

STAY CONNECTED

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To be connected is to be linked to, joined together with, associated with, attached to and united to someone or something.

To stay connected is to resist any separation, feed and nurture the relationship.

Connection has to do with relationships. There are different kinds of relationships:

1. Relationship with God

- a. Relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, Lord and King
- b. Relationship with your Pastor
- c. Relationship with other believers

2. Relationship with man

- a. Relationship with Spouse
- b. Relationship with children
- c. Relationship with Parents
- d. Relationship with siblings
- e. Relationship with in-laws
- f. Relationship with friends
- g. Relationship with your employers and colleagues
- h. Other human relationships.

The relationship that we are concerned in this study is the relationship that we have with God. It is essential that we feed and nurture the relationship. We must all resist any attempt by the enemy to weaken our love and commitment to God or cut us off completely.

James 4:7

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

NIV

1 Tim 6:12

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

NKJV

Staying connected to God means staying connected

1. to the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, Lord and King
2. to your Pastor
3. to other believers.

HOW TO STAY CONNECTED

1. You must place a great value on these relationships.

If you don't value your relationship with God, you will never fight to strengthen and keep it.

Mal 1:6

6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the Lord Almighty.

NIV

- a. It is the value you place on the Lord Jesus Christ that determines how you relate with Him – the amount of time you give to Him, how you worship Him, what you do with His instructions and how much you are willing to sacrifice for Him.
- b. The value you place on your Pastor determines how you relate with your Pastor, whether you will pray for him or not, support him, provide for his needs and work with his teachings and counsel.
- c. The values you place on fellow believers determine how you see them, treat, relate with and partner with them.

2. You must accept the word of God as the final authority on every subject.

The word of God is the ultimate truth. It is eternal and cannot be reversed or changed.

We are expected to pattern our lives in accordance with the word of God.

John 1:1-3

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. NKJV

Ps 89:34

34 I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered.

NIV

Isa 45:23

23 By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear.

NIV

Eccl 8:5-6

5 Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm, and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure. 6 For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a man's misery weighs heavily upon him.

NIV

Your whole duty is to embrace the truth of God's word and never live your life contrary to it in all things and at all times. If you break the scriptures it will break you. If you prove stubborn you will be destroyed by it.

John 10:35

*and the Scripture cannot be broken—
NIV*

Prov 13:13

*13 He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded.
NIV*

3. Invest time into your relationship with God.

The proof of love is the investment of time. Invest time in fellowship and prayer, study of God's word, reading of good Christian books to build your faith in Him, winning of souls for the kingdom, helping your pastor succeed and encouraging and helping other believers.

1 Kings 17:1

*17 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, **before whom I stand**, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."
NKJV*

4. Resist the devil and refuse to be weakened or disconnected completely.

Resisting the devil is all about mind management.

Mind management is about watching over one's thoughts and keeping the wrong thoughts away. It is all about keeping the human thoughts pure, positive, godly, and at peace to enable man live life to the fullest. Mind management is being careful of what kind of thoughts one thinks per time especially as unpleasant events unfold in one's life.

You need mind management to keep your relationships stable and full of fun. You need mind management to keep your mind from discouragement and overcome the challenges of life, business, career and academics. You need mind management to keep your marriage exciting and happy. You need mind management to get along well with your colleagues, bosses, subordinates, management, and stay focused on the job. You need mind management to stay motivated on the job and in your chosen career. You need mind management to handle the difficult assignments you are given and deliver on time successfully despite the difficulties you face and pressures and unpleasant remarks from your superiors. You need mind management to separate your personal life from your work life. You need mind management to deal with the negative attitudes, unkind words and remarks, wrong criticism, and false accusations of people towards you. You need mind management not to fall in love with the wrong person; for love is a product of affectionate thoughts towards a person. You need mind management to live long and healthy, be happy, cheerful, and impact people positively. You need mind management to stay focused and not be distracted by what is happening in other people's life or what they are doing. Broken focus is the real reason why many fail in life. You need mind management to be cheerful in the midst of challenges of all kinds, and not be anxious, worried, depressed or fearful. You need mind management to fulfill destiny and accomplish greatness in life.

The mind of man is a powerful force within man. What a man focuses his mind on is what he manifests. Thoughts are alive and have power to influence, direct the course of a man's life and control him totally. A man's thoughts make him a success or a failure. It generates faith or unbelief depending on what is being contemplated. The thoughts of a man makes him sin though he is born again. The thoughts of the believer make him unable to manifest love, forgiveness, the character and life of Jesus Christ in him. It is so powerful that God said we should give priority attention to it, and guard it continually.

Reasons for mind management:

- 1. It is the wellspring of life.** *Prov 4:23 (NIV)*
- 2. It shapes our lives.** *Prov 4 :23 (GNB)*
- 3. It determines the direction we go in life.** *Prov 4:23 (NLT)*
- 4. It determines our level of commitment to God and His work.** *James 4:7; Prov 12:19*
- 5. It determines our ability to get along well with people.** *Matt 6:14-15*
- 6. Our health depends on it.** *Prov 14:30; Job 5:2; Prov 17:22; Prov 12:25; Prov 15:13; Isa 26:3*
- 7. It determines faith, unbelief and doubt.** *James 1:6-8; James 4:7*
- 8. Success or failure in life depends on it.** *Isa 55:6-9; Eph 4:22-24; Rom 12:2; Josh 1:6-9*
- 9. Our life is only a reflection of our thoughts.** *Matt 12:34; Matt 15:18; Prov 27:19; Prov 23:7*
- 10. Holy living and pleasing God depends on the use of it.** *Eph 4:22-24*

Understanding the word heart

Prov 4:23

23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

NIV

Prov 4:23

23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

NAS

“The word heart is used in scripture as the seat of life or strength; hence it means mind, soul, spirit, or one's entire emotional nature and understanding. It is also used as the centre of inner part of a thing.” (Crudens concordance)

“Strong defines the ‘heart’ (3820) thus: ‘The heart; also used (figuratively) very widely for the feelings, the will and even the intellect; likewise for the centre of anything.’”

Based on what Crudens and Strong concordance says, one will be right to use ‘Mind’ in the place of ‘Heart’ in this passage. To guard your heart is to guard your mind, for the heart includes the mind in the above passage.

Analysis of Prov 4:23:

1. Importance and power of thoughts

The thoughts of your heart (mind) determine the way in which things progress or develop in your life. Your thoughts determine the procedure you adopt to deal with a situation in your life.

- God, in this passage sets watching over our minds above fasting and prayer, attending of services, studying and memorizing of scriptures, and all kind of spiritual exercise.
- “*Above all else*”, means that it is the most important duty of man. Watching over your thoughts is a higher calling.
- “*Above all else*”, means there is nothing higher and more important than the task of watching over your mind.
- It means we are to give more attention to the things we permit in our minds or the thoughts that run through our minds.
- It will be foolish of any man to neglect what God Himself set above other matters.

2. Watching over our thoughts

Watching over our thoughts is so important because the thoughts we think influence and control the words we speak and the way we speak them. *Matt 12:34; Matt 15:18*

- It influences and controls our emotions or feelings, and our actions. *Prov 27:19*
- God says it is the wellspring of life, which means that life springs from it. It means thoughts are alive. They are living forces, and not idle things running through the mind. *Prov 4:23*
- Everything conceived in the mind always finds expression in our lives. *Prov 27:19; Matt 15:18-20; Prov 23:7*
- The thoughts of man has life in itself, and has the ability to become manifest. *Prov 4:23; Isa 55:6-9*
- Evil thoughts will produce evil life and character. *Rom 8:5; Eph 4:21-24*
- Lustful thoughts will produce immoral life.
- Angry thoughts will produce quarrels, fights, bitterness, hate, enmity and murder.
- Disappointment induced thoughts will bring discouragement, frustration, and defeat.
- Negative thoughts towards your partner will make your love sour and kill your marriage.
- Unhealthy thoughts towards your job will kill enthusiasm for your job and make you unproductive and this can lead to job loss.
- Unhealthy thoughts will make you sick as it destroys your health gradually. *Prov 14:30; Prov 15:13; Prov 15:30; Job 5:2*
- Your thoughts produce the life that you live. Your life is a reflection of your thoughts.

Prov 27:19

19 For as in water face answers to face, so the mind of man reflects the man.

RSV

Conclusion:

Manage your thoughts to stay connected to the Lord Jesus Christ. Manage your thoughts to stay connected to your Pastor. Manage your thoughts to stay connected with other believers and get along well with all without resentment envy and bitterness.

Keep evil out of your mind. Do not give in to thoughts that can weaken your love for God and commitment to Him. Keep away from your mind thoughts that can make you to start disrespecting your pastor. Keep your thoughts free from things that can keep you away from being close to your pastor for it takes closeness to benefit from a relationship.

Guard your mind.