

Guarding the Heart and Ruling the Spirit

— Emotional Intelligence —

- **Guard the Heart at the Source**
- **Govern Responses with Wisdom**
- **Let the Peace of God Rule**
- **Practice Christ-like Responses**

Many today, use the expression "emotional intelligence."

But if we let the Bible name the subject, Scripture speaks of keeping the heart, ruling the spirit, being slow to speak, and letting the peace of God rule.

The question before us is simple:

How does God **teach** His people, to understand and govern their **inner life**, in a way that **honors** Him?

God willing, this morning, we'll look into four Biblical principles.

- First, the heart is the source.
- Second, wisdom must govern our responses.
- Third, peace IN Christ, steadies the inner man.
- And lastly, these truths must be practiced in daily relationships through compassion, forgiveness, and active good.

One needed balance, should be kept in mind, from the beginning:

- The Bible does not teach emotional deadness.
- The Lord Jesus wept, had compassion, and yet was without sin.
- The issue is not whether we feel, but whether our feelings, words, and reactions, are ruled by the truth of God.

With the subject now before us,

Let's begin where Scripture begins - not with outward behavior first, but...

I. **Guard the Heart, at the Source**

If we only treat outward reactions, we have not yet reached the root.

God first directs attention to the inner man.

Solomon speaks to the inner life, before he speaks to outward conduct.

- He said, "**Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it, are the issues of life.**" ([Prov.4:23](#))

Explanation:

- "**Keep**" means — guard carefully.
- "**Issues**" mean — the outflow or springs of life.
- God shows, that the heart is the starting place.

Jesus teaches that words do not appear from nowhere; they come from within.

- He said, "**A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good... for of, the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaketh.**" ([Lk.6:45](#))

Explanation:

- "**Abundance**" means — what fills the heart.
- The mouth reveals, what the heart stores.

First, we must see that the natural heart, cannot be treated as a safe guide.

A. The Heart Must Be Cleansed, Not Trusted

Jeremiah warns against following the heart, as if it were naturally pure and dependable.

- He said, "The heart is **deceitful** above all things, and **desperately wicked**: who can know it?" ([Jer.17:9](#))

Explanation:

- "Deceitful" means — misleading.
- "Desperately wicked" means — deeply sick.
- Left alone, the heart does Not guide safely.

After his sin was exposed, David did not excuse himself — he asked God to work within.

- He said, "**Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.**" ([Psa.51:10](#))

Explanation:

- "Create", points to God's power.
- "Clean heart" means — an inward life made pure before Him.

God promised not merely better behavior, but a changed heart and spirit.

- God said, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the **stony heart** out of your flesh, and I will give you an **heart of flesh.**" ([Ezek.36:26](#))

Explanation:

- "Stony heart" pictures — hardness.
- "Heart of flesh" pictures — softness and readiness toward God.

Jesus taught, that defilement is not first caused by outward circumstances, but by what rises from within.

- He said, "For from within, out of the heart of men, **proceed** evil thoughts... All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." ([Mk.7:21-23](#); [Matt.15:18-19](#))

Explanation:

- "Proceed" means — come forth.
- Sinful reactions, show what has come out of the heart.

A spring cannot stay sweet, if the source is polluted.

In the same way, our words and reactions will not stay clean, unless the heart is brought before God, for cleansing.

Once the heart's condition is faced honestly, the next question is this:
How does God teach us to rule, what rises within?

B. God Commands, the Rule of the Spirit

Solomon compares ruling oneself, to taking a city in battle.

- Scripture says, "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that **ruleth** his spirit, than he that taketh a city." ([Prov.16:32](#))

Explanation:

- "Ruleth" means — governs.
- God calls inward mastery greater, than outward conquest.

Paul lists temperance among the fruit, produced by the Spirit, in a faithful life.

- He wrote, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, **temperance**: against such there is no law." ([Gal.5:22-23](#))

Explanation:

- "Temperance" means — self-control.
- This is not cold pride — it is Spirit-shaped restraint.

Peter shows that godly character, must be added diligently, not left to chance.

- He said **ADD**, "...to knowledge **temperance**; and to temperance **patience**; and to patience godliness;" ([2Pet.1:5-6](#))

Explanation:

- "Temperance" again means — self-control.
- "Patience" means — steady endurance.
- One grace, supports another.

Paul uses the training of an athlete, to picture the discipline of a christian.

- He said, "every man that **striveth for the mastery**, is **temperate** in all things..." ([1Cor.9:25](#))

Explanation:

- "Striveth for the mastery" means — competes to win.
- "Temperate" means — disciplined in all things.

Grace not only saves — grace also teaches holy living.

- "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that... we should live **soberly**, righteously, and godly, in this present world;" ([Tit.2:11-12](#))

Explanation:

- "Soberly" means — with a sound, self-controlled mind.
- Grace trains us, to live under God's rule now.

A city with broken walls is open to attack. So is the man who will not rule his spirit.
But the one who governs their self, shows strength, that comes from God.

Scripture brings us back to the source. Our responses do not begin with other people — they begin in the heart. Therefore, the heart must be cleansed by God and the spirit must be ruled, with diligence and self-control.

With the root or source now in view, we must,

II. Govern Responses With Wisdom

Words often reveal the temperature of the heart, before anything else.
God therefore gives wisdom, for speaking and listening.

Proverbs teaches that the manner of our answer, can either cool a fire or feed it.

- "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." ([Prov.15:1](#))

Explanation:

- "Soft" means — gentle.
- "Grievous" means — harsh and painful.
- Tone and manner, matter before God.

James ties hearing, speaking, and anger together in one command.

- He said, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be **swift** to hear, slow to speak, slow to **wrath**: For the wrath of man worketh Not the righteousness of God." ([Jas.1:19-20](#))

Explanation:

- "Swift" means — ready.
- "Wrath" means — burning anger.
- Human anger, does not produce God's righteous result.

Let's notice how often Scripture shows,

A. A Soft Answer, Calms Conflict

Solomon shows that gentleness, can have surprising strength.

- He said, "By long **forbearing** is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue **breaketh the bone.**" ([Prov.25:15](#))

Explanation:

- "Forbearing" means — patient restraint.
- "Breaketh the bone" is a strong picture, meaning — gentle words can accomplish, what force cannot.

Paul places responsibility on the Christian, to pursue peace, as far as truth allows.

- He said, "If it be possible, **as much as lieth in you**, live peaceably with all men." ([Rom.12:18](#))

Explanation:

- "As much as lieth in you" means — as far as depends on you.
- We must do our part, to live peaceably.

Peter forbids the natural response of paying back, hurt with hurt.

- He said, "Not rendering evil for evil, or **railing** for railing: but contrariwise **blessing...**" ([1Pet.3:9](#))

Explanation:

- "Railing" means — insulting speech.
- "Blessing" means — speaking and acting for good, instead of revenge.

Even under pressure from one in authority, calmness is praised.

- The Bible says, "If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding, **pacifieth great offences.**" ([Eccl.10:4](#))

Explanation:

- "Yielding" here means — calm restraint.
- "Pacifieth" means — quiets or settles.

Paul teaches not only what to avoid, but what speech, should positively be.

- He said, "Let your speech be always **with grace, seasoned with salt...**" ([Col.4:6](#))

Explanation:

- "With grace" means — kind and fitting.
- "Seasoned with salt" means — words that are wise, pure, and helpful.

Harsh words, are like dry wood on a fire. Gentle words, are like water on it. Scripture teaches wise strength, not weak surrender.

But wise speech, begins even before the answer is given. It begins with listening and restraint.

B. Be Swift to Hear and Slow to Speak

Solomon warns against answering, before listening fully.

- "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is **folly** and **shame** unto him." ([Prov.18:13](#))

Explanation:

- "Folly" means — foolishness.
- "Shame" means — disgrace.
- Quick answers, often expose shallow hearing.

The wise man is warned, Not to hurry toward anger.

- The Bible says, "Be not **hasty** in thy spirit to be angry: for anger **resteth** in the bosom of fools." ([Eccl.7:9](#))

Explanation:

- "Hasty" means — quick and rash.
- "Resteth" means — settles down.
- Fools make a home, for anger.

Patience and understanding are joined together.

- Scripture says, "He that is **slow to wrath**, is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit, **exalteth folly**." ([Prov.14:29](#))

Explanation:

- "Slow to wrath" means — not quick-tempered.
- "Exalteth folly" means — lifts foolishness, into plain view.

Wisdom is often seen in what a man chooses Not to say.

- "He that hath knowledge, **spareth his words**: and a man of understanding, is of an **excellent spirit**." ([Prov.17:27](#))

Explanation:

- "Spareth his words" means — holds them back carefully.
- "Excellent spirit" points to — a calm and governed, inward manner.

Another proverb, contrasts the fool and the wise man, in how they handle inner feelings.

- "A fool **uttereth all his mind**: but a wise man keepeth it in, till afterwards." ([Prov.29:11](#))

Explanation:

- "Uttereth all his mind" means — pours out everything at once.
- Wisdom waits, weighs, and speaks at the right time.

A wise man does not let every feeling become a speech — He listens, weighs, and answers with care.

- Godly wisdom, governs the tongue
- Gentle answers, cool anger
- Careful listening, restrains rash speech
- and Patient words, give room for righteousness.

Still, Scripture does more than restrain our words — It also tells us, what must rule the heart within.

III. Let the Peace of God Rule

God never intended His people to live tossed about, by anxiety, fear, and inner turmoil.

IN Christ, He gives **peace for the heart** and **stability for the mind**.

Paul directs troubled hearts, away from anxious care and toward prayerful dependence.

- He said, "**Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God... shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**" ([Phil.4:6-7](#))

Explanation:

- "Careful" here means — anxious.
- "Keep" means — guard like a watchman.
- God's peace, stands guard over the heart and mind.

Peace is not only a gift from God — it is to be allowed to govern His people.

- The Bible says, "**let the peace of God, rule in your hearts...**" ([Col.3:15](#))

Explanation:

- "Rule" means — govern or decide.
- God's peace, must be allowed to direct the inner man.

We must see that true peace, is found in the Person and work of Christ, not in outward ease.

A. The Peace of God, Guards the Heart

On the night before His death, Jesus spoke peace to troubled disciples.

- He said, "**Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**" ([Jn.14:27](#))

Explanation:

- "Troubled" means — stirred up inwardly.
- Christ gives a peace, different from the world.

Before there can be the peace of God in the heart, there must be peace with God through Christ.

- The Bible says, "**Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.**" ([Rom.5:1](#))

Explanation:

- "Justified" means — counted righteous before God.
- Peace begins with, reconciliation through Christ.

Isaiah foretold the coming King and named Him, by the peace He brings.

- He said, "**...and His name shall be called... The Prince of Peace.**" ([Isa.9:6](#))

Explanation:

- "Prince" means — ruler.
- Christ does not merely speak peace — He reigns as the giver of it.

Jesus did not hide the reality of trouble, but He placed peace above it.

- He said, "**These things I have spoken unto you, that IN Me, ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**" ([Jn.16:33](#))

Explanation:

- "Tribulation" means — pressure or trouble.
- Peace is found "IN Me," that is, IN Christ.

Paul closes with a prayer, centered on the Lord Himself, as the source of peace.

- He said, "Now the **Lord of peace** Himself, give you peace **always by all means...**" ([2Thess.3:16](#))

Explanation:

- "**Lord of peace**" shows — peace comes from Him.
- "**Always by all means**" points to — His sufficiency in every condition.

Biblical peace, is not pretending the storm is small.
It is knowing the Lord of peace, in the midst of the storm.

Yet peace is not maintained by empty feelings.
Scripture connects peace, to a mind that stays fixed on the Lord.

B. A Stayed Mind, Brings Steadiness

Isaiah tells us where steady peace is found.

- He acknowledged, "Thou wilt, **keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.**" ([Isa.26:3](#))

Explanation:

- "**Stayed**" means — fixed or leaning upon.
- A trusting mind, set on God — is kept in peace.

The Hebrew writer tells suffering believers, where to direct their gaze.

- "**Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...**" ([Heb.12:2](#))

Explanation:

- "**Looking**" means — turning the eyes away from distractions TO Christ — He steadies faith.

David describes a life lived with God, consciously before him.

- He said, "I have **set** the LORD always before me: **because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.**" ([Psa.16:8](#))

Explanation:

- "**Set**" means — placed before the mind.
- "**Not be moved**" means — not easily shaken.

Paul teaches, that even thoughts must be brought under the rule of Christ.

- He said, "...**bringing into captivity every thought, to the obedience of Christ;**" ([2Cor.10:5](#))

Explanation:

- "**Captivity**" pictures — taking something prisoner.
- Thoughts are not to roam free, from the Rule of Christ.

Paul tells believers where their mind and affection must rest.

- He said, "**Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**" ([Col.3:2](#))

Explanation:

- "**Set your affection**" means — fix the mind and heart, there.
- A heavenly focus — steadies earthly living.

When the mind keeps returning to Christ, passing fears and pressures, do not rule so easily.
Peace follows trust, and steadiness follows a fixed gaze.

The Bible teaches more than restraint; it teaches inward rest.
Peace comes from Christ, and steadiness comes from a mind fixed on Him.

With the heart guarded and the mind steadied, we must,

IV. Practice Christ-like Responses, in Daily Relationships

True spiritual maturity is not proven only in private feelings.

It is seen in relationships, especially when others are difficult, weak, or even hurtful.

Paul tells saints, what kind of character they must "put on" in daily life.

- He said, "**Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another...**" ([Col.3:12-13](#))

Explanation:

- "Put on" means — clothe yourself with these qualities.
- "Forbearing" means — bearing with others patiently.

Paul contrasts the spirit that must be removed, with the spirit that must replace it.

- He said, "Let all **bitterness, and wrath, and anger... be put away from you... And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...**" ([Eph.4:31-32](#))

Explanation:

- "Bitterness" means — settled resentment.
- "Tenderhearted" means — compassionate and soft, toward others.

Notice that godly control of the heart, is not only restraint from evil; it is active compassion toward others.

A. Put On Compassion, Kindness, and Forgiveness

Love pays attention to the joys and sorrows of others.

- Scripture says, "**Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.**" ([Rom.12:15](#))

Explanation:

- "Rejoice with" and "weep with" means,
— sharing rightly in another person's condition, not living only inside your own.

Paul teaches that believers are not to ignore another's load.

- He said, "**Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**" ([Gal.6:2](#))

Explanation:

- "Bear" means — help carry.
- "Burdens" are — heavy loads.
- Love, does not stand far off.

Christian thinking, must move beyond self-concern.

- "**Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.**" ([Phil.2:4](#))

Explanation:

- "Look" means — pay attention to.
- God teaches us to consider others, not only ourselves.

Paul describes what love looks like, in conduct.

- He said, "**Charity (or Love) suffereth long, and is kind... is Not easily provoked, thinketh No evil.**" ([1Cor.13:4-5](#))

Explanation:

- "Suffereth long" means — is patient for a long time.
- "Thinketh no evil" means — doesn't assume the worst motives, nor keep a running record of wrongs.

Peter shows the strength of fervent love among brethren,

- When he said, "above all things, have **fervent** charity (or love) among yourselves: for charity (love), shall **cover** the multitude of sins." ([1Pet.4:8](#))

Explanation:

- "Fervent" means — earnest and stretched out.
- "Cover" means — love does not delight, in exposing every fault.

Paul says to "put on" these qualities like garments.

When compassion, kindness, and forgiveness are worn daily, others see more than our personality — they see the character of Christ, being formed in us.

But the highest test, often comes when we are wronged.

Scripture then asks not only, "Will you restrain evil?" but Will you... (?)

B. Overcome Evil With Good

Paul gives a plain command for moments, when evil presses against us.

- He said, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." ([Rom.12:21](#))

Explanation:

- "Overcome" means — conquered or mastered.
- We must not, let another person's sin, shape our response.

Jesus commands love, where the flesh would choose revenge.

- He said, "**Love** your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them, which despitefully use you, and persecute you;" ([Matt.5:44](#))

Explanation:

- "Love" here — seeks another's good.
- Christ commands action and prayer, not bitterness.

Paul warns the church, to watch carefully against, returning wrong for wrong.

- He said, "See that none **render** evil for evil, unto any man; but ever **follow** that which is good..." ([1Thess.5:15](#))

Explanation:

- "Render" means — repay.
- "Follow" means — pursue.
- Good must be chased, on purpose.

Peter points to Christ Himself, as the pattern, when mistreated.

- "Who, when He was **reviled**, reviled Not again; when He suffered, He threatened Not; but committed Himself to Him, that judgeth righteously;" ([1Pet.2:23](#))

Explanation:

- "Reviled" means — insulted.
- Christ did not answer sin with sin — He trusted the righteous Judge.

Long before the New Testament, wisdom already taught active goodness, toward an enemy.

- The Bible says, "If thine enemy be hungry, **give him bread to eat;** and if he be thirsty, **give him water to drink...**" ([Prov.25:21-22](#))

Explanation:

- "Give him" shows — active mercy.
- Biblical goodness is more than quiet restraint — it actively does good.

To overcome evil with good, is not to call evil good.

It is to refuse, to let another person's sin, turn us into a sinner also — This is the likeness of Christ.

Truth must finally appear in daily relationships.

Christ-like maturity puts on compassion, bears with others, forgives freely, and overcomes evil with active good.

Having traced the matter from the heart to the tongue, from peace to daily practice, we are ready to gather the lesson together, in some,

V. Closing Thoughts

The world may speak of managing emotions, for better relationships or personal success,

- but Scripture goes deeper.

God's Word calls for,

a guarded heart, a ruled spirit, gracious speech, a mind fixed on Christ, and daily conduct shaped by mercy.

This lesson is not calling us to be cold or without feeling.

Jesus wept ([Jn.11:35](#)), was moved with compassion ([Mk.6:34](#)), and yet was without sin ([Heb.4:15](#)).

The aim, is not the absence of emotion,

but holy affections, governed by truth and expressed in ways that glorify God.

Some Lessons learned:

- Guard the heart, because the issues of life flow from it.
- Do not trust every inward impulse; bring the heart before God for cleansing.
- Rule the spirit and the tongue with patience, restraint, and grace.
- Seek peace IN Christ, and keep the mind fixed on Him.
- Practice compassion, forgiveness, and active good in daily relationships.

The lesson is yours...

It is the Lord, who invites, and we await to assist.

Won't you come...

- **Hearing** the gospel ([Rom.10:17](#)),
- **Believing** in Christ ([Heb.11:6](#); [Jn.8:24](#)),
- **Repenting** of sins ([Lk.13:3](#); [Acts 17:30](#)),
- **Confessing** your belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ([Acts 8:37](#); [Rom.10:9-10](#)),
- and be **Baptized** for the forgiveness of sins ([Acts 22:16](#); [Mk.16:16](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [1Pet.3:21](#); [Gal.3:26-27](#)).

...while we stand and while we sing.