**Guarding Our Hearts and Minds**

*Thank the ladies for coming*

Tonight, I want to share with you something I am still learning. It is about **Guarding Our Hearts and Minds.**

(Information from 31 Sizzling Scripture Passages from God’s Heart by William J. Loge)

“Several financial experts regarded the Diamond Center in Antwerp, Belgium, as the absolute safest in the world. It was equipped with ten layers of security, including Doppler radar, seismic sensors, and motion detectors. In addition, the lock had 100 million likely combinations. It was a major center for the precious jewels of the world, and the designers and managers of the Diamond Center took great measures to keep the treasures safe. In spite of the security system, on February 22, 2003, the thieves broke in and stole most of the valuable stones, hauling off about $100 million in jewels. The safe and all the security failed to guard the treasure!”

**Our hearts and minds are far more valuable than earthly jewels.**

\*What makes them valuable? (It is from there we love, live, think, make decisions, analyze information)

As followers of Christ we want God’s holy values to shape our hearts and minds, and we are to guard them.

**Philippians 4:6 & 7** share truths that can help us guard and secure our hearts and minds. “**Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”**

**1st TRUTH: DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING**

\*What kinds of things cause you anxiety, cause you to worry?

When I was a child, I never understood why older people seemed to worry so much. I am older now and have far better understanding, but truthfully, I know that as a child I trusted God completely; therefore, worried less. Yes, my understanding and responsibilities were far less, but still the truth applies that we are not to be anxious. Just last weekend, my husband was out of town and I had gone to bed. At 4:30 am I woke up with a bad dream, which then caused me to be afraid. I considered waking up one of my kids to come sleep with me but decided I should be “adult” about this. It is then that I have learned to apply what has taken me years to learn-hopefully, you learn quicker than I do. I then began to pray-praise and thanksgiving first, for who God is and how He is always there with me. Then I began to pray over my mind and thoughts and then pray for the things in life that cause me to be anxious.

I have learned **the best way to handle anxiety is through prayer and petition with thanksgiving presenting my requests to God, which is the 2nd TRUTH.** This is more than just asking God for help but going to Him with thanksgiving is a sign of faith that our Lord is in control. When we trust in Him through our actions, we feel more secure. Worrying does not guard our inward treasure of Jesus nor will human positive thinking; however, looking to Christ with absolute trust will lead to divine peace from God that will in turn place His lock of protection on our hearts and minds. This is not easy to do in life, but it is truly the only answer to worry. There isn’t anything that we can’t speak to Christ about. Absolute trust is shown by going to Christ with everything.

**That is where the 3rd TRUTH comes in, “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”** So back to the night where I couldn’t sleep because I was afraid. I have learned that saying a quick prayer does not usually produce that peace that I desire. I have learned to pray –beginning with praise and thanksgiving and then moving into handing over my worries-quoting Scripture – and truly trusting God to bring the peace often requires some time. That night it took about an hour and I was tired and wanted to sleep and I remembered the Scripture when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to His crucifixion. He had gone there to pray and was a distance away from the disciples who had been instructed to keep watch – to pray. When He returned to where they were, they were asleep. Jesus asked Peter, “Couldn’t you watch with me even one hour?” This thought came to my mind and knowing God desires to use all things for His glory, I realized God desired me to use this time to pray. In the end, peace returned to me and I was able to sleep well. The guarding of my heart and mind came from Christ as did the peace that God brought, but **I had to choose where I set my thoughts, and what I have put in my heart has prepared me to know what to do**. This comes through practice and through knowing that God is in absolute control and having complete dependence upon Him. I wish I could say this is what I always do, but I also am a disciple of Jesus in training. Still learning.

**No one can break in and steal the treasure of Jesus in your heart and mind with this kind of security system.**

**Romans 8:38, 39 “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

It is because of His great love for us that we know we can depend on Him and not be anxious.

Let’s remember to guard our hearts and minds by following **Philippians 4:6, 7** “**Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”**

We also have the great privilege of praying for one another, to encourage one another with the things that cause us to worry. I would like you to take some time to pray with each other and to follow the truths in this verse. First, share what things cause you to be anxious. Then spend time thanking God for His goodness and then present your requests to God for each other. Pray for each other that God’s peace would come into their hearts and minds in the areas that cause them to be anxious. I encourage you girls to pray for your prayer partner, too. If you are nervous just try to at least pray one line, such as, “God be with my prayer partner or please bring peace to my prayer partner.” Everyone is in a different place of growth so there is nothing to be embarrassed about- I encourage you to pray one for another.