

Message Ten
Living a Godly Life

Scripture Reading: Prov. 29:18a; 23:23; 20:27; 4:23; 10:12b; 17:9

I. “Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint”—Prov. 29:18a:

- A. In the Bible *vision* denotes an extraordinary scene; it refers to a special kind of seeing—a glorious, inward seeing—and to the spiritual scenery that we see from God—Ezek. 1:1, 4-28; Dan. 7:1, 9-10, 13-14.
- B. In order to have a vision, we need revelation, light, and sight—Eph. 1:17-18a.
- C. The heavenly vision governs us, restricts us, controls us, directs us, preserves us, revolutionizes us, keeps us in the genuine oneness, and gives us the boldness to go on—Prov. 29:18a.
- D. When we see this vision, our entire inner being has an inward turn, and we are changed in thought, concept, and attitude.
- E. The heavenly vision motivates us, energizes us, holds us, gives us endurance, brings us into the Lord’s up-to-date move, and causes our life to be full of meaning and purpose—Heb. 1:8; 12:1-2; Eph. 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; 3:10; Rev. 1:9; 3:10.
- F. Everyone who serves the Lord must be a person with a vision; the inner vision will revolutionize the way we serve the Lord—Acts 26:13-19; Rom. 1:9.
- G. Under the heavenly vision we are directed toward God’s destination, and our life is controlled according to God’s economy—Phil. 3:13-14; 1 Tim. 1:4.
- H. The governing vision of the Bible is the Triune God working Himself into His chosen and redeemed people in order to saturate their entire being with the Divine Trinity for the producing and building up of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem—Eph. 4:4-6; Rev. 21:2, 9-10.

II. “Buy truth, and do not sell it”—Prov. 23:23a:

- A. Truth is something that we have to buy, something that has a price—v. 23a:
 - 1. Buying requires the paying of a price.
 - 2. If we want to please the Lord and stand for the truth, we must pay the price—cf. Rev. 3:18.
 - 3. If our hearts are ready to receive the love of the truth and buy the truth at any price, we will be blessed—2 Thes. 2:10-11; Prov. 23:23.
- B. The divine truth is absolute, and we must be absolute for the truth and uphold the absoluteness of the truth—John 14:6; 18:37; 3 John 3-4, 8:
 - 1. To be absolute for the truth means to set aside feelings, to ignore personal relationships, and to not stand for the self—Matt. 16:24-25; 1 Pet. 1:22.
 - 2. The truth is the unique standard, and we must stand on the side of the truth to oppose ourselves; upholding the absoluteness of the truth is possible only when we are delivered from ourselves—John 8:32; 2 John 2; 3 John 3-4.
 - 3. We should honor God’s truth, take the way of the truth, and not compromise the truth in any way—2 Pet. 2:2.
- C. For the consummation of the divine economy, we need to be absolute for the present truth—1:12:
 - 1. The present truth is the truth that is present with the believers, which they have already received and now possess—v. 12.
 - 2. The present truth includes the revelation concerning the eternal economy of God (Eph. 1:10; 3:9), the Divine Trinity (2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5), the person

and work of the all-inclusive Christ (Col. 2:9, 16-17; 3:11), the consummated life-giving Spirit (John 7:39; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 22:17), the eternal life of God (John 3:15-16), the church as the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), and the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 10-11).

3. The present truth includes the high peak of the divine revelation—the revelation that God became man so that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead—to produce and build up the organic Body of Christ for the fulfillment of God’s economy to close this age and bring Christ back to set up His kingdom—John 1:12-14; 1 John 3:1-2; Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; 12:4-5; Rev. 11:15.

III. “The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being”—Prov. 20:27:

- A. Man’s spirit is God’s lamp within man—Matt. 25:1:
 1. The light shining within man’s regenerated spirit is God Himself—1 John 1:5.
 2. Just as a lamp contains light and expresses it, man’s spirit was created to contain God and express Him.
 3. In order for the divine light to shine into man’s inward parts, God’s Spirit as the oil must soak (mingle with) man’s spirit as the wick and “burn” together with man’s spirit—Rom. 8:16; 12:11.
 4. If we respond to the spirit’s shining, we will walk according to the spirit—8:4.
- B. The Spirit of God is also a lamp, with a sevenfold intensity to His shining—Rev. 4:5:
 1. Our regenerated spirit is a lamp indwelt by the Spirit of God, who is also a lamp.
 2. Man’s spirit and God’s Spirit are both lamps, together enlightening the inward parts—Prov. 20:27; Rev. 4:5.
 3. The spirit wants to enlighten every part of our soul.
- C. When we exercise our spirit to pray properly, there is a lamp shining—Eph. 6:18; 1:17-18; 5:8-9:
 1. As we pray, our spirit functions as a shining lamp, searching all the parts of our soul—Prov. 20:27.
 2. The more we exercise our spirit in prayer, the more we are enlightened—2 Cor. 4:6:
 - a. The lamp may shine on our thoughts, emotions, and will.
 - b. Our inward parts will be thoroughly searched by the Lord—Psa. 139:23-24.
 3. After such a time of prayer, we will feel bright and transparent, filled with God—Eph. 5:8-9.

IV. “Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life”—Prov. 4:23:

- A. The soul is the person himself, but the heart is the person in action—Luke 1:66; 2:19, 51; Acts 11:23; Eph. 3:17; 1 Thes. 3:13:
 1. We have something in our inner being that represents us, and this representative is our heart—Luke 6:45; John 16:22; 2 Cor. 3:16.

2. The relationship that we have with God first depends on our heart, because the heart is the organ by which we express ourselves and by which we make decisions to receive or reject things—Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10.
 3. Although our spirit is pure, what is expressed from our spirit depends on our heart—2 Thes. 2:17; 3:5.
- B. The heart is the entrance and exit to our whole being—Matt. 13:19; 15:18-19:
1. It is through our heart that our real being comes out because the traffic of our being is through our heart—Luke 6:45.
 2. Our spirit is the source of our being, but our heart is the passage, the entrance and the exit, through which the traffic in our being passes—Matt. 12:34-35.
 3. In order to be a proper Christian, we need to exercise our spirit and guard our heart by keeping it with all vigilance—Prov. 4:23.
- C. The Hebrew word rendered “keep” in Proverbs 4:23 means “guard”:
1. We should guard our heart above all because out of it are the issues of life.
 2. *Issues* in Proverbs 4:23 implies sources and springs as well as issues:
 - a. The issues of life are the flowing out of life—cf. John 4:14.
 - b. The heart is related to the sources of life, the springs of life, and the issues of life—cf. Isa. 12:3.
 - c. The fountain, the source, of what we are, of our real being, flows out from our heart—cf. John 7:37-38.
- D. We guard our heart by caring for our heart and having a thorough dealing with our heart before the Lord in the way of life; the more we deal with our heart, the more we guard our heart—Psa. 26:2; 139:23-24; Prov. 4:23; Rom. 8:27; Rev. 2:23; Matt. 13:18-23; 5:8.
- E. In order to grow in life for God’s building, we need to love the Lord, take heed to our spirit, and guard our heart with all vigilance to stay on the pathway of life—1 Pet. 1:8; 2:2, 5; 3:4, 15; Prov. 21:2; 4:18-23; Deut. 10:12; Mark 12:30.

V. “Love covers all transgressions”—Prov. 10:12b:

- A. “He who covers a transgression seeks love, / But he who repeats a matter separates close friends”—17:9.
- B. To cover is love; to uncover is not love—James 5:20.
- C. Covering brings in blessing, but uncovering brings in a curse—Gen. 9:22-27:
1. Those who uncover others suffer the curse.
 2. Those who cover others’ sins, defects, and shortcomings enjoy gain and receive blessing.
- D. “Love covers all things” (1 Cor. 13:7a), not only the good things but also the bad things:
1. “The elders need to realize that in their shepherding, they have to cover others’ sins, to not take account of others’ evils”—*The Vital Groups*, p. 72:
 - a. “Whoever uncovers the defects, shortcomings, and sins of the members of the church is disqualified from the eldership”—p. 72.
 - b. “Our uncovering of the members under our eldership, our shepherding, annuls our qualification”—p. 72.
 2. We need to shepherd others according to God, with a love that covers all transgressions—1 Pet. 5:2; Prov. 10:12b.
- E. “Above all, have fervent love among yourselves, because love covers a multitude of sins”—1 Pet. 4:8.