

Insight for the Issues

Prov. 4:23

NE → XT  
STEPS

How a Christian can develop spiritual  
perception for our times.

Prov. 4:23 **Keep thy heart** with all diligence; for **out of it are the issues of life.**

For the next few weeks we will endeavor to seek “Insight for the Issues” that believers must confront during our lifetime. Each generation has its own historical epoch that is unique for their time. Some intellectuals label it *zeitgeist*.

Zeitgeist = the general, intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era.

Scholars have long maintained that each era has a unique spirit, a nature or climate that sets it apart from all other epochs. In German, such a spirit is known as "Zeitgeist," from the German words *Zeit*, meaning "time," and *Geist*, meaning "spirit" or "ghost." Some writers and artists assert that the true zeitgeist of an era cannot be known until it is over, and several have declared that only artists or philosophers can adequately explain it. We don't know if that's true, but we do know that "zeitgeist" has been a useful addition to the English language since at least 1835.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/zeitgeist>

1 Chron. 12:32 And of the children of Issachar, **which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do**; the heads of them *were* two hundred; and all their brethren *were* at their commandment.

Est. 1:13 Then the king said to the wise men, **which knew the times**, (for so *was* the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment:

Mt. 16:3 And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; **but can ye not discern the signs of the times?**

Prov. 22:3 A prudent *man* **foreseeth** the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

- ❖ The “...men that had **understanding of the times**, to know what Israel ought to do...” were prepared to make decisions for the direction of the country.
- ❖ The “...wise men, which knew the times...” indicate that discernment of the present is linked with being wise.
- ❖ Jesus indicated that those who lacked discernment of the present were hypocrites for not paying attention to the obvious spiritual needs while focusing upon something of less value.
- ❖ Proverbs indicates that discernment of forthcoming tragedy, leads to prudent avoidance of trouble.

In order to be good stewards of “our era,” let’s examine Scriptural principles to guide us:

## I. THE FOCUS IS UPON THE SPIRITUAL RATHER THAN THE EARTHLY

Prov. 4:23 **Keep thy heart** with all diligence; for **out of it are the issues of life.**

### A. The Primary Challenge = the Heart

❖ The preeminence for a Christian is to focus upon the personal vulnerability – “Keep **thy** heart...”

1 Chron. 28:9 And thou, Solomon my son, **know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts:** if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

❖ Our involvement in society during our lifetime will be directed by the dictates of our heart.

Mt. 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for **out of the abundance of the heart** the mouth speaketh.  
35 A good man **out of the good treasure of the heart** bringeth forth good things: and an evil man **out of the evil treasure** bringeth forth evil things.

Mt. 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth **come forth from the heart**; and they defile the man.

19 For **out of the heart** proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

❖ A Christian's heart will be motivation to remain steadfast to Christ in the present world.

Jn. 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, **If a man love me, he will keep my words**: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

2 Tim. 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, **I have kept the faith:**

1 Jn. 2:5 But **whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected:** hereby know we that we are in him.

1 Jn. 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, **because we keep his commandments**, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

❖ The impetus is the faithfulness that is producing the venture – “...with all diligence...”

Diligence = a constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken; persistent exertion of body or mind.

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/diligence?s=t>

**Original Word:** σπουδάζω

**Transliteration:** spoudazó

**Definition:** to make haste, to give diligence

**Usage:** I hasten, am eager, am zealous.

*spoudázō* – properly, be swift (go fast, be *speedy*); (figuratively) to move speedily by showing *full diligence* (fully applying oneself); acting *fervently* (*speedy* commitment) to accomplish all that God assigns through faith ("His inbirthed *persuasion*").

Accordingly, (*spoudázō*) and faith (*pístis*) are directly linked (see Eph 4:3-5; 2 Tim 4:7-9). <https://biblehub.com/greek/4704.htm>

❖ A believer must put forth an earnest effort in order to be spiritually minded.

Rom. 8:6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but **to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.**

Eph. 4:3 **Endeavouring** to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

2 Tim. 2:15 **Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**



❖ Spiritual mindedness will produce personal spirituality and peace.

Eph. 5:19 **Speaking to yourselves** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody **in your heart to the Lord**;

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Isa. 26:3 Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, **whose mind is stayed on thee**: because he trusteth in thee.

### B. The Practical Challenge = The Head

❖ The believer must be in control of his “thought-life.”

Prov. 23:7 For **as he thinketh in his heart**, so *is* he...”

Phil. 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *are* any praise, **think on these things.**

❖ The believer must “think on” some things, and NOT think about other things:

2 Cor. 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 **Casting down imaginations**, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; ...**

7 **Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?** If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's.

❖ The soul of a believer, the union of the spirit and body, is affected by our focus:

1 Pet. 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, **abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;**

12 **Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles:** that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, **which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

## Conclusion

2 Pet. 1:5 And beside this, **giving all diligence**, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, **give diligence** to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.