

Heart Maintenance

- **Introduction**
 - Shepherding the hearts of your children and maintaining their heart's direction toward you is one of the most important things you will do as a parent.
 - By shepherd I mean: care for, be attentive to, maintain and guard their hearts.
- **A Myth**
 - First I would like to share with you a myth to beware of: That if you homeschool your children or take your children to church and the youth group, they will turn out okay.
- **A Truth**
 - Second, I would like to encourage you with the truth: The key to your child's future is your securing and maintaining their heart's direction toward you.
- **Why are their hearts important?**
 - The heart is important because it is the center of their souls.
Prov. 4:23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.
Prov. 23:7 For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you.
 - Your children's hearts consists of their minds, consciences, and spirits. Their wills always act according to the condition of their hearts. If their hearts are hardened, they will close down to you and the Lord and will open up to the word of the world. If they are soft toward you, they will remain open to you and closed to the words of the world.
- **Watch out for a hardened heart.**
 - How does a child's heart get hard?
 - A. Parents' hearts are turned toward other things above their children.
 - B. Parents' hurt their children in their discipline.
 - 1. By disciplining in selfishness and idolatry.
 - 2. Or when the selfish and idolatrous child takes loving discipline wrongly.
 - C. By responding wrongly to correction and sin through rationalization or blaming someone else.
 - D. By fellowship with the spirit of the world.
 - Signs of a hardened heart.
 - A. Secrets or hidden actions, lying to protect, and a private attitude.
 - B. Unusual disinterest in God, His Word, and prayer.
 - C. No remorse for sin and a resistance to reproof.
 - D. Disrespect toward you and your word.
 - E. They desire to identify and relate more with their peers to the neglect of your relationship.
 - If their hearts are hardened to you, they need the most protection from the world.
- **What to do when you detect a hardened heart.**
 - 1. Examine your own heart first and see what direction it has been turned.
 - 2. Ask your child where they might have been hurt.
 - 3. Ask the Lord to show you where he/she might have been hurt.
 - 4. Ask your child if they have lied or hidden anything from you out of fear.
 - 5. Examine the sources of the influences in their lives. Have you protected them?
 - 6. Take corrective action.
 - A. Explain to your child where you've been wrong and ask their forgiveness.
 - B. Explain the importance of the heart.
 - C. Explain where they have been wrong and what God is doing in revealing what's in both your hearts.
 - D. Explain the importance of taking corrective action regardless of how uncomfortable and difficult.
 - E. Take the steps of action.

- 7. Ask God to turn your hearts.
- **What to do if their hearts are soft.**
 - 1. Keep a clear conscience between each other.
 - 2. Guard your hearts from turning elsewhere.
 - 3. Communicate with each other about everything.
 - 4. Pray
- **Conclusion**
 - 1. Your hearts' being turned toward your children is the key to their future openness to the Lord.
 - 2. Keeping the heart of your child should be a high priority.
 - 3. It is worth whatever it costs to regain and maintain the heart of your child.