

# How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts Worksheet

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## *Verse 1*

How shall the young secure their hearts  
And guard their lives from sin?  
Thy Word the choicest rules imparts  
To keep the conscience clean.

## *Verse 2*

When once it enters to the mind,  
It spreads such light abroad,  
The meanest souls instruction find,  
And raise their thoughts to God.

## *Verse 3*

'Tis, like the sun, a heav'nly light  
That guides us all the day,  
And through the dangers of the night  
A lamp to lead our way.

## *Verse 4*

The men that keep Thy law with care,  
And meditate Thy Word,  
Grow wiser than their teachers are,  
And better know the Lord.

## *Verse 5*

Thy precepts make me truly wise:  
I hate the sinner's road;  
I hate my own vain thoughts that rise,  
But love Thy law, my God.

## *Verse 6*

The starry heav'ns Thy rule obey,  
The earth maintains her place;  
And these Thy servants, night and day,  
Thy skill and power express.

## *Verse 7*

But still Thy law and Gospel, Lord,  
Have lessons more divine;  
Not earth stands firmer than Thy Word,  
Nor stars so nobly shine.

## *Verse 8*

Thy Word is everlasting truth;  
How pure is every page!  
That holy Book shall guide our youth  
And well support our age.

**Vocabulary** In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

*Verse 1:* secure, sin, imparts, conscience

*Verse 2:* abroad, meanest

*Verse 3:* 'Tis, heav'nly

*Verse 4:* Thy, meditate

*Verse 5:* precepts, wise, sinner, vain, Thy

*Verse 6:* heav'ns, maintains, Thy, express

*Verse 7:* Thy, Gospel, divine, nobly

*Verse 8:* everlasting, pure

**Word Pictures** Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, without making an image of God, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

*Verse 1:* secure their hearts; guard their lives from sin; conscience clean

*Verse 2:* spreads ... light abroad; instruction find; raise their thoughts

*Verse 3:* sun a heav'nly light; through the dangers of the night; A lamp to lead our way

*Verse 4:* Grow wiser

*Verse 5:* precepts make me ... wise; sinner's road; vain thoughts

*Verse 6:* stary heav'ns; Thy servants

*Verse 7:* lessons more divine; stars so nobly shine

*Verse 8:* How pure is every page; holy Book shall guide our youth; well support our age

**Mechanics** are the nuts and bolts of a poem. Verbally discuss.

***Who is the speaker?*** (Does the speaker have a specific personality or has the author remained in the background so the message of the poem will be more clear?)

***What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?*** (Sometimes, poems reveal nothing about the speaker's personal thoughts, feelings, or attitudes. Yet, the poem may demonstrate those character traits that are important to the author like courage, loyalty, perserverance, etc.)

***Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone?*** (Sometimes poems are not directed to anyone in particular, but to anyone that may read it.)

***Does the poem have a setting?*** (Does the author tell where the poem occurs? Is the poem about a specific event?)

***Is the poem about a particular event?*** (Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?)

***Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?*** (Some poems are straightforward and are meant to be taken literally. In songs, the theme may be presented in the refrain or in the last few lines. Sometimes the theme is a little bit more difficult to discern as it is made with figurative language or symbols.)

***What point of view or perspective is the speaker?*** (What meaning do you think the poem has for the author?)

***How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?*** (Did your thoughts and feelings change after you took time to study it?)

**Comprehension Questions** Verbally discuss

*Verse 1:* What are the young to secure and guard their hearts from? What will help the young to do this? What is to be kept clean? Why would this be important?

*Verse 2:* What enters the mind? What does it spread? Explain and discuss: "The meanest souls instruction find, And raise their thoughts to God."

*Verse 3:* Did you notice the terms "'Tis" and "heav'nly"? What do they mean and why do you think the author used these terms? What is like the sun? What guides us? What keeps us from dangers in the night? What is like a lamp?

*Verse 4:* Who grow wiser than their teachers? What do they to grow wiser? With respect to the Lord, what happens as a result of their labor?

*Verse 5:* What makes us wise? What does the author hate? What does the author love?

*Verse 6:* Who do the “starry heav’ns” obey? How does the earth stay in her course? Explain and discuss: “And these Thy servants, night and day, Thy skill and power express.”

*Verse 7:* The author holds that the Law and the Gospel are important. What does the author mean by saying their lessons are “divine”? Explain and discuss: “Not earth stands firmer than Thy Word, Nor stars so nobly shine.”

*Verse 8:* What is everlasting truth? How does the author describe every page? What shall guide our youth? What shall support our age or when we are old?

Did this historical event or message become more real to you after reading this poem? Why?

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

### ***What Does the Bible Say?***

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the eight verses.

What does the Bible have to say about education? instruction? knowledge? Remember, thoughts have consequences. We act on what we think. When we read an exciting story, for example, we must intellectually process what is going on so that we know what emotions are required (e.g., sad, glad, mad or scared).

For more help, check out the Bible and Education web page at <http://www.lovetolearnplace.com/Bible%26Education.html>

### ***The Author/Poet***

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The name of the author for this poem or lyric is Isaac Watts (1674-1748). He was born 17 July 1674, in Southampton, England, and died 25 November 1748, in Stoke Newington, England. He is buried at Bunhill Fields Cemetery, London, England. Watt’s had an interesting father who was imprisoned two times for his religious views. Mr. Watts studied Greek and Latin but declined an offer for a standard university education preferring to attend the Nonconformist Academy at Stoke Newington in 1690. When Mr. Watts was 20-22 he stayed at home and wrote the majority of the hymns for *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* that were published in 1707-1709. For six years he was the tutor Mr. John Hartopp’s son. Mr. Watts was ordained in 1702.

### ***"Give 'em Watts, boys, give 'em Watts!"***

Interestingly, Isaac Watts is intimately connected with the American War of Independence. In an attack upon Springfield when the patriots' wadding gave out, Rev. James Caldwell (of Huguenot descent) ran into a Presbyterian church returning with his arms and pockets crammed full with *Watts' Psalms and Hymns* saying, "Now, boys, give them Watts!" The British offered large rewards for the capture of Rev. Caldwell, but to no avail. Therefore, the British burned his church, shot his wife while she was in the midst of their nine children, dragged her body into the street, and burned his home and out buildings.

## Geography

Locate Southampton, England, and Lond on a globe, map and atlas.

*Challenge* Locate Stoke Newington (England) on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast England's weather with your own for one week.

Make an English meal for your family.

## Activities

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each verse. (Note: that will be eight different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the song and the author's name which will be your book's cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the event or message discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the historical event or message of this poem.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, "interview" various individuals connected with this poem (e.g., apostles, heads of nations either current or past, older testament prophets, repentant sinners, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents' permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author's view of the impact of *How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about Isaac Watts (1674-1748) and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.