



Guard Your Heart

"I'll never forget the day the President of the United States came to my office. Well, not exactly my specific office space. More like our office building.

It was in 1992, and President George H. Bush was campaigning to get re-elected for a second term. I was working for Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs at the time. President Bush was scheduled to discuss his position on various family issues with Dr. James Dobson for an upcoming radio broadcast. Pretty neat stuff.

Imagine getting an announcement that the President of the United States would be arriving at your home. I guarantee it would be nothing short of electrifying. The recording studio was in our building (we had six different buildings at the time). A memo was circulated describing the security measures required of all employees at our location. Unlock all cabinets, closets, desks, and file drawers. Any area not accessible would be crowbarred open to accommodate a pack of specially trained bomb-sniffing dogs. Once searched, the area was sealed off until the President concluded his visit.

Dozens of Colorado Springs police officers shut down several adjacent streets to all traffic. Bomb dogs sniffed the sewers, public trash cans, and sidewalk planters, anywhere an explosive device might be planted. As if these precautions weren't enough, a tent was erected adjacent to the entrance. A tent? Yes. The presidential limousine would park its long, sleek, bullet proof body inside this covering to prevent an enemy sharpshooter from having a view of the President exiting and re-entering his limo. These guys think of everything. All these measures were undertaken to do one thing—guard the President. Seems like they went to a lot of trouble, not to mention expense, right?

But isn't that what we do with the things we value most—whether it's the President of the most powerful country on the planet or just my puny savings account at the local bank. As a society, we guard what we perceive to be of great value.

King Solomon knew something about the use of guards. After all, he was one of the wealthiest kings who ever lived. According to the biblical account in I Kings 10:27a "The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones." And yet look at Solomon's surprising advice: "**Above all else, guard your heart.**" Excuse me? My heart? Why didn't he say, "Above all else, guard your cash"?

Because Solomon understood this secret: Our hearts possess the wellspring of life. When Solomon speaks of my heart, he's not talking about that beating pound of flesh within my chest. My heart is the core of my being. It's the essence of who I am. It's where my mind and will, my emotions and convictions come together to shape what I believe and the choices I make." – author unknown

In Revelation 2:4 God told the believers in Ephesus, "**But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.**"

Tim Keller speaks about "*Disordered Love which is loving something or someone more than you love God. He should be our "supreme" love. If He is, all other "loves" will fall rightly into place. We must see that our heart's loves are "disordered," out of order. Things we ought to love third or fourth are first in our hearts. God, whom we should love supremely, is someone we may acknowledge but whose favor and presence is not as important to us as prosperity, success, status, love, and pleasure.*

An **idol** is anything more important to you than God. Anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God. Anything that is so central and essential to your life, that should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. Therefore, anything can be an idol." – Tim Keller

In This New Year . . .

- ❖ Let's ask God to make us earnest in prayer, intolerant of sin in our lives and faithful to be in His Word. "Let's spend less time on face book and more time getting our face in The Book." – Beth Moore
- ❖ "God's eyes are still looking for someone who will totally and passionately seek him, who is determined that every thought and action will be pleasing in his sight. For such a person, God will prove Himself mighty. His power will explode on their behalf." – Cymbal
- ❖ May the cry of our hearts always be: "Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness." Psalm 115:1

"For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him."
II Chron 16:9

May we have hearts that are completely His and may we confidently and with great joy step into God's sovereignty every day. We do not know what 2022 will bring, but we do know that God is loving, and He will be faithful, even in the midst of any trials that we may go through.

You Have *Everything* You Need

The Lord is my shepherd, I have all that I need. Psalm 23:1

"God, you have promised to care for us. We bring You the needs of our hearts, the needs of our souls, the needs of our relationships, the needs of our situations, and we trust that You will meet them. You are our Provider, our Comforter, the One who sustains us. Amen.

There will never be a situation, conversation, or circumstance when God is not with us and working on our behalf. We will never walk into a room where He isn't already there. We will never receive news that He hasn't already heard. We will never face a challenge He hasn't already overcome.

Nothing surprises God because He knows the past, present, and future. He can't be derailed, disappointed, or deterred. He doesn't become discouraged. He doesn't grow weary. He doesn't give up, give in, or let go.

God has endless capacity, so He is the only One who can truly handle everything. Nothing is too big for Him. And nothing is too small. He can do it all. We can't be "too much" for Him, and we can't be "not enough." Any limitation that causes us hesitation will not slow Him down.

He has promised to be our help. He has promised to be our hope. He has promised to get us through whatever happens. He has a plan for us and it's good. We can trust Him to complete His purposes in our lives because he loves us.

God is on our side. And He is by our side. With Him we have everything we need for this day, tomorrow and forever."
-- *What's True About You* by Holley Gerth

God's faithfulness continues!

Thank you for praying for me when I spoke in Goodyear, AZ and Sun City, AZ last month.

What a blessing all the women I met at these speaking engagements were to me! I don't know what the Lord did in each heart, but I know His Word does not return void without accomplishing that for which it was sent forth. Always and Only for His Glory Alone!

Evangelistic Tea -- Desert Springs Community Church, Goodyear, AZ



Sondra Greenfield

"Brenda, one of the ladies at the Tea, brought 2 neighbors with her. She said that this past year she had really tried to be more focused on building good relationships with them. Having the opportunity to bring them and hear the Gospel so nicely presented was really special because she knew they heard it and understood it and gave her another opportunity to talk further with them. Your presentation was filled with humor, grace, and love for the Lord. It was clearly seen by those of us in attendance.



I invited my friend, Kristi, to the Tea. Her mother had been a resident at Robson up until her death last January. Coming back to Robson had caused her some anxiety because of all the memories she had there but as she arrived, I could tell she was really excited to be there. She has always been "spiritual" and would say she was going to heaven, but I am not sure she truly grasped how to do that. She heard very clearly from you what a relationship with Jesus means and how to begin that journey. Kristi has joined the singles group at church and absolutely loved the Event!

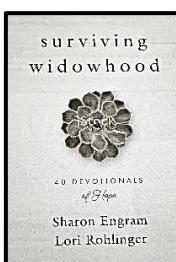
I know God put this Tea together and He also placed you there to give hope and allow those in attendance an opportunity to respond to Jesus! Thank you for being such an important part of this Event!" – Sondra Greenfield – *50 Plus Ministry*



Sharon Engram Tami Engram

"What a great day! It was wonderful to see you and God spoke through you as you presented the gospel so clearly. My neighbor said it was very touching to her. She was a police officer in Chicago and did some peace core work. I heard from the other lady we invited. She said your story of losing your husband is similar to the loss of her husband six years ago. She is new to our church having moved here from Washington state. She has no children, so I feel she is trying to find her way. It was emotional for her. I know several gals attending were not Christians. We continue to pray! The Lord is so good, and I thank Him for bringing you into my life!" - Sharon

"I thank the Lord for allowing our paths to cross!!! You are a blessing to us, and God used your words, love, and joy today to share the greatest gift ever! Thank you so much for serving Jesus so faithfully!" – Tami, *Women's Ministry Director*



I was honored and humbled when Sharon asked if I would write an endorsement for their book, ***Surviving Widowhood***, which she and her daughter Lori have written together.

Surviving Widowhood is an incredible book which offers genuine hope to widows! I appreciate how transparent, honest, and open Sharon and Lori are as they share their hearts and raw emotions in this journey called "widowhood".



Lori Rohlinger Sharon Engram

The 40 devotions are short, powerful, encouraging, and relatable! Each devotion ends with helpful, practical applications: prayer, perspective, and prompts. ***Surviving Widowhood*** will be a blessing and encouragement to every widow, regardless of where they are in their journey or season in life. I wish there had been a book like this when I became a widow 13 years ago. I plan to give it to every widow I know and to those whom I've not yet met!

It will be available at the end of February!



Christmas Luncheon - Grace Bible Church, Sun City, AZ



'I've known Sara for years, heard her speak several times, and finally was in a position to invite her to share at my church's Ladies Christmas Luncheon. Many women commented on how great she was. When you invite Sara to speak, here is what you can expect -- she will pray for you and your event, she will ask the Holy Spirit for guidance about what she should say, she will be well prepared and arrive on time and keep to the schedule you give her. She will share the gospel, include humorous stories, incorporate your theme, and project enthusiasm. She is transparent, authentic, and friendly to all who approach her. I don't know how else to explain how wonderful she is, except to say that she also gives warm, sisterly hugs that convey her genuine friendship.' -- Sandy Boettger, Chairman of Women's Ministry, Grace Bible Church, Sun City, AZ



Moms in Prayer



I have had the wonderful privilege and joy of hosting **Moms in Prayer** in my home. We laugh together, we cry together, we stand in the gap with each other on behalf of our children. Even though all our children are grown, and many are now parents themselves, if we have breath, we are going to keep interceding for them because we will always be **Moms in Prayer**. We meet from 8:30-9:30 a.m. every other Friday and will begin again on January 14. If you are interested in joining us, please contact me and please know we would love to have you come!

A couple of thoughts to ponder

Resolution One: I will live for God. **Resolution Two:** If no one else does, I still will. – Jonathan Edwards

God doesn't call us to be successful; He calls us to be faithful. *I used to be afraid of failing at something that really mattered to me, but now I'm more afraid of succeeding at things that don't matter.* – Bob Goff

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Thank you for being a part of what God is doing in and through this ministry! He was faithful in 2021 and He will be faithful in 2022. People desperately need hope and encouragement which can only be found in a personal relationship with Jesus.

Thank you for being involved in what matters for eternity,

Sara