

The Amazing Potential:

- of each human infant:
- 26 Then God said, "Let Us make man **in Our image, according to Our likeness**; let them have **dominion ... over all the earth** Gen. 1:26-28
- For You have **made him a little lower than the angels**, And You have **crowned him with glory and honor**. 6 You have **made him to have dominion** over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, Ps. 8:5-6
- I will praise You, for **I am fearfully and wonderfully made**; Ps. 139:13-14

The Amazing Potential:

- *And the Child grew and **became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom**; and the grace of God was upon Him. Luke 2:40*
- *Jesus **increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men**. Luke 2:52*
- An eternal soul in the image of God
- Gaining intelligence and skill
- Planning for the **FUTURE**
- Working in the **PRESENT**
- Remembering the **PAST**
- Preparing for **ETERNITY**

We Did Not Reach our Potential

- Couldn't protect our heart from detours / dead ends.
- We all started like Adam and Eve.
- Just as they were given a law to bring life, but sin revived and they died so have all their children.
- *I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. Rom. 7:9-10*
- We can't avoid this. Rom 3:23:
- *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*
- But we can limit it and seek to regain our potential.

Our Spiritual / Moral History

- Our life began with innocent purity.
- At some point we gave in to evil and were defiled.
- In the next few days, we made choices.
- Listened to our good and unseared conscience
- *Men and brethren, **I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.** Acts 23:1-2*
- Strengthened our purity and goodness
- Gave in to evil lust again, deadening and defiling our mind and our conscience?
- ***To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.***

Guarding (Keeping) our Heart

- *Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. Pr. 4:23*
- We are completely responsible for the temptations in our heart.
- *Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God;” **for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.** 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Jas 1:14-15*

The Person we are Today

- Purity we had as infants slowly changed.
- We allowed the defilements to enter / strengthen.
- **one lust and one temptation at a time**
- Some areas: minimized and never activated.
- Others led to defiling of our mind and conscience.
- Some doors opened then slammed shut by:
- ***set nothing wicked before my eyes*** Ps. 101:3-4
- ***evil companionship corrupt good morals*** 1Cor. 15:33
- In this way we can work to
- ***keep oneself unspotted from the world.*** Jas. 1:27

The Battle is different for Each of Us

- *God made man upright but they sought out many schemes (devices) Ecc. 7:29*
- Each of us began upright, but after the age of accountability, we sought our own devices and schemes.
- Paul spoke of where His own schemes had led him
- *I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind. Rom 7:22*

Keeping Your Heart with Diligence

- Peter revealed how Christians guard hearts:
- *13 Therefore **gird up the loins of your mind**, be **sober**, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*
- It takes continuous effort, monitoring, trust and obedience to God's Instructions:
- *as obedient children, **not conforming yourselves to the former lusts**, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." 1Pet. 1:13-16*
- *But I **discipline my body** and **bring it into subjection**, lest, when I have preached to others, **I myself should become disqualified**. 1Cor 9:27-10:1*

David & Joseph

- David's great potential: a *man after God's own heart* watching Bathsheba allowed a lust to activate
- While Job had made a "*covenant with his eyes*" (Job 31:1-10) David had not. The lust won and defilement reigned. From adultery to deception and murder. How did David fall so low?
- Joseph cried out "*how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*" (Gen. 39:9).
- The progression is always the same.
- "*Each one is tempted when he is **drawn away by HIS OWN LUSTS and enticed. Then, when **desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin**; and **sin**, when it is **full-grown, brings forth death***** Jas. 1:14-15

We Must Guard and Protect Heart

- Born pure and holy with no lust or defilement
- We sowed in our youth and still reap them today.
- *Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Tim 2:22-23*
- It never too late.
- **we are today what we sowed yesterday,**
- **we will be tomorrow what we sow today.**
- *for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. Gal 6:7-9*

Those who Won / Those who Lost

- *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 1Pet. 2:11*
- *they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. 2 Pet 2:19*
- *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.** Rom 13:14*
- *NKJV*

Guarding the Heart is Painful

- Grace will not cover those who do not remove.
- *If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, 44 45 If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell, 47 If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, 48 where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. Mark 9:43-48*

Final Thoughts

- *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. Matt 16:24-26*
- *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, Titus 2:11-13*

The Journey to Purity Begins:

if you do not **BELIEVE** that I am He, you will die in your sins." Jn. 8:24

unless you **REPENT** you will all likewise perish. Lk. 13:5

if you **CONFESS** with your mouth the Lord Jesus and **BELIEVE** in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Rom. 10:9-10

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who **BELIEVES** and **is BAPTIZED** will be saved; Mk. 16:15-16

REPENT, and let every one of you **be BAPTIZED** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins Ats 2:38

If we **CONFESS OUR SINS**, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.