



Formation: Guard Your Heart

Date: Sunday 14th April 2019

Speakers: Kat Densham & Andrew McNeil

With interviews from Oliver Nyumbu, Fiona Lighting & Liz Gowan

Key Verses: Proverbs 4:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Talk Summary:

This exercise is all about ending your day well, so you can start tomorrow right.

‘God intends the disciplines of the spiritual life to be for ordinary human beings: people who have jobs, who care for children, who wash dishes and mow lawns.’ Richard Foster - Celebration of discipline.

The Bible says in Proverbs 4:23 - “Above all else, guard your heart for everything you do flows from it.”

At the end of the day, just before you fall asleep, is the best time to check your heart. A combination of solitude, stillness and silence help us in this process of reflection. Be present to God. Recognize that He is here with you.

We can look back through our day, at the things that have happened, and use them to help us meet God.

Give thanks - Look back with gratitude

- Extensive research shows the benefits of gratitude. Gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. (Harvard Health Publishing)
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 - Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- As we reflect, it's not just about feeling happy... What do the things we reflect on tell us about God's character and goodness?

Say sorry – Asking for forgiveness

- Guarding your heart is a time to ask God – is there anything I need forgiveness for? "Search me O God, and know my heart" says the psalmist. "See if there is any offensive way in me" (Psalm 139:23). It's a bold prayer.
- If God shows you something, ask for forgiveness. Have confidence that you are forgiven – 1 John 1v9. If He doesn't show you something, move on!
- God can speak to us in those moments of reflection and repentance. It's a moment to train us and equip us to live His way.

Let it go – Forgive others

- It's tempting to keep "the rocks" in the rucksack for tomorrow. To feel the weight of them, remember why we're angry and feel justified in it. And then somehow we get used to the weight and just keep them in there permanently.
- How often does something small happen, and you react out of proportion? It's how you know you still have a rock in there. You haven't forgiven the other times and they've built up, that's why your reaction is over the top this time.

Group Discussion Questions:

- Silence - Stillness – Solitude
What's our experience of meeting God in these ways?
- Thanksgiving. What are you most thankful for this week?
- How has God met you as you read and listen?
- How has God been at work as you've prayed your thoughts this week?
- What's the best time and place for you to guard your heart?

Other Resources:

- [The Big Three booklet](#)
- [A video explanation of the daily examen](#)