

Gospel Treason

What Happens When We Give Our Hearts to Idols

How Does My Heart Direct My Life?

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Oct. 21, 2012

The Bible points you to your own heart as the control center of what's going on in your life – and it exposes the ongoing battle that rages right there on a daily basis. It's a battle for ownership... and control... and worship.

James 4:1-3 “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

An idol = **Anything** or **Anyone** that begins to **Capture** our **Hearts** and **Minds** and **Affections** more than God.

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

Proverbs tells us to **guide our heart, guard our heart**, and that **you're a fool** if you follow your heart! It is not your best friend! Jesus Christ and His Word is your best friend.

Proverbs 23:19 “Hear, my son, and be wise; and guide your heart in the way.” Guide it!

Proverbs 4:23 “Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it flows the issues of life.” Guard it!

Proverbs 28:26 “He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.”

The Worship of Your Heart Shapes the Direction of Your Life because Your Heart is the Processing and Sorting Center for Everything You Do ~ and Everything You'll Become!

A. You Can't Keep Life from Happening All Around You!

Stuff comes at us everyday! People hurt us, best friends desert us, health fails us, and finances can evaporate – along with any kind of job security.

B. Your Heart Never Stops Trying to Make Sense Out of It

The Bible teaches that you're 'thinking' something whether you're conscious of it or not. We talk to ourselves in our heart.

Proverbs 23:7 “... as a man *thinks* in his heart so is he.”

Psalm 15:1-2 “Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and *speaks the truth in his heart.*”

Obadiah 3 “The pride of your heart has deceived you... you who *say in your heart*, ‘Who will bring me down to the ground?’”

Jeremiah 13:22 “And if you say in your heart, ‘Why have these things come upon me?’ For the greatness of your iniquity your skirts have been uncovered, your heels made bare.”

Deuteronomy 8:17 “Then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’”

The ‘Heart’ is where we do our thinking... talking... assessing... and processing of all that life is throwing at us.

C. Your Feelings Never Stop Feeding Off Your Thinking

Feelings don’t erupt out of a vacuum. Our feelings flow out of our thinking.

“Fear and desire are two sides of a single coin. A sinful fear is a craving for something not to happen. If I want money, I fear poverty. If I long to be accepted, I’m terrified of rejection. If I fear pain or hardship, I crave comfort or pleasure. If I crave preeminence, I fear being inferior to others. With some people the fear may be more pronounced than the corresponding desire, and wise counseling will work with what is pronounced.” David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes*, p. 155

"I remember the time I counseled a man who habitually escaped life's pressures into TV, food, video games, alcohol, pornography, antique collecting, sci-fi novels. Where to begin? Could I find a passage to focus his problems? I wasn't sure what to pick up on. Then it struck me: Try the Psalms—as a whole! Almost every single Psalm, in some way or other, portrays the Lord as our refuge in trouble. The Psalms implicitly and explicitly rebuke taking refuge in anything less; the Psalms offer steadfast love and mercy; the Psalms spur us to know and obey God in the trenches of life. This man felt vaguely guilty for some of his bad behavior. But he didn't see the pattern or the seriousness. His efforts at change were half-baked and unsuccessful.

Conviction of the specific sin of his heart—turning from the living God in order to seek idolatrous refuge—woke him up, and made him see his behavioral sins in a fresh way... Christ's grace became very real and necessary. He became motivated to practical change—to face pressures and responsibilities to God’s way.” David Powlison, “X-Ray Questions: Drawing Out the Whys and Wherefores of Human Behavior,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 18, no. 1 (Fall 1999): 7

Like a bicycle wheel, idolatry is at the **HUB** of our sin! And each specific sin is a spoke running off from that.

“Paying careful attention to emotions that grow to near neurotic proportions is one of the most effective ways to identify our specific idols. Whether manifested as spontaneous outbursts or chronic life patterns, these exaggerated emotions can provide an unobstructed view into the cathedral of our idol worship. The main questions to ask ourselves in light of such intense feelings are: What do I think I have to have in life beyond Jesus and what he chooses to give me? Has something or someone become too important to me?

When anger gets out of control, ask yourself: What am I being blocked from having that I believe is a necessity but really isn't? Marriage, children, success, a Ph.D., a record deal? If fear threatens to overwhelm you, ask, ‘What is being threatened that I think is essential but really isn't? My 401K, my life, my physical looks, my reputation? If despondency consumes you, consider: What have I lost that I believe is critical to have but really isn't? A starting position on the football team, my spouse's approval, my parents, the ability to drive a golf ball three hundred yards, my wrinkleless face?’ *The Reign of Grace*, Scotty Smith, p. 160 & 161

D. Your Actions Are Rarely Ever Bizarre

Based on what you’re feeling you begin to make choices and take action.

E. (T. E. A.) more thinking, emotions, and actions in the same direction **Your Character Will Eventually be Shaped by the Dominant Patterns of Your Heart**

If you chase your idols long enough you’ll adopt the **IDENTITY** of your idols. They’ll start to define you... and what started off being something that served you starts to **ENSLAVE** you.

Based on the way you've been interpreting life and what you've been thinking and feeling and doing, you've arrived where you are today.

As Christ encountered real people He loved them enough to put His finger right on the idol that was standing in the way of them being able to treasure and prize Christ.

Consider the rich young ruler that came to Christ.

Luke 18:18-23