

ROOTED: HEART CHECK

5-Day Devotional • Day 1

THE GIFT BEFORE THE GROWTH

Wisdom is a gift to receive before it is something to grow in.

Have you ever tried to assemble furniture without reading the instructions? You might get something that looks like a chair, but it probably won't hold your weight when you need it most. Life transformation works similarly - we need the right foundation before we can build anything lasting. Many of us approach change like we're renovating a house, focusing on the exterior while ignoring structural problems. We work on our appearance, chase achievements, and accumulate possessions, hoping these external changes will somehow transform us from the outside in. But this approach is like applying fresh paint to a house with a rotten foundation—it might look better temporarily, but the core problems remain untouched. God offers us something far better than surface-level improvements. He offers us wisdom as a gift, not something we have to earn or figure out on our own. This wisdom isn't just knowledge or good advice; it's the very foundation for genuine transformation. Before we can grow in wisdom, we must first receive it as a gift from our loving Father. Think about the most meaningful gifts you've received. They weren't earned through performance or achievement. They were given out of love and relationship. God's wisdom works the same way. He doesn't wait for us to get our act together before offering us His guidance and insight. He gives it freely, knowing that this gift becomes the

starting point for real, lasting change. When we try to transform ourselves through willpower and external modifications, we're essentially rejecting God's gift and choosing to build on a faulty foundation. But when we humbly receive His wisdom first, we're positioning ourselves for the kind of transformation that changes us from the inside out.

PROVERBS 4:20-22

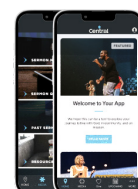
*My son, pay attention to what I say;
turn your ear to my words.
Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;
for they are life to those who find them
and health to one's whole body.*

PRAYER

Father, thank You for offering wisdom as a gift rather than something I have to earn. Help me to humbly receive Your wisdom before trying to grow in it. Show me where I've been building on faulty foundations and give me the courage to start with Your truth instead. Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

In what areas of your life have you been trying to create change through external modifications rather than receiving God's wisdom as a gift first?



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ROOTED: HEART CHECK

5-Day Devotional • Day 2

THE COMMAND CENTER OF YOUR LIFE

Whatever's in the source shows up downstream.

Every major operation has a command center—a place where critical decisions are made and directions are given. In a hospital, it's the emergency room. In a business, it's the executive office. In your life, it's your heart. When we think of the heart, we often picture emotions and feelings. But in biblical terms, the heart represents something much more comprehensive. It's the command center of your entire life. Every thought, word, and action flows downstream from what's happening in this internal headquarters. This is why Solomon uses military language when he tells us to “guard your heart above all else.” He's not suggesting we be careful with our emotions; he's commanding us to protect the very source of our life's direction.

Just like a general wouldn't leave his command center undefended, we cannot afford to leave our hearts unguarded. The heart functions like a wellspring or fountain. Whatever fills the source inevitably shows up downstream. If the source is pure, the water that flows from it will be pure. If the source is contaminated, everything downstream becomes contaminated too. This is why focusing only on changing our behavior without addressing our hearts is like trying to clean a river by scrubbing the rocks downstream while ignoring the polluted source. Your heart is constantly being shaped and formed by something. The question

isn't whether formation is happening, it's what is doing the forming. Every day, influences compete for access to your command center. Some want to fill it with anxiety, others with materialism, still others with pride or fear. Recognizing your heart as your life's command center changes everything. It means that lasting transformation must begin there, not with external behavior modifications.

PROVERBS 4:23

*Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.*

PRAYER

Lord, help me understand the critical importance of my heart as the command center of my life. Give me wisdom to recognize what influences I'm allowing access to this sacred space. Teach me to guard it carefully and fill it with Your truth. Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What influences are currently competing for access to your heart's command center, and which ones are you allowing to shape your daily decisions?

ROOTED: HEART CHECK

5-Day Devotional • Day 3

THE BATTLE FOR YOUR ATTENTION

The fight for your heart begins with the fight for your attention.

Have you ever been driving and suddenly realized you'd drifted into another lane without meaning to? One moment of distraction, one glance away from the road, and you found yourself somewhere you never intended to go. This same principle applies to our spiritual lives—we drift in the direction of our attention. Every day, there's a fierce battle being fought for your attention. Advertisers spend billions trying to capture it. Social media algorithms are designed to hold it. News outlets compete to grab it. Entertainment industries fight to monopolize it. But here's what many of us don't realize: the battle for your attention is actually the battle for your heart. We don't usually wake up and decide to drift away from God. Instead, it happens gradually, one distraction at a time. Something catches our eye, captures our thoughts, and slowly begins to shape our desires. Before we know it, we've drifted far from where we intended to be, wondering how we got there. The drift begins the moment something captures your attention and holds it. What you consistently focus on becomes what you consistently think about. What you consistently think about shapes what you desire. What you desire determines the direction of your life.

This is why Solomon gives us such specific instructions about where to direct our attention: toward God's words, toward His instruction, keeping His truth in our sight and storing it in our hearts. He understood that

winning the battle for our hearts requires winning the battle for our attention first. The good news is that you have more control over your attention than you might think. While you can't control every thought that enters your mind, you can choose what you dwell on, what you feed, and what you allow to take root in your heart.

PROVERBS 4:25

*Keep your eyes straight ahead;
fix your gaze directly before you*

PRAYER

God, I recognize that the battle for my heart begins with the battle for my attention. Help me to be intentional about what I focus on each day. Give me the discipline to keep my eyes fixed on You and Your truth, even when distractions compete for my focus. Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What currently captures most of your attention throughout the day, and how is that shaping the direction of your heart and life?

ROOTED: HEART CHECK

5-Day Devotional • Day 4

GUARDING WHAT MATTERS MOST

You guard your heart when you make sure that the desires of your eyes and the longing of your ears is for God and for his word.

Imagine you're a security guard at a bank. Your job isn't to chase down every suspicious person in the neighborhood—it's to protect what's valuable inside the building. You guard what matters most by controlling what gets access to it. Guarding your heart works the same way. It's not about becoming paranoid or isolating yourself from the world. It's about being intentional with what you allow to influence the most important part of your life, your heart. Solomon gives us a clear strategy: make sure that the desires of your eyes and the longing of your ears are for God and His word. This means actively choosing to look toward God's truth and listen for His voice above all the other voices competing for your attention. When your heart is unguarded, it shows up in predictable ways.

Your words reveal what's truly inside you, out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. Your focus shows what you're really after, despite what you might claim to value. Your direction indicates what you actually trust to guide your life. But here's the beautiful promise: when you consistently guard your heart by inclining your ears and eyes toward God's word, you can actually trust your heart to guide you. A guarded heart becomes a reliable compass for life's decisions. Guarding your heart isn't a one-time decision—it's a daily discipline. Every morning, you choose what will have access to your command center. Every moment,

you decide whether to feed your heart with God's truth or allow it to be shaped by lesser influences. The highest achievement in the Christian life isn't perfect behavior or impressive accomplishments. It's waking up every day wanting to do what God wants you to do. This only happens when your heart has been consistently guarded and shaped by His truth.

PROVERBS 4:21-22

*Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;
for they are life to those who find them
and health to one's whole body.*

PRAYER

Father, teach me to guard my heart with the same diligence a security guard protects what's valuable. Help me to be intentional about what I allow access to my heart. Fill my desires with longing for You and Your word above all else. Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What practical steps can you take today to ensure that your eyes and ears are consistently turned toward God and His word rather than competing influences?

ROOTED: HEART CHECK

5-Day Devotional • Day 5

GROWING WHAT SHOULD BE THERE

The best way to kill what shouldn't be there is to focus on what should be there.

When a gardener wants to get rid of weeds, they don't just focus on pulling them out. They know that the best way to eliminate weeds is to plant and nurture healthy plants that will naturally crowd out what doesn't belong. The same principle applies to heart transformation. Many of us approach change by focusing intensely on what's wrong - the bad habits we want to break, the negative thoughts we want to stop, the behaviors we want to eliminate. But this approach, while it might have an appearance of wisdom, often leads to frustration and failure. It's like trying to clean something dirty with another dirty thing. God offers a better way: focus on growing what should be there rather than just fighting what shouldn't. When you consistently fill your heart with God's truth, love, and wisdom, these healthy influences naturally begin to crowd out the unhealthy ones. This is why reading God's word isn't just a religious duty—it's the primary way we feed our hearts with what they need to grow healthy and strong. When we neglect this spiritual nourishment, we're essentially trying to live the Christian life on empty, wondering why we feel weak and directionless.

A healthy heart doesn't just change your habits; it changes your horizon. It transforms what you're looking at and what you're looking for. Instead of being preoccupied with avoiding what's wrong, you become excited about pursuing what's right. The

spirit-filled life is about doing what God wants you to do, when God wants you to do it, each and every time. This isn't achieved through willpower or behavior modification, it's the natural result of a heart that has been consistently nourished with God's truth and love. Transformation happens from the inside out when we stop being preoccupied with what's wrong and start focusing on what we want to grow.

PSALM 1:2

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

PRAYER

Lord, help me shift my focus from what I want to eliminate to what I want to cultivate. Fill my heart with Your truth, love, and wisdom so that healthy desires naturally crowd out unhealthy ones. Make me hungry for Your word and eager to grow in what honors You. Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Instead of focusing on what you want to eliminate from your life, what positive qualities and desires do you want to cultivate in your heart through God's word?
