**How shall the young secure their hearts?**

*Psalm 119:9-16*

**Introduction**

1. Youthfulness has always presented unique challenges in general, and especially to faith. This is highlighted throughout the Bible.
2. The struggle increases as culture changes negatively (respective to the Biblical standard), and as technological advances function as a vehicle which accelerates these threats and problems.
3. There is an undeniable correlation between the increase in secularism, technological advances and the rise of social media, and an increase in immorality, and mental health issues among young people.
4. Ironically, young people struggling with problems that are exacerbated by social media outlets turn to them to find solutions among their peers, or among secular thinkers who compound the problems with philosophies which clash with our created nature and purpose revealed in God’s will.
5. Christians should think soberly about the false labels placed upon these issues, and the irrelevant excuses made for them in this day and age – **these activities and attitudes are not merely struggles that youths deal with as passive victims; they are sinful manifestations, faith failures, and signs of malnourished faith.**
6. The solution to these problems, and the way our young can guard their hearts, is not found in the psychological tips and tricks which flood the internet, but in a total surrender to God, and full pursuit of fellowship with Him.
7. The Psalmist revealed the Divine answer to the question, “How shall the young secure their hearts?” – **Psalm 119:9-16**
8. By Guarding Their Hearts with God’s Word **(vv. 9, 15)**
9. **Way** – the course of one’s life; **Heart** – **Proverbs 4:23** – fountainhead of life’s course.
	1. ***“By keeping it according to Your word.” (NASB)*** – “it” = “way”
	2. ***“By guarding it according to your word.” (ESV)*** – “it” = “way”
10. ***“taking heed”*** – *šâmar* – properly, to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; generally, to protect, attend to, etc. (STRONG)
	1. The object of the verb greatly determines how the word is being used.
	2. The NASB and ESV suggest it is the “way” of the young man – i.e. not the idea of “attending to” or “observing” “Your word.”
	3. Idea expressed in **Proverbs 19:16** where š*âmar* is used twice in parallel form – ***“He who KEEPS (šâmar) the commandment KEEPS (šâmar) his soul, But he who is careless of his ways will die.”***
		1. Keeps the commandment = attends to it and observes it (obey)
		2. **Keeps his soul = guards it, protects it – BY OBSERVING GOD’S WORD.**
	4. ***The difference is between mere duty, and the preservation of life.***
11. Our heart and way are not kept pure by rote, unenthusiastic, and superficial observation of command, but by an intense effort to guard them and save them by coming to God through His word – **cf. Luke 8:42-48** – as Jesus went to tend to Jairus’ daughter, one woman fought for her life to get through the crowd to Jesus only to touch His garment and be healed.
	1. It is not a “quick fix” by mindlessly checking boxes.
	2. **This is a fight for your life, and a strenuous effort to protect your way.**
12. God’s word is the object of our focus because it is the substance and preservation of our life – **Deuteronomy 6:24-25**
13. It truly boils down to the question Jesus asked a man long ago – **John 5:6**
	1. Do you want to stop sinning? Do you want to grow spiritually? Do you want to overcome anxiety? Etc.
	2. Do you want joy, contentment, security, peace, purpose, fulfilment, etc.?
	3. **We live in a society that glorifies victimhood – God demands self-responsibility and guarantees victory.**
14. **(v. 15)** – speaks to how one guards his way with God’s word.
	1. **Meditate** – “The basic meaning of this verb seems to be "rehearse," "repent," or "go over a matter in one's mind… it is used of silent reflection on God's works, and God's word.” (TWOT)
	2. **Our relationship with God’s word is not merely obtaining fact knowledge, but deeply thinking about the truth in relation to our lives – going over God’s word in our minds with the question of how my life can conform to it.**
	3. **Proverbs 6:20-23** – how does the wisdom of God relate to MY everyday life – when I place God’s word beside my life, what does it demand I change? Subtract? Add? Improve?
		1. “the metaphors of tying or binding…depict the tenacity with which wisdom is to be grasped and the central part it plays in every aspect of life.” (Hubbard, David A., The Communicator’s Commentary, Proverbs, 104)
	4. **Hebrews 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22** – when we meditate on God’s word, we equip ourselves with discernment that will guard our lives from what is evil each and every day.
15. By Fully Devoting Their Hearts to God **(v. 10)**
16. The Psalmist sought God – ***“I have sought You”***
	1. This involves His word – **(v. 10b)**
	2. However, this is not merely a lifeless, intellectual activity, **but deep, heartfelt relationship with God** – **cf. Revelation 2:1-4** – Ephesus was keeping the commands, defending truth, persevering, but they forgot the ultimate reason!
17. **The call to heart security, and a pure way of life is not through intellectual assent, or meaningless decree, or robotic activity.**
18. The way to secure our hearts and purify our ways is through pursuing and growing a relationship with our Creator – **Ecclesiastes 12:1; Psalm 139:13-18** – the solution to our problems is found by remembering the One who made us for the express purpose of having fellowship with Him.
19. KEY – what is key to this, like with any meaningful relationship, is full devotion – ***“WITH MY WHOLE HEART I HAVE SOUGHT YOU”***
	1. Leaving all – **Luke 14:33**
	2. Delighting in every bit of who God is – **Colossians 2:9-10** – Christ is the FULLNESS of God – we do not come to Him seeking God partially, but fully – we are complete in Him by His fullness, not only part of who He is.
	3. Estimating all of God’s will as equally important – **James 2:11-12**
	4. When we are not fully devoted, we are not truly devoted at all – **Deuteronomy 6:4-5, 14-15** – none should be reserved for any other.
20. The commandments/word of the Lord are how we know Him and come into fellowship with Him (**cf. Psalm 119:10**) **– John 14:21, 23-24** – you cannot discount any of God’s will and maintain that you are seeking Him, and loving Him.
21. By Treasuring God’s Word in Their Hearts **(vv. 11-12, 14, 16)**
22. ***“Hidden”*** – *ṣâp̱an* – “to hide, treasure, treasure or store up” (BDB)
23. ***“Your word I have treasured in my heart” (NASB)***
	1. If we long for God and seek Him with our whole heart **(v. 10)** because we want to be in fellowship with Him then we will place an invaluable estimation upon His word.
	2. God’s word is His communication of Himself to man.
	3. ***“that I might not sin against you”*** – **1 John 2:15-17** – the one who loves the things of God, and despises the things of the world will overcome sin.
24. **(v. 12)** – adoration for God in connection with His will – speaking well of God.
25. **(vv. 14, 16)** – Joy and delight in God’s word – ***“As much as in all riches”***
26. **When we want something, we often think about it, look at it, contemplate buying it, plan to buy it (saving, etc.), and then when we get it we use it, play with it, enjoy it, look at it, etc. – THIS IS HOW WE SHOULD BE WITH GOD’S WORD ON AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT LEVEL!**
27. How we should value the things of God according to Jesus – **Matthew 13:44-46**
28. God’s word makes life better here, and provides eternal things that will never be taken from us – **1 Timothy 4:8**
29. God’s word transforms us into the image of Christ – **2 Peter 1:2-4**
30. God’s word is the vehicle of His grace, and leads us to an inheritance – **Acts 20:32**
31. Our relationship with God’s word should be one of great joy, and excitement – **Romans 10:17; 15:13**
32. By Professing God’s Word with Their Hearts **(v. 13)**
33. In context of cleansing his way, the Psalmist manifests that part of that process is declaring what is learned of God’s word to others – **Psalm 119:13**
34. A sign of true conversion and devotion is declaration – **Psalm 51:12-15**
35. A commitment to speak God’s word to others requires a prior devotion to it – **Psalm 50:16-17, 23**
36. Being devoted to sharing God’s word with others will result in your own convictions being strengthened, as well as your own knowledge, and character – **1 Timothy 4:16**
37. Jesus said we ought to take what we learn and reveal it to others without fear – **Matthew 10:27-31**
38. We are created in Christ Jesus to proclaim His praises – **1 Peter 2:9-10**
	1. Such requires prior conviction, meditation, and appreciation.
	2. Such results in strengthened conviction, greater thought, and further appreciation.
	3. Such results in a way of life which aligns with these.

**Conclusion**

1. The way young people can secure their hearts before God and maintain a pure way of life is through drawing near to God in His word.
2. This is not some quick fix that takes little effort, but a great commitment requiring our everything.
3. Jesus did not say if you want to save your life just take these few simple steps, or do this one thing each day, but rather, ***“whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.” (Mark 8:35)***
4. **Total surrender to God is the only way to improve your life dramatically and secure your heart for heaven’s reward.**