

Keep Thyself

No. 139

Introduction.

I. If we were to conduct a survey and ask, “What is the hardest task of man?”, we would likely receive many different answers. Some would probably say, “**It is man struggle to make a living.**” Others would probably say, “**It is man’s fight against disease.**” Others would probably say, “**It is man’s problem of getting along with others.**” All of these are difficult tasks, but I do not believe they are the hardest task of man.

II. Man’s hardest task is to keep himself. “Self-keeping” is man’s most difficult task because it involves many things we must do daily, even hourly. Let’s consider what is involved in keeping self.

I. **Keep Our Tongues** - We must learn to keep or control our tongues.

A. The tongue has a great power for good.

1. It can bless, strengthen, and encourage. It can bring out the very best in us and in others.
2. It has great destructive powers. It also can be mean and ugly. (Jas. 3:8b).
3. For this reason it is impossible for us to be too careful about what we say in our conversation with others. (Psa. 39:1; Matt. 12:36, 37; Jas. 1:26).

B. Let us consider some things we must guard our tongues against.

1. We must guard our tongues **against lying**.

- a. Generally, speaking, members of the Lord’s body look with horror on the sin of fornication, of drunkenness, of robbery, of stealing, of murder and such like.
- b. But some look lightly on the sin of lying, but Solomon said. (Prov. 12:22).
- c. The New Testament also stresses that children of God must put away the lying that usually characterizes the old man. (Col. 3:9; Rev. 21:8, 27).
- d. Once I read about **a small boy who was on the witness stand** in an important lawsuit. The prosecuting attorney cross-examined him, then delivered, he thought, a crushing blow to the testimony. He said, “Your father has been telling you how to testify, hasn’t he?” Without hesitation the lad said, “Yes.” The lawyer said triumphantly, “Now, just tell us how your father told you to testify.” The boy said, “Well, father told me the lawyers would try to tangle me in my testimony, but if I would just be careful to tell the truth, I could repeat the same thing every time.” The father’s advice was good for the boy and for all of us. If we are careful to tell the truth, we can repeat the same thing every time.

2. We must guard our tongues against **angry answers**. (Prov. 15:1).

- a. **One night while camping in the mountains a man was awakened** by a scratching on his tent door. The moon beams were coming through the door and the man could see all too plainly that his visitor was a skunk. The man thought about shooting him, but he considered that in the act of dying the skunk might ruin his clothes, his tent, his bed and his books that he had been collecting for 25 years. So it appeared to the man that he had all to gain and nothing to lose by being quiet and still. In a few minutes Mr.

Skunk walked out of the tent and away, having done positively no harm at all. And the man returned to his slumber peacefully, and happy that he had not created a “stink” by foolishly defending himself.

- b. It is not always wise, even though we can, to try to answer every challenge, every charge, every angry word that is thrown at us. It is often best to remain silent or give a soft answer, “A soft answer turns away wrath.”
3. We must guard our tongues against **hasty words**. We should carefully think before we speak.
- a. One **modern proverb** is, “Make sure your mind is running before you put your mouth in gear.”
 - b. **Another proverb** is, “And if your mind should go blank, don’t forget to turn off the sound.”
 - c. There is an interesting story told of **two men who met on the street one morning**. They had not seen each other for quite some time. One asked, “How’s your wife?” The other replied, “She’s in heaven.” The man was so shocked he blurted out: “Oh, I’m glad! I mean, I’m sorry. I mean I’m surprised!”
 - d. Sometimes we really put our foot in our mouths because we do not think before we speak. Let us weigh our words carefully before we speak. (Jas. 1:19).
4. We must guard our tongues **against talebearing**. (Prov. 11:13).
- a. There may be some harmless gossip, but the vast majority of gossip is cruel and deadly..
 - b. Christians must not be gossips.
 - c. Christians must build one another up, not tear them down with ugly, mean, vicious words.
 - d. **Listen to the deadly boasting of gossip,**

“I am more deadly than the screaming shell of the cannon. I win without killing. I tear down homes, break hearts, wreck lives. I travel on the wings of the wind. No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me, none pure enough to daunt me. I have no regard for truth, no respect for justice, no mercy for the defenseless. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea and often as innocent. I never forget and seldom forgive. My name is Gossip.”
 - e. **Someone has written of gossip,** “It topples governments, wrecks marriages, ruins careers, destroys reputations, causes nightmares, spawns suspicion, and generates grief. Even its name hisses. It’s called gossip. Before you repeat a story, ask yourself: Is it true? Is it fair? Is It necessary? If not, forget it.”

II. **Keep Our Hearts** - We should keep our hearts. (1 Sam. 16:9; Prov. 4:23; 23:7).

A. In Matthew the 15th chapter we learn that the scribes and the Pharisees rebuked Jesus and His disciples because the disciples did not wash their hands before they ate.

1. These same men were neglecting to help their aged parents who stood in need of assistance.

2. Jesus said to them. (Matt. 15:3, 4).

MAT 15:7 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 8 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 9 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' " 10 And after He called the multitude to Him, He said to them, "Hear, and understand. "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man." 12 Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" 13 But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up. 14 "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." 15 And Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain the parable to us." 16 And He said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also? 17 "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? 18 "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. 20 "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

3. It is clear Jesus is not concerned with the washing of hands, but is very concerned about the heart.

C. **One time a lady said**, "Just keep plenty of Jesus in your heart and everything will be all right." Yes, if we will keep the heart right, keep it filled with Jesus, then the things that come out of both our mouths and hearts will bless others and honor God.

III. Keep Out Of Others People's Business - We must keep ourselves out of other people's business. (1 Pet. 4:15).

- A. A meddler is one who tries to manage the affairs of others. He is always trying to pry.
- B. The Christian should keep himself out of the private affairs of others that do not concern him.
- C. He should also **keep himself out of the business of God.**

- 1. It is God's business to **forgive**, to **add to the church** and **make laws**.
- 2. When man tries to do these things, he is doing something that is none of his business.

IV. Keep Ourselves Unspotted From The World - We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world. (Rom. 12:2; Jas. 1:27; 1 Jn. 2:15, 16).

There are **three reasons why Christians must keep themselves** unspotted from the world.

- A. First, Christians should keep themselves unspotted from the world because of **the way sin looks to God**.
 - 1. **Do you know how sin looks to God?** It looks to Him like leprosy looks to us.

Leprosy is a loathsome, polluting thing. The hair falls from the head and eyebrows. The nails loosen,

decay and fall off. The joints of the fingers and toes shrink and fall away. The teeth disappear and the nose, the eyes, the tongue and palate are slowly consumed.

2. **Leprosy** makes us sick at our stomachs and the Bible tells us that sin is just that detestable to God.

B. Second, Christians should keep themselves unspotted from the world because of **what sin can do to their lives**.

What sin does to us can be described with 5 “D” words.

1. Sin **degrades**. It takes a man from a high position and pulls him down to the lowest level.

2. Sin **defiles**. It takes a clean man and makes him dirty.

3. Sin **defeats**. It keeps a man from going to the top, from being victorious.

4. Sins **destroys**. It kills everything good.

5. Sin **dooms**. If a man holds on to it, it will take him down to the eternal hell.

C. Third, Christians should keep themselves unspotted from the world because of **what it does to others**. Sin not only makes God sick and hurts and destroys us, but it will mar and destroy the lives of others.

V. **Keep Ourselves In God’s Love** - We must keep ourselves in God’s love. (Jude 21).

A. The love of God is a wonderful thing.

1. When **Nansen was seeking the North Pole** there came a day when he found his ship in deep water. He tried to measure the depth of the water but his line would not reach the bottom. So he wrote in his diary, giving the length of the line and adding, “Deeper than that.”

2. That is like the love of God. No matter how we measure it, we must always say, “Deeper than that.” And there is nothing sweeter or better than to be in “the love of God.”

B. But **Jude says** we must keep ourselves “in the love of God.” The doctrine of “once saved always saved” is not true.

1. We must give diligence to make our calling and election sure.

2. We must continually walk in the light of God’s word. (Eph. 5:8).

Conclusion.

I. As we can see, keeping self is a big task. It is the biggest and most difficult task we have in life, but it brings rich reward. Those who keep themselves will be able to say at the end of the way. (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

II. The invitation is now extended.. Come now and submit yourself to the loving God, through Christ, as we stand and sing.

