

# WHEN SPIRITUAL IS NOT ENOUGH

## NEW YEARS' DAY 2023

**Introduction:** A number of things got my attention over the Christmas break – there is a change happening / has happened in our society.

(a) *I watched a movie, where miracles were happening around a young boy. It raised some contemporary scenarios:*

- What reaction would you expect from our society if you saw an amputee's leg grow back?
- The movie showed modern society polarised for and against
- Some that were against were aggressively against
- Social media exploded; news streams were not prepared to check out the facts in case they were seen as “pro-Christian”.
- People lost jobs, evicted from rented premises, expelled from schools if they questioned the status quo.

(b) *Nick Cave performed at Sydney Opera House. He is a singer, actor and composer.*

- QUOTE from news report on the event: “This was a religious experience – not spiritual; something demanding, a thing of ritual and discipline. The oft-heard contemporary phrase “I’m spiritual not religious” is something short of commitment.” – Stan Grant
- In our nation, we will continue to see both opposition and searching increase.
- In this season, it pays to keep OUR heart right.
- Proverbs 4:23-27 will give us strategy for the New Year.

## 1. Guard your Heart

**Proverbs 4:23** *So above all, guard the affections of your heart, for they affect all that you are. Pay attention to the welfare of your innermost being, for from there flows the wellspring of life.*

- Guard your affections
  - Will
  - Thoughts
  - Discernment
- Affections affect who you are.
- Pay attention to your heart, as it shapes your season / wellspring in God.
  - Your dry / frozen season could be shortened depending on your heart.
  - NOT Your age or circumstances.

## 2. Watch your Mouth

**Proverbs 4:24** *Avoid dishonest speech and pretentious words. Be free from using perverse words no matter what!*

- Dishonest speech = fake news
- Pretentious = trying to “big note” yourself
- Perverse = deliberate and obstinate desire to behave in an unacceptable way.

*Matthew 12:34-35 But you who are known as the Pharisees are rotten to the core like venomous snakes. How can your words be good if you are rotten within? For what has been stored up in your hearts will be heard in the overflow of your words. When virtue is stored within, the hearts of good, upright people will produce good fruit. But when evil is hidden within, those who are evil will produce evil fruit.*

- Whatever you put in WILL come out – good or bad.

### 3. Watch your Step

**Proverbs 4:25-27** *Set your gaze on the path before you. With fixed purpose, looking straight ahead, ignore life's distractions. Watch where you're going! Stick to the path of truth, and the road will be safe and smooth before you. Don't allow yourself to be side-tracked for even a moment, or take the detour that leads to darkness.*

- Fix your purpose – what's your purpose for being?
- Paul's purpose

**Philippians 3:12-13** *I admit that I haven't yet acquired the absolute fullness that I'm pursuing, but I run with passion into His abundance so that I may reach the purpose for which Christ Jesus laid hold of me to make me His own. I don't depend on my own strength to accomplish this; however I do have one compelling focus: I forget all of the past as I fasten my heart to the future instead.*

- Stick to the path of truth
- Don't be sidetracked.