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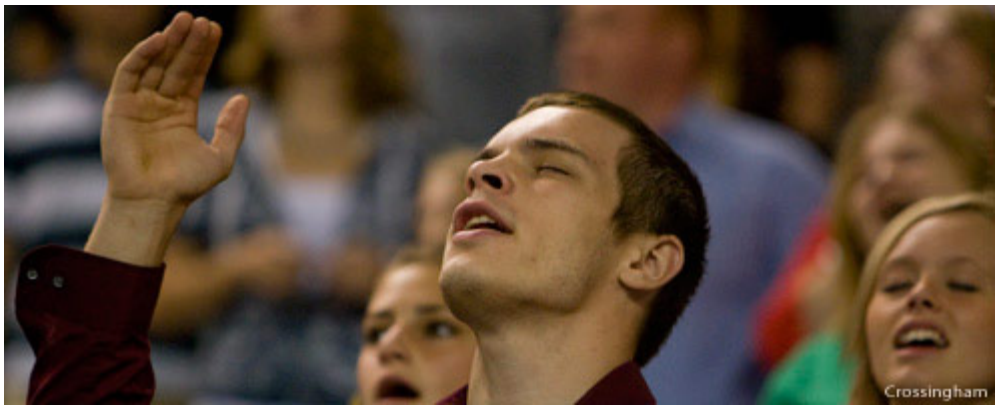

LU alumnus tells students to "Guard Your Heart"

August 22, 2008 ¦ Teresa Dunham

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” – Proverbs 4:23

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When Ted Cunningham attended Liberty University, he was the type of guy who actually read the student policy manual from front to back and obeyed every rule.

“I went to Liberty University at a time when there were a lot of rules,” said Cunningham, who graduated in 1996 with a degree in government and later attended Dallas Theological Seminary.

He believed in God, but guilt ruled his heart. He falsely thought God would love him more if he obeyed the rules — but his worldview slowly changed while he was attending Liberty.

“This is the first place I learned about grace and understood it,” said Cunningham.

Now founding pastor of Woodland Hills Community Church in Branson, Mo., Cunningham returned to his alma mater on Friday to deliver a convocation message titled “Guard Your Heart.”

He told students they need to be aware of the messages that the world is throwing at their hearts — messages that they aren’t good enough — and realize that God’s message is one of grace.

“There is nothing that I can do to make God love me more. There’s nothing that I can do to make God love me less,” he said.

Yet students must prepare their hearts to receive the messages and blessings that God wants to show them, he said. They must find the lies in their hearts and replace them with truth.

“My heart is my responsibility,” he said, explaining that people shouldn’t be co-dependent on friends, spouses or co-workers to fill voids of the heart. “Make sure your tank is filled with God’s love.”

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Ted Cunningham often accompanies well-known Christian speaker Gary Smalley at his national “I Promise” conferences and has also worked on several Biblical relationship-based books with Smalley. In 2002, Cunningham received the noteworthy Purpose Driven Church Health Award.