



LITTLE WHITE GUARD DOG

KEY SCRIPTURES: Proverbs 4:23, Romans 10:10

I took my walk a little earlier than normal one morning not too long ago. It had rained in the night, and the humidity was already high, so I knew a walk any later in the day would have been more uncomfortable.

I got to see things I normally would have missed: rabbits eating their morning salads; folks going to work; a fellow exerciser.

And a barking white dog.

He was tied to a stake out in a yard that I pass about halfway through my route, put there by his master so he could take care of his morning "business." And just as I noticed I hadn't seen him before, he noticed the same of me, and started barking.

He saw me coming—and let me know about it—when I was still about five houses away. And he kept barking until I had passed and was about five houses down in the other direction. Thankfully for him, his owner was leaving for work and had to put him back inside. His house was on the part of my route where I looped around and headed for home, so I would have really traumatized the poor little fellow when I came by a second time.

He was quite the guard dog. Nothing but a little ball of white fur, his bark was definitely bigger than his bite. But it was effective. He meant business, too, stretching his little rope as far as it would go, ferociously claiming every inch of the yard that he knew was his.

He was small, but spunky, and I think his little doggy friends would have been proud of the way he stood his ground and defended his territory.

And I wondered to myself, Do I defend my heart so ferociously? We are told to do so in Proverbs, when the writer of verse 4:23 reminds us, *"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."* Our hearts are our borders, where everything starts and where everything flows out of and comes into.

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"...so we can know our value, live with purpose, and make a difference...**In that order.**"



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No wonder we are told to keep it guarded.

So, how do we do that? Maybe we can learn something from that little white bundle of furry energy.

If his barks could have been words, maybe he would have been saying something like this: "You don't belong here. Oh, you're getting closer, but you don't belong here. See where I am? You can't come beyond this point. I'm little, but I fight big. That's right. Just keep on walking. Oh, trying to smile at me, huh? Well, it won't work. This is MY yard! You just keep on walking. Uh-huh. I thought so. AND STAY AWAY!"

Do I say the same things to any signs of trouble trying to creep in on my heart? Do I guard it so ferociously?

I should.

I learned a big lesson from a little dog that morning. What he taught me was well said. I mean, barked.

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