

Be Careful

Sunday, December 31, 2023
10:15 AM

A couple of months ago God put a word in my heart for closing out this year and entering in to the new one

I felt like the Holy Spirit was saying "Be Careful"

But not in the sense of fear, but of caution and preparation, and in the way we should live our lives in this coming year

After He had brought some thoughts to mind I remembered that song many of us learned early on in Sunday School. We learn some of the most powerful lessons in Sunday School...

"O Be careful little eyes what you see"

So I want to begin by taking look at several areas of our life in which we need to be more careful and then talk about how we can accomplish that with the tools that God has already given us.

First let's look at both and Old Testament and New Testament admonition that speaks the truth of being careful

Proverbs 4:18-27

"The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble. 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. Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil."

Ephesians 5:8-17

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and

everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.“

Where we need to be careful...

Eyes what you see

In The sermon on the mount, Jesus said that the eyes were the lamp of the body

Matthew 6:22-23

”“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!“

The Majority of what we think about, dwell upon and in turn act on, begins with the eyes

Genesis 3:6

”When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree...

I like to think of it this way...

The eyes control the desires of the heart

If you do not agree then consider this...

Why does advertising work so hard to create the perfect picture in order to sell products.

Words at not enough... but when people see something they begin to think “I want that”

That’s why we are so often disappointed when we order something that looks good only to get it and find out it’s not what we thought it would be

Oh if we would only apply that experience to sin it might keep us out of a lot of trouble

That's why David said...

Psalms 101:3

"I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar... (I will set no evil thing before my eyes)

Apparently he forgot that promise or hadn't properly learned that lesson yet when he set his eyes on Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11:2

"One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful,"

What are you looking at? Will you be careful with your eyes in the coming year?

Ears what you hear

There are many voices that vie for our attention. We need to be careful to block out the voices that don't speak for God

This could be our own thoughts that don't line up with God's Word

This could be the voice of the Enemy seeking to deceive us

John 8:44

44 ..He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

This is what he did to Eve in the garden... And she listened to his lies

This could be the voice of the others seeding doubt and leading us astray

Galatians 5:7-9

7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? 8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. 9 "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."

At the close of the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4 Jesus says...

Mark 4:24

24 “Consider carefully what you hear,”

Why? Because what we listen to affects the fruitfulness of the word of truth that is being sown into our lives.

What voices will you listen to in 2024

Tongue what you speak

Likewise we must be careful in what we speak...

Proverbs 18:21

21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 13:3

3 Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.

Proverbs 15:1

15 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

James 3:9-10

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

James 1:26

26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

Do you speak words of life or death, cursing or blessing? Do you think before you speak or are you always cleaning up the mess that your words make of situations. Do you speak with gentleness or anger? Do your words lift others up or tear them down? Will you ask God for help taming your tongue in the coming year?

Next week we will look at 4 more areas in which we need to BE CAREFUL. But for now, let's begin to turn our attention to How we can be careful using the tools that God has given us...

2 Peter 1:3-13 NLT

”By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires. In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God’s promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins. So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught. And it is only right that I should keep on reminding you as long as I live.“

This morning I want to remind you of just one of those tools powerful tools...

1. Read the Book

Everything we need is in the book...

2 Timothy 3:14-17

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- Read it for breadth
- Read it for depth
- Study it with others
- Memorize it

Psalm 119:11

11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

- Meditate on it

Psalm 119:97

97 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

- Use it (Jesus did)

Three times in Matthew 4 it is recorded that Jesus said "It is written" to defeat the temptations of the enemy"

The Word of God defeated the lies of the enemy and gave Jesus the power to be careful with His eyes, His Ears and His mouth