

the latter [spiritual heart], influence the entire character of the moral agent." Your character, or lack of it, comes from your heart. Character is doing what is right even when it is difficult. Character qualities include humility, fairness, courage, forgiving, honesty, dependability, gratitude, responsibility, commitment, generosity, purity, diligence, attentiveness, compassion, etc.

b. Protecting the heart takes diligence.

- 1) God said, **"Keep thy heart with all diligence."** To keep is to guard, watch over, or preserve. **"Diligence"** actually refers to acting as an alert prison guard.
- 2) Keeping your heart is like guarding your diet. If you eat the wrong things, you endanger your physical heart. If your senses (particularly your ears and eyes) take in ungodly things, you endanger your spiritual heart. The Psalmist vowed, (Psalms 101:3) **"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."** We must learn to bounce our eyes immediately away from indecency and evil. Whether it be TV, the Internet, magazines, the shopping centre or the public beach, protect your ears and eyes. Paul warned young Timothy, (2 Timothy 2:22) **"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."** Protect your heart by never letting down your guard. (1 Corinthians 10:12) **"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."**

Conclusion: Well, what are the results of your spiritual EKG? Does your spiritual heart have the regular heartbeat of a genuine Christian? If you are not a true Christian, your heart is still desperately wicked. A regenerated heart is your greatest need. Is your spiritual heart healthy? What has been circulating in your spiritual heart? Does it please God? Then, have you been adequately protecting your heart from intruders? Out of your heart will come the issues of your life – your words, reactions, thoughts, character and reputation. With God's help, keep your heart in good health.

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Insights for Life – A Spiritual EKG

20 November 2022 PM – Proverbs 4:20-23 – Insights – Scott Childs

Introduction: An electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG) is a painless, non-invasive way to help diagnose many common heart problems. It is used to check for 1) Irregular heart rhythms, 2) If blocked or narrowed arteries in the heart are causing chest pain or a heart attack, 3) Whether you have had a previous heart attack, and 4) How well certain heart disease treatments, such as a pacemaker, are working.

Transition: Solomon mentions the heart twice in our text and more than 90 times in the book of Proverbs. This evening, I want you to let God run a spiritual EKG on your moral or spiritual heart to evaluate its condition.

1. Make sure you have a regular heartbeat.

a. The first thing an EKG finds is the heartbeat.

- 1) Without a heartbeat, there is no life.
- 2) The moral heart naturally has a defective heartbeat.
 - a) (Proverbs 22:15) **"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child..."**
 - b) We were born with wicked hearts. (Jeremiah 17:9) **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"**
 - c) (Genesis 6:5) **"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."**
- 3) Until you repent of your sin and trust Christ as your Saviour, your heart has a defective heartbeat.

b. Only a regenerated heart beats properly.

- 1) God wants you to have a believing heart. (Romans 10:9) **"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."** Only faith in the Lord Jesus can regenerate your heart.
- 2) The Holy Spirit indwells the heart of every believer. (2 Corinthians 1:22) **"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."**

2. Is your heart healthy?

a. A healthy physical heart functions properly.

- 1) God created the human heart to pump blood throughout the body to ever living cell.
- 2) An average adult has about 4.5-5.5 L of blood in his body.
- 3) A healthy heart can circulate all that blood around your body in 20 seconds; that is, three times each minute.

b. A healthy moral heart functions properly.

- 1) It will be sound or healthy. (Proverbs 14:30) "**A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.**"
- 2) It will be wise. (Proverbs 10:8) "**The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.**"
- 3) It will teach the mouth. (Proverbs 16:23) "**The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.**"
- 4) It will be guided. (Proverbs 23:19) "**Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.**"
- 5) It will be pure. Jesus said, (Matthew 5:8) "**Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**"

3. What is circulating through your heart?

a. Often, parasites circulate through the heart.

- 1) Malaria, Lyme, disease, bacteria and other invaders may circulate in the blood through the physical heart.
- 2) Here are some of the harmful spiritual parasites that Jesus said might circulate through the moral heart.
 - a) (Matthew 15:19) "**For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:**"
 - b) (Mark 7:21-22) "**For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:**"
 - c) (Luke 6:45) "**A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the**

abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

b. God wants His word to circulate in the heart.

- 1) Read Proverbs 4:20-21. A father's biblical words and sayings are to be **kept in the midst of the heart**. God's word must flow through the spiritual blood vessels of our being. Just as every cell in your body requires a constant flow of blood to maintain physical health, so God's Word must constantly flow to every part of our spiritual being to maintain spiritual health.
- 2) We notice in verse 22 that the biblical **words** and **sayings** taught by Christian parents (v.20) are the source of life. They give health to the whole body. You need God's word just as you need blood.
- 3) Physically, God gave us a liver to purify our blood. A healthy liver filters about 1.7 litres of blood per minute. God's creative design is amazing!
- 4) Spiritually, God gave us our **conscience**, the **indwelling Holy Spirit's conviction**, and **confession** to purify that that flows through our spiritual hearts. Without these wonderful filters, our hearts would soon become blocked by the filth of sin. We must regularly cry out to God in confession, as David did. (Psalms 51:1-3) "**Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.**"

4. How well are you protecting your heart?

a. Your heart needs protection.

- 1) Physical heart attacks kill thousands each year, and spiritual heart attacks ruin the lives of countless Christians every year.
- 2) Solomon wrote, "**out of it are the issues of life.**" All that we think, say, and do flows from our hearts.
- 3) Wardlaw explains, "**As the healthy action of the former [physical heart] affects the vitality and vigour of the entire corporeal frame, so does the well-regulated exercise of**