**In the book of Jeremiah we read,**

“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?” (**Jeremiah 17:9**)

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.” (**1 Corinthians 15:33**)

Therefore it is important to keep our heart with all diligence as Christians if we are to be truly salt and light in our world

**In the book of Proverbs we read,**

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (**Proverbs 4:23**)

We are now living in the perilous times that the Apostle Paul wrote about.

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (**2 Timothy 3:1-5**)

Jesus Himself said in relation to the times that we are now living in that the love of many would grow cold

**We see this in the gospel of Matthew where Jesus said,**

“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold, But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” **(Matthew 24:12-13)**

**Jesus also said,**

“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. “For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” **(Matthew 24:37-39)**

*When we look at the days of Noah we see that the world was full of corruption and violence with the hearts of people being filled with evil intents.*

**We see this in the book of Genesis.**

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” **(Genesis 6:5)**

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.” **(Genesis 6:11-12)**

What we are now seeing in our world is very much like the days of Noah.

With the imminent return of the Lord it is important that we are always ready for and anticipating the return of Christ. That we are prepared for and ready for the rapture of all true believers! (See 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

If we are to see God moving in our cities and nation in a mighty way, we need to have a wholehearted desire to seek His face and to pray and to get our hearts right with Him.

**In 2 Chronicles we read,**

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

**(2 Chronicles 7:14)**

As Christians we must CONTINUALLY guard our hearts and not allow wrong attitudes and desires to enter our heart.

I will now firstly look at some of the things that we must prevent from entering into our heart before finishing this teaching with some keys to help us to maintain a right heart in the days that we are now living in.

We must not allow the following to enter our heart:

- Selfish ambition

We will never be faithful and loyal to others when we are gripped with selfish ambition. Our primary focus will always be one of what is in it for me and not on how I can best serve the team

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

**(Philippians 2:3)**

- Envy and Jealousy

**In the book of James we read,**

“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” **(James 3:14-16)**

Envy and jealousy will always lead to strife and contentions in our relationships with others and negatively affect the atmosphere in our homes, churches and workplaces

It is so important that we learn to rejoice with others who are succeeding in life and to be content with what God has called us to do in life and what He has entrusted to our care.

**This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” **(1 Timothy 6:6)**

Wherever we see selfish ambition, envy and jealousy in the lives of people, we will also invariably see strife and disunity in our homes, workplaces and church fellowships. God commands a blessing where brethren dwell together in unity. (Psalm 133)

- Offences

**Jesus Himself warned of people being offended when He said,**

“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. **(Matthew 24:10-11)**

We will have many opportunities in life to forgive people who have offended us. We must refuse to allow offences to enter into our heart and poison our spirit. If we fail to forgive others quickly our relationships will be negatively impacted. Without forgiving others people will also invariably bring the hurts and pain from their past relationships into their new friendships causing many problems

An offended heart is the breeding ground for deception to enter into the life of a person. We must simply be quick to forgive others

- A love for money.

Money must always be our servant and not our master.

Money is a good servant but a poor master. When money is our security we will never have enough. Our security must always be in God's faithfulness to meet our every need (and not greed) in life

We come into the world with nothing and we leave the world with nothing. It is only what we have done for eternity in living for the Kingdom Cause that will matter when we go to be with the Lord. The treasures that we have stored up in heaven

**Jesus Himself said,**

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” **(Matthew 6:19-21)**

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out... But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” **(1 Timothy 6:6, 7, 9-10)**

We must not allow the things of this world and a love of money to take our focus off what God has called us to do in life

Our faith is the most precious thing that we have. (1 Peter 1:3-9)  
For this reason we must continually have a right perspective in the area of our finances and that we do not allow the spirit of this world to influence the way that we live our lives.

It is important that we always have a Kingdom focus in the use of our finances!

Continually maintaining our first love for Jesus and having a generous heart will help us to have a right perspective in relation to money

**Jesus Himself said,**

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ Or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” **(Matthew 6:31-33)**

Jesus also made it clear that you can never out give God when He puts on your heart to give to His work or to help relieve the needs of others

**Jesus Himself said,**

“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” **(Luke 6:38)**

- Pride

Pride always precedes a fall. Pride is a barrier to promotion in God’s Kingdom. Pride in our lives will always negatively affect our relationship with God and with others and bring strife and disunity into our homes and church fellowships



**In the book of Proverbs we read,**

“Pride *goes* before destruction,  
And a haughty spirit before a fall.” (**Proverbs 16:18**)

“By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised is  
wisdom.” (**Proverbs 13:10**)

**In the book of James we read,**

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”  
(**James 4:10**)

**The Apostle Peter wrote,**

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes,  
all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility,  
for

“God resists the proud,  
But gives grace to the humble.”

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He  
may exalt you in due time,” (**1 Peter 5:5-6**)

In the book of Daniel we see King Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation  
when he allowed pride to enter into his heart.

“All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>29</sup> At the end of the twelve  
months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. <sup>30</sup> The king  
spoke, saying, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal  
dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?”

<sup>31</sup> While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from  
heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has  
departed from you! <sup>32</sup> And they shall drive you from men, and your  
dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat  
grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know  
that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to  
whomever He chooses.”

<sup>33</sup> That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

## Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

<sup>34</sup> And at the end of the time<sup>[a]</sup> I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives forever:

For His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,

And His kingdom *is* from generation to generation.

<sup>35</sup> All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing;

He does according to His will in the army of heaven

And *among* the inhabitants of the earth.

No one can restrain His hand

Or say to Him, "What have You done?" (**Daniel 4:28-35**)

- The cares of this world and desires for other things.

These things will prevent our lives from bearing much fruit

We must not allow the things of this world to steal our love and affection for the Lord

We must also not allow the cares of this world to consume our thought life and to take our focus off the things of God

Jesus Himself said in the parable of the Sower,

"Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." (**Mark 4:18-20**)

## - Deception

Having an offended heart and disobeying God's Word can open the door to deception entering into our lives. Whenever we go against the Word of God we open ourselves up to the spirit of deception which will cause us to make decisions contrary to God's will for our life.

Being continually filled with the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of truth) is also a great key to keeping deception out of our lives. Being both hearers and doers of God's Word will also shut the door to deception entering into our lives

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,”  
**(1 Timothy 4:1)**

## - Anger

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Be angry, and do not sin”; do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.” **(Ephesians 4:26-27)**

In the book of James we read,

“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” **(James 1:19-20)**

We must not allow anger to enter into our heart.

We must refuse to dwell on the past injustices in our life and allow resentment and anger to build up in our heart

We need to learn to walk in the Spirit so that we maintain self control at all times

We must also be careful to not spend too much time in the presence of angry people lest we learn their ways

In the book of Proverbs we read,

“Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.”

**(Proverbs 22:24-25)**

- Fear and Unbelief to grip our heart.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Without faith it is impossible to please God. We must refuse to allow fear and unbelief to enter into our heart by looking at the giants in our life rather than the promises of God. (See Numbers chapters 13 and 14) (2 Corinthians 1:20)

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” **(2 Timothy 1:7)**

**In the book of Hebrews we read,**

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” **(Hebrews 11:6)**

- Lust

We must be careful about what we look at and listen to

If we lose our purity we will also lose our power.

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy- meditate on these things.”

**(Philippians 4:8)**

## SO HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN A SOFT AND RIGHT HEART

Following are some keys to help us to do so;

### 1) Delighting ourselves in the Lord.

We need to make having intimacy with the Lord our greatest priority in life and ministry

**King David wrote,**

“O GOD, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for you; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.” **(Psalm 63:1-3)**

“Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.” **(Psalm 63:4-7)**

Having intimacy in our walk with the LORD is a great key to maintaining a right heart

**King David wrote,**

“**Delight yourself also in the LORD,** And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” **(Psalm 37:4)**

The more we focus on Jesus, the less the things of this world will have a hold on our life. The closer we are in our relationship with the LORD the more we will have His love and heart for people

2) Having a lifestyle of worship and *communion with God* (Worship helps to connect our heart to God's heart)

King David was a worshipper who wrote many of the Psalms. He was the only one in the bible referred to as being a man after God's own heart

**In the book of Acts we read,** “And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’ (Acts 13:22)

**Jesus Himself emphasised the importance of worship when He said,** “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24)

God inhabits the praises of His people. (Psalm 22:3) Worship helps to keep our focus on the bigness of God and invites God into our circumstances and situations. It is during times of worship that God often speaks most clearly into our lives. Worship helps to change the atmosphere in our fellowship meetings and at home. God lives in an atmosphere of praise

Worship and having a LIFESTYLE of prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17) are great keys to helping us to remain humbly dependent on God

Prayer helps us to cultivate an intimate relationship with the LORD. Consistently making time to draw aside with the LORD is crucial if we are to grow in our relationship with Him and if we are to grow in Christ like character. Jesus needs to become our best friend.

In the book of Jeremiah we read, “For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD, And has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it?” (Jeremiah 23:18)

The Psalmist wrote, “Be still, and know that I am God;..” (Psalm 46:10)

Jesus Himself during His time here on earth often withdrew into the wilderness to pray (Luke 5:16)

Having an intimate prayer life helps us to get to know the Lord in a real and tangible way. Spending quality time in God’s presence on a consistent basis is a key to growing in Christ like character.

**Jesus Himself said,**

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” **(John 15:4-5)**

As we draw aside to pray to God, the Holy Spirit will also highlight areas in our life (convict us of sins and wrong attitudes) that need to be addressed to help us to maintain a right heart and to grow in our walk with the Lord

**Jesus Himself said,**

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” **(John 16:13)**

**Praying with an open bible also helps us to hear from God**

3) Keeping short accounts with God - Having a repentant heart

We need to be quick to repent of any known sin in our life.

This is a great key to maintaining a soft and sensitive conscience.

**The Apostle John wrote,** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”  
**(1 John 1:9)**

4) Keeping humble in all that we do, **ESPECIALLY** when we are seeing success in our life and ministry.

We must always be careful to give all of the glory to God

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” **(1 Corinthians 10:31)**

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6)

For this reason we must always be careful to give all the glory to God in all that we do, so that we do not allow pride to enter into our heart. It was pride that led to the fall of Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-15)

We must always maintain a humble dependence on God if we are to see all that God has planned for our life come to pass. In God’s Kingdom the more we humble **OURSELVES** the more He can raise us up to do greater things for His glory

## 5) Continually having a **TEACHABLE SPIRIT**

Having a teachable spirit will help us to make fewer mistakes in life and enable us to maintain a right heart. Because we come into this world knowing nothing we have so much to learn

When we have a teachable spirit we are humble enough to receive correction from others and to have people speaking into our lives

In reality when we are not prepared to receive counsel from others, we will invariably struggle to receive counsel from God



**In the book of Proverbs we read, “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.” (Proverbs 9:9)**

“Listen to counsel and receive instruction, That you may be wise in your latter days.” **(Proverbs 19:20)**

## 6) Continually being quick to forgive others.

We must refuse to take on offences.

In ministry we will have many opportunities to forgive others.

Failing to forgive others will affect our relationships both with others and with God

This is why the Lord emphasised the importance of being quick to forgive others that may have hurt us or let us down in life

**Jesus Himself said,**

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” **(Mark 11:25-26)**

**We also see Jesus emphasising the importance of forgiving others in the gospel of Matthew,**

“Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” **(Matthew 18:21-22)**

Being quick to forgive others is a great key to enjoying the fullness of life that God has planned for our lives and to keeping our heart soft towards others.

## 7) Choosing our friends wisely.

We become very much like the company that we keep

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits.”  
**(1 Corinthians 15:33)**

**In the book of Proverbs we read,**

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.” **(Proverbs 12:26)**

It is important that we have good godly friends who will encourage us to grow in our faith and in developing Christ like character

## 8) Being careful about what we look at and listen to, especially given the lawless days that we are now living in.

We need to have a disciplined thought life

What we focus on will greatly influence our lives. With so many ungodly influences in our world today, we need to be selective in what we allow into our eyes and ears. The Devil is always looking for an opportunity to undermine our faith and to destroy our lives

The Apostle Paul made it clear what we should meditate on as believers.

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things.”  
**(Philippians 4:8)**

The real battle is for the mind. The enemy will constantly bombard our minds with wrong and negative thoughts to try and discourage us and to draw our hearts away from the Lord

Winning the battle for the mind is crucial if we are to experience the fullness of life that God has planned for our lives.

We need to learn to take all wrong thoughts QUICKLY captive before they take us captive

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” **(2 Corinthians 10:4-5)**

We see an example of the consequences of focusing on the wrong things in the book of 2 Samuel, where we read about King David looking upon the wife of Uriah as he walked upon the roof of his palace. In this account we can see clearly how easily the heart can be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin

David, Bathsheba, and Uriah

**11** It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out *to battle*, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. <sup>3</sup>So David sent and inquired about the woman. And *someone* said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” <sup>4</sup>Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. <sup>5</sup>And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, “I am with child.”

<sup>6</sup>Then David sent to Joab, *saying*, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” And Joab sent Uriah to David. <sup>7</sup>When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered. <sup>8</sup>And David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah departed from the king’s house, and a gift *of food* from the king followed him. <sup>9</sup>But Uriah slept at the door of the king’s house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. <sup>10</sup>So when they told David, saying, “Uriah did not go down to his house,” David said to Uriah, “Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?”

<sup>11</sup>And Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and *as your soul lives*, I will not do this thing.”

<sup>12</sup>Then David said to Uriah, “Wait here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. <sup>13</sup>Now when David called him, he ate and drank before him; and he made him drunk. And at evening he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

<sup>14</sup>In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. <sup>15</sup>And he wrote in the letter, saying, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die.” <sup>16</sup>So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there *were* valiant men. <sup>17</sup>Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And *some* of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also.” (2 Samuel 11:1-17)

In this account we see how King David, a man after God’s own heart through looking at something that he should not have been looking at, was enticed into committing adultery with Bathsheba, then to being deceitful in trying to cover up the affair and then to finally having Uriah murdered on the front line

If King David could do this, we all have the potential to make such wrong choices if we do not lead a disciplined thought life. It is so important that we are always careful about what we focus on and that we are always quick to take all wrong thoughts captive before they take us captive and to replace wrong thoughts with Christ centred thoughts. This is a great key to maintaining a right heart

## 9) Choosing to continually walk in the Spirit.

As Christians we are in a continual spiritual contest

A key to maintaining a right heart is to learn to walk in the Spirit

We all will be tested in many ways in our walk with the Lord.

We need to learn to not react in the flesh and to stay in the Spirit when confronted with trials and challenges and persecution from others

As Christians our greatest witness is how we live our lives before others. In other words our actions speak louder than our words.

### **The Apostle Peter wrote,**

“Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honourable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:11-12)

The Apostle Paul emphasised the importance of walking in the Spirit and the consequences of not doing so. We have a very real adversary, the Devil, who will continually try and get us to react in the flesh to discredit our Christian witness

### **The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another**. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:13-16)

**The Apostle Paul also wrote,**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (**Galatians 5:22-23**)

10) Making meditating on the Word of God a key priority in our life and allowing the Word of God to go from our head to our heart.

Meditating on the Word of God is a great key to seeing transformation in our hearts and minds as believers

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (**Romans 12:2**)

**The Psalmist wrote,**

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” (**Psalm 119:9-11**)

We must not allow the busyness of life and ministry to stop us from spending quality time in God’s Word. Meditating on the Word of God is a great key to prospering in our walk with the Lord.

**The LORD said to Joshua just prior to him leading the Children of Israel into the Promised Land,**

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (**Joshua 1:8**)

Meditating on and speaking out God's Word is a great key to building up our faith.

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”  
**(Romans 10:17)**

11) Continually CHOOSING to love others and always looking for the best in others.

This is a great key to maintaining a right attitude in life and ministry and to not becoming bitter and cynical in life when others let us down.

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” (Romans 12:18)

When we choose to love others the feelings will always follow and the Holy Spirit will always give us the ability to do so.

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”  
**(Romans 5:5)**

12) Doing all things as to the Lord.

In this way we will not be disheartened when others do not appreciate what we have done for them and when others betray us or let us down in life

**The Apostle Paul wrote,** “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”  
**(Colossians 3:23-24)**

### 13) Being continually filled with the Holy Spirit.

This is a great key to seeing the fruit of the Spirit being more and more reflected in our own lives

**The Apostle Paul wrote,**

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,” **(Ephesians 5:18)**

**The Apostle Paul also wrote,**

“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” **(Ephesians 3:17-19)**

### 14) Simply choosing to trust God at all times and just doing what He tells us to do

God always has our best interests at heart

We can be assured that what God starts in our life He promises to complete

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” **(Philippians 1:6)**

Faith is the opposite of fear

We shut the door to fear by simply choosing to trust God at all times and by building our lives on the promises of God contained in His Word. The bible makes it clear that if we put Christ first in our life we can be assured that God will meet our every need in life



**Jesus Himself said,**

Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ Or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (**Matthew 6:31-33**)

The bible makes it clear that God is absolutely faithful and that He is always both willing and able to help us in time of need

Choosing to trust God at all times is a great key to overcoming fear and to seeing all that God has planned for our lives coming to pass

**King David wrote,**

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. **Delight yourself also in the Lord**, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.” (**Psalm 37:3-5**)

**In the book of Proverbs we read,**

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” (**Proverbs 3:5-6**)

AND

15) Always having a heart to serve others with our gifts and talents.

That we always live our life with the purpose of investing our lives in the lives of others

Jesus made it clear that greatness in God’s Kingdom comes from serving others

When we have a heart to serve others and to see others succeed in life we have the right heart for ministry

**Jesus Himself said,**

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet is shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” **(Matthew 20:25-28)**

These 15 Christian disciplines if consistently applied to our life, will help us to continually maintain a right heart and help us to walk in victory as a believer so that we can experience the abundant life that Jesus spoke of

Jesus Himself said,

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:10)**

I will finish this teaching by encouraging you to keep your heart with all diligence. The bible makes it clear that if we have a right heart

- 1) God knows where we are, and
- 2) That God will promote us into those things that He has called us to do in life

This is most clearly seen in God’s choice of Israel’s second king. God sent Samuel the prophet to the house of Jesse because he knew that there was a young shepherd boy who had a right heart and a great love for Him. It was this young shepherd boy who was anointed by the prophet Samuel to be Israel’s next King, who later went on to become Israel’s greatest King.

**I will finish this teaching with one more passage of Scripture that describes this event.**

“So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before Him!” **(1 Samuel 16:6)**

“But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” **(1 Samuel 16:7)**

“So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” **(1 Samuel 16:8)**

“Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” **(1 Samuel 16:9)**

“Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” Then he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.” **(1 Samuel 16:11)**

“So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good looking. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!” **(1 Samuel 16:12)**