



FOURTH MONDAY OF LENT  
DEVOTIONAL

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MARCH 28, 2022

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Today is the Fourth week of Lent.

*Take a moment to pause and breath in and out slowly.*

*Intentionally.*

*Rest in and welcome God's grace-filled presence.*



Complete these well-known axioms:

- Garbage in ...right – garbage out.
- You are what you...eat. Got it again – two for two.
- No pain...no gain. You've done this before!
- OK one more: Above all else guard your...heart.

This last one might have taken a bit more brain power but as we will find out today from Jesus, it's the most important.



How can these axioms we just heard, relate to our relationship with Jesus?

As you hear them again, reflect on how they can help us understand important nuances, as we seek to live our lives as followers of Jesus.

- Garbage in – garbage out.
- You are what you eat.
- No pain – no gain.

Why do you think we are told in the Scriptures, “Above all else guard your heart?”

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As you listen to Jesus this week, allow what we have reflected on thus far, to help make sense out of a startling Scripture.

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SCRIPTURE  
MATTHEW 5:27–30 (NLT)

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<sup>27</sup> “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’<sup>28</sup> But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> So if your eye—even your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

<sup>30</sup> And if your hand—even your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

†

Do today's teachings of Jesus make you uncomfortable in any way? If so, how?

What do you sense God desires to do in you, as you hear these teachings of Jesus today?

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There's a story told about the "keeper of the stream." The tale revolves around a little town and the stream that flowed through its center. People walked by it. Swans swam in it. Kids splashed in it. The stream was the center piece of the town.

One day the town council decided they had no need for the "keeper of the stream" so he was let go. At first, no one missed his talents. Not long after though, the stream grew dirty and polluted. Soon it was intolerable, and the village suffered illness due to the stream's uncleanness. Seeing their folly for releasing the "stream keeper" they quickly rehired him. Almost immediately their stream and village returned to their former glory.

The moral of the story? The life of a village depended on the health of the stream. The stream is your heart. And you are the keeper.

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As you listen again to Jesus speaking to you – pay attention to the thoughts and feelings your heart offers to you in response.

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Are there any lusts such as prestige, sex, food, money, success or something else the Spirit has brought to mind, that you need to cut out of your life?

†

The axioms we reflected on at the beginning today and the story of the keeper of the stream we heard, all had something in common, they all shared, cultivated actions to accomplish the desired result, quality or outcome.

A healthy body doesn’t just happen.

Healthy relationships don’t just happen.

A healthy heart and soul don’t just happen.

We cultivate actions for our good or detriment.

Cultivated actions – as followers of Jesus, cultivated actions are more simply called spiritual practices.

Dallas Willard reminds us that spiritual practices are designed to “help us be active and effective in the spiritual realm of our own heart, now spiritually alive by grace, in relation to God and His kingdom.”

†

In these final moments today, talk to Jesus about what spiritual practices you are cultivating in your life to allow the grace of God to flow over and transform your heart.

If you are having trouble talking to Jesus about this for lack of experience or just feeling overwhelmed \_ talk to Jesus about who you can ask for help.

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CLOSING AFFIRMATION  
JOHN 6:66–69 (NLT)

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<sup>66</sup> At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. <sup>67</sup> Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?”

<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. <sup>69</sup> We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.