Before The God of Heaven

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Dedication

This tool is dedicated to my brothers and sisters in Christ. It is my desire to give us a template, a GPS, a navigational guide to assist our ***pilgrimage*** here on earth as ***navigators of God's universe***. ***"…they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Hebrews 11:13)***

Acknowledgements

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9:15)

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (II Cor. 8:9)

Apart from the saving grace of God extended to us through the gift of His Son, we would be totally without hope and bound for hell. Having received eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, our hearts are filled with gratitude for our standing in His grace. We are rejoicing in His daily provision of sustaining and sanctifying grace, without which, where would we be?

Were it not for the fact that God gave to us the Holy Scriptures, ***"…given by inspiration of God, …profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works," (II Timothy 3:16-17)*** *we would have been without divine revelation by which to navigate God's universe.*

I would like to thank my wife, Debby, for her endurance and support through these fifty years of marriage and ministry.

A Template

(My Position)

Before the God of Heaven

As one…broken…

As one…redeemed…

As one…commissioned…

(My Mission) In This Life

…walking with God…

…in my place…strengthening family…

…reaching out…as a channel of grace…

…to unbelievers…

…to fellow believers…

Introduction

For most of us, life is not likely going to become less busy any time soon. So, while we are going down the highway of life at 70 to 75 mph, we need to figure a way to still handle the forty issues of life coming at us, and, asking God to help us do two things with more intentionality…1) to enlarge our scope of God consciousness, and 2) to be proactively pursuing our God given mission (three areas). Let's ask God for his enabling grace to 1) walk more closely with Him, 2) strengthen our earthly and forever family, and 3) to be reaching out, being a channel of grace to those around us.

This material is not intended to become a regular type of book. This material will not just pass along information to you that once you have taken it in, you are done with it and then you can just lay it down and keep moving. This is a template. It is a spiritual GPS. No, the twelve gates are not twelve lessons or sermons. They are navigational checkpoints, if you will. Just as a sailor continually checks his compass, charts, and position, or a pilot repeatedly consults his instruments, the believer continually comes back to these gates and asks:

1) What does God desire?
2) Where am I right now?
3) What course correction is needed?

Each of these gates do not just bring us to common terrain, but to very special, consequential, places. You may wonder why we are using the idea of gates. Let me explain. Even in our culture, there are "Gated communities." Farmers and some businesses use fences and gates. Security is one issue. Protection of valuable property is an issue. Fences and Gates communicate a separation between what is public and what is private. A gate may communicate that you are about to

enter a place that is important and that accessibility is a privilege not a right.

Here, each unit is introduced as a Gate that has a designation that characterizes the aspect of life that we are about to bring attention to, and to demonstrate, coming here is not just a common place, but rather a special place to be shown respect, for it has great impact on lives, our own, and on others, as well.

The question is not, what chapter am I reading today? The question is, before the God of heaven, which consequential aspect of the Christian life am I tuning into today, as I navigate God's universe? ***Gate One – Heart, Life, Legacy, Gate Two – Integrity – Before the God of Heaven, Gate Three – Brokenness on Display, Gate Four – The God of Grace – Redemption, Gate Five – Commissioned by God, Gate Six – Integrity # 2 – His purposes or mine? Gate Seven – Integrity #3 – My mission on Earth, Gate Eight – Walking with God, Gate Nine – In My Place…Strengthening Family (Earthly), Gate Ten – In My Place…Strengthening Family (Forever), Gate Eleven – Reaching Out…as a channel of Grace to Believers, Gate Twelve – Reaching Out…as a channel of Grace to Unbelievers.***

At each of the twelve gates we will ask three questions.
What does God Desire?
Before the God of Heaven, where am I presently?
How, by His grace, do I move toward what God desires?

We are all navigating God's universe. And we do so before the God of Heaven. He is not a casual observer. It makes a difference for now and all eternity how we deal with the important matters within the twelve gates! These are twelve

places we should revisit often so as to remind ourselves of God's navigational "checkpoints," and ask ourselves 1) what does God want from me? 2) where are we right now, and, 3) by God's grace, how can I move toward where He wants me to be?

The template, the GPS, the navigational "checkpoints" found here use Nehemiah as someone who was tuned in to God, His purposes, people, truth, taking an honest and open look, not satisfied to just let things go, was willing to get out of his comfort zones to go motivate others to do what they should have been doing on their own. Before the God of Heaven, was exactly where he lived his life.

Gate One – Heart, Life, Legacy

PLEASE STOP! WAIT A MOMENT!
BEFORE YOU ENTER THIS GATE
A FEW THOUGHTS TO KEEP IN MIND
YOU ARE BEFORE THE GOD OF HEAVEN
HEART, LIFE, LEGACY DETERMINED HERE
KEEP YOUR HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE

> ***"Keep thy heart with all diligence;***
> ***for out of it are the issues of life.***"
> ***(Proverbs 4:23)***

Ponder for a moment the wisdom of that proverb.

An epic heart battle, ***pride vs. humility***, first within Lucifer, had devastating consequences on us all. Lucifer was not content with the place God had for him. Pride prompted him to want to exalt himself above the throne of God. Also, Adam and Eve fell for Satan's lie, rather than holding to what God had said to them. Again, note the eternal consequences.

So, as we enter the ***Heart, Life, and Legacy Gate***, think about the importance of what happens here for each of us. We will look at ***brokenness*** as Paul speaks of it in Romans chapter one. Then, we will examine another critical aspect of heart life, our human affections. Understand ***temporal treasures are ok, in their place, until they have the ultimate place, God's place, in our heart***. Also, we note fourteen ***epic battles of the heart***, one we just mentioned, that can become a huge trouble spot within our heart life. For these ***epic battles of the heart***, you need to ***bring truth*** to the deliberations.

Also, we will look at ***how the heart is won*** over to anyone or anything. It determines who or what you put before God.

We will note there are three undergirding principles to this growth and development initiative. All of them can be activated in our heart life. And they work together. They are about Heart, Life, and Legacy.

"For where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also." Matt 6:21

"Whoever or whatever has a person's heart,
is whose ways will be observed."

We can, with God's help determine that we will do what we need to do, to make sure God has our heart. There is a sequence of seven actions that make that possible.

"If a ruler hearkens to lies, all his servants are wicked".
Proverbs 29:12

"What you honor, dignify, emphasize,
pay attention to, and reward, is what you get."

By example/emphasis, when God has our heart, what we honor, dignify, emphasize, pay attention to, and reward, will be God, and the things of God.

"…I have purposed it. I will also do it." Isa 46:11c

Purpose it in your heart, then do what you purposed.

I have simply noted for you some of the key aspects of heart life that we will focus on in this tour of our heart life. Let's begin!

Gate One

Heart, Life, Legacy

What God Desires

Run to Jesus, love Him with all my heart
Honor Him and His Word by my example and emphasis
Purpose in my heart to embrace His purposes as my own

Three Universal Principles

"For where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also." Matt 6:21

"Whoever or whatever has a person's heart,
is whose ways will be observed."

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"If a ruler hearkens to lies, all his servants are wicked".
Proverbs 29:12

"What you honor, dignify, emphasize,
pay attention to, and reward, is what you get."

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"…I have purposed it. I will also do it." Isa 46:11c

Purpose it in your heart, then do what you purposed.

WHO CREATED HEART LIFE

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. (John 1:1-3)

BEFORE THE GOD OF HEAVEN

13 The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. 14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. 15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works. (Ps 33:13-15)

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it* are *the issues of life."(Prov. 4:23)

From these passages there are some important things we need to note from the Bible. 1) In the beginning God, through His Son, the Living Word, made the universe. 2) God makes it clear that from His habitation he sees all the sons of men. All of them, and he knows intimately everything going on in an individual's heart, because He fashioned it. 3) Our heart, our Command and Control Center, needs to be guarded.

Please understand that this is only a survey tour. As you will see, each aspect of heart life that we see here could have books written about each one. There is a clear connection between what happens here and the flow of human history.

GUARD YOUR HEART

Our heart needs to be guarded from outside, and inside, influences. It needs to be understood that the heart itself is already sin tainted.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9)

Through Lucifer's fall, and his influence on Adam and Eve, the whole human race is sin tainted all the way to our DNA. The apostle Paul, in setting forth the doctrine of the depravity of man, in Romans 1 and through to chapter 3, interestingly gives four phrases in chapter one that capture at our core, how sin works in our flesh.

"…who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,…" (v. 18)

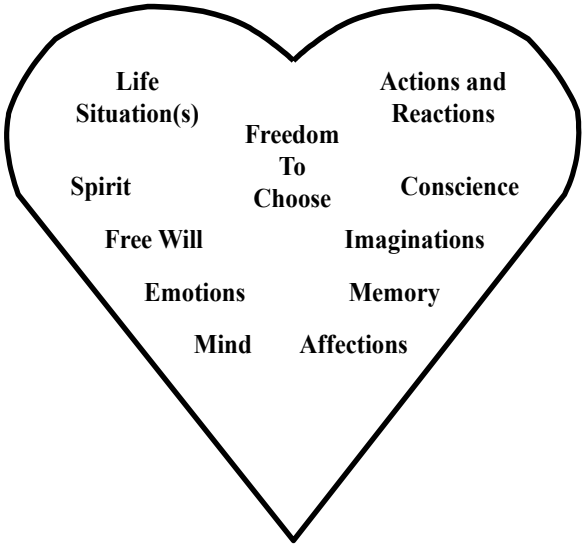
"Although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks" (v. 21)

"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (v. 25)

"Worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (v. 25)

So, having just begun our tour, we have great cause to not trust our own heart. It is sinful to the core. This is a devastating reality with which we have to contend. I am addressing believers in this navigational guide, and yes, we have been redeemed, but not yet glorified. We still have to deal with our flesh. When we get to the third gate, ***Brokenness on Display***, we will elaborate more on what this all looks like in this life.

There are eight components of our heart life.



We all have a human spirit, volition (free will), emotions, intellect/mind, conscience, imagination, memory, and human affections. I like to describe our internal heart deliberations this way. It's as if these aspects of our heart life sit at a conference table, and as life situations, both from the outside, and from within, come to us, there is a deliberation that takes place within our heart. And we make choices of how we will act or react in these situations. Books have been, and should yet be, written about the deliberations that take place within the human heart.

HUMAN AFFECTIONS – TREASURES OF THE HEART

There is this ongoing battle within us between focusing on temporal treasures and spiritual treasures. We live in a temporal world. There is part of us that is made to exist and operate in the temporal world. As temporal beings, we are tuned in to the temporal treasures that are needed and wanted in this temporal existence. There is nothing wrong with temporal treasure, if it stays in its proper place. Understand ***temporal treasures are ok, in their place, until they have the ultimate place, God's place, in our heart***.

For most of us life is not likely going to become less busy any time soon. So, while we are going down the highway of life at 70 to 75 mph, we need to figure a way to still handle the forty issues of life coming at us, and asking God to help us do two things with more intentionality…1) to enlarge our scope of God consciousness, and 2) to be proactively pursuing our God given mission (three areas).

Let's ask God for his enabling grace to 1) walk more closely with Him, 2) strengthen our earthly and forever family, and 3) to be reaching out, being a channel of grace to those around us.

As children of God, there is now a whole different level to our existence! And now we need to give spiritual/eternal treasure greater priority than temporal things.

GOD'S VALUE SYSTEM	
SALVATION	LOST
OBEDIENCE	DISOBEDIENCE
WISDOM	MAN'S WISDOM
GODLINESS	WORLDLINESS
PLEASING GOD	PLEASING SELF
SERVING OTHERS	SERVING SELF
FEAR OF GOD	FEAR OF MAN
HEAVEN	HELL
DESIRE FOR GAIN	FEAR OF LOSS OR PAIN

So, we are conflicted. Will I be able, while doing the forty necessary temporal things of life, to have a greater level of God consciousness, so that I do not neglect my walk with the Lord? And, our spiritual obligations to family, church, and individual believers, unbelievers, need their place in our lives as well.

TEMPORAL VS. ETERNAL TREASURE

Where we have been so far addresses the reality that human beings are made with the capacity to tune in to the temporal world. And yes, we need the capacity to do this. And in this world, we come to ascribe value to what we call temporal values. You saw the list, possessions, position, power, prestige, pleasure, popularity, praise of men, and passion. There is nothing wrong with having temporal treasure, as long as these temporal things do not take first place in our heart. If we treasure them more than we treasure/love our redeemer, Jesus, then that treasure has taken God's place in our life. That is idolatry. That is a big problem.

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great* is *that darkness! 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Matt 6:21-24)

There are three points Jesus makes in this passage. There are two kinds of treasure, temporal and spiritual. As we have ascribed value to these two kinds of treasure, whoever or whatever has been ascribed the higher value will have the heart of that person. Nothing should be treasured/valued more than God. If it is, it has taken God's place. ***So, guarding the heart takes discernment, integrity, and determination. Our DNA is strong and it is easier sometimes to suppress the truth rather than embrace it. It***

is possible to find ourselves honoring ourselves, and being in control, more than honoring God, and letting Him be in control. We can quickly find ourselves buying falsehoods that allow us to rationalize doing what we want to do. And, we can find ourselves worshipping and serving self rather than worshipping and serving the Creator.

Some of the most epic of battles on planet earth take place within the human heart. As I note these, take a moment and recall how some of these you know have had great impact in your own life, and the lives of family members, friends, and people that have been in the world around you.

EPIC BATTLES OF THE HEART

Truth vs. Falsehood
Good vs. Evil
Integrity vs. self-deception
Humility vs. Pride
Purpose vs. Nihilism
Meaning vs. Emptiness
Selflessness vs. Self-centeredness
Spirit vs. Flesh
Divine calling vs. Desire
Spiritual/Eternal vs. Temporal
Love vs. Hate
Faith vs. Fear
Hope vs. Despair
Passion vs. Illicit Passion

Intense, draining, numbing, deliberations play out at the conference table of the heart. Guard your heart. Life and Legacy play out from what's in the heart.

HOW THE HEART IS WON

<u>Contact</u> — The Beginning of Influence

"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals." (1 Corinthians 15:33)
"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked…" (Psalm 1:1)

<u>Dwelling With</u> — Repeated Presence Deepens Attachment

"He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm." (Proverbs 13:20)

"Abide in Me, and I in you." (John 15:4)

(This is why Scripture places enormous emphasis on fellowship, family, church life, companionship, meditation, and abiding.)

<u>Communication</u> — Exchange Builds Connection

"Faith comes by hearing…" (Romans 10:17)
"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Matthew 12:34)

<u>Knowing</u> — Familiarity Produces Internalization

People naturally move toward what becomes familiar, and, repeated familiarity reduces resistance, and, intimate knowledge creates emotional attachment.

<u>Valuing / Treasuring</u> — The Heart Attaches

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21)

<u>Influencing</u> — What Captures the Heart
Begins Directing the Life

"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:23)

"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." (Proverbs 23:26)

<u>Embracing</u> — Full Identification and Ownership

At this point there is connection, loyalty, and oneness.

ISRAEL AND THE RECHABITES

The Bible gives contrasting illustrations of how the heart was won over within two groups in totally opposite directions.

Throughout the Old Testament, God wanted the children of Isreal to not go dwell among the idolatrous people of the surrounding pagan cultures. They did not obey. As they followed the seven steps given above their hearts were won over to the people, the cultures, the pagan gods within those cultures. And so, God did not have the hearts of His chosen people. God would use pagan nations to bring judgement on his people.

17 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered. Jer. 35:17

In Jeremiah 35 there is an amazing story. God is moving toward judging Judah for their waywardness. But He wants to point out to them, and us, that there is a group that went the completely opposite way.

The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, 2 Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink. 3 Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites; 4 And I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door: 5 And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. 6 But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: 7 Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers. 8 Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters; 9 Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: 10 But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. 11 But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we

dwell at Jerusalem. 12 Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, 13 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the LORD. 14 The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. 15 I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me. 16 Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me: 17 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered. 18 And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: 19 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me forever. (Jer. 35)

God had the prophet bring the Rechabites to the house of God and had them set wine before them and they were commanded to drink. They did not obey because Jonadab the

son of Rechab had commanded them not to drink wine. They kept their distance from the surrounding cultures. Thus their hearts were kept loyal to their leaders directives.

Contact

The descendants continually remained connected to the teachings of Jonadab. The commands were not forgotten.

Dwelling With

Their entire communal structure reinforced those convictions. They lived inside a culture of remembrance. Environment reinforced identity.

Communication

The commands were continually repeated from generation to generation. The family narrative stayed alive. This parallels Deuteronomy 6:

Knowing

The descendants knew who they were and where they came from. They knew why they lived differently.

Valuing / Treasuring

The commands became treasured traditions rather than burdensome restrictions. The family honored Jonadab's vision. Their loyalty became affectionate and voluntary.

Influencing

The inherited convictions governed their lifestyle, habits, priorities, boundaries, and social behavior. Their worldview shaped conduct.

Embracing

Finally, the Rechabites fully embraced this identity as their own. What began as Jonadab's commands became the descendants' convictions. This is one of the most powerful examples in Scripture of multigenerational loyalty.

18 And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: 19 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me forever. (Jer 35:18-19)

THREE UNDERGIRDING PRINCIPLES

This first navigational guide puts at the foundation the importance of knowing that we must guard our heart, and keep it from so many influences that want to be in first place in our lives. Our hearts are broken, sinful, and easily won over to temporal treasure that then takes God's place in our life. Yes, these three heart purposes pursued ***Before the God of Heaven*** with integrity, by God's grace, should be how we navigate God's universe… ***Heart, Life, and Legacy.***

Heart

"For where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also." Matt 6:21

"Whoever or whatever has a person's heart,
is whose ways will be observed."

Run to Jesus, love Him with all my heart

I want to make you aware again, as we begin to illustrate the battles that rage within our sinful hearts, that this is all happening ***Before the God of Heaven***. Psalm 33:13-15 reminds us,

13 The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. 14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. 15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works. (Ps 33:13-15)

1 (To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.) O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. 2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. 3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. (Ps 139:1-4)

Let's take a close look at just how much our flesh, our sinful flesh, suppresses the truth, just beyond our awareness. *"We see what we want to see. And we hear what we want to hear. Because we want to do what we want to do. Because we treasure what we treasure."*

Numerous times a day we, in a moment, realize we have a minute of discretionary "free" time on our hands. There may be a half dozen things we could choose to do. Rather than listing all of them, I will just list two…pick up my phone, or pick up my Bible. Why is it, that most Christians, in that moment will opt for the phone. ***A temporal treasure that influences us more than we realize is comfort, taking it easy, relaxing.*** There are many moments in our lives where treasuring comfort rules the moment over treasuring time communing with our God.

Another illustration of treasuring our pleasure (comfort zones), over treasuring spiritual things would be that moment in our busy day when someone moving in our sphere, who does not know Christ, and in the moment, the Holy Spirit prompts us to start an exchange with them with the intent to make it a moment of a verbal witness to them regarding Jesus, and our need of His redemption, we shrug it off, rationalizing that surely it wasn't a good time after all (when we just wanted to stay in our comfort zone).

Treasuring our pleasure (a big category of temporal treasure…a lot more than just our comfort), has to be one of the predominate categories of temporal treasure that has a higher priority than spiritual treasure much of the time, in the life of believers. Ask God to help you become more aware of this, and ask His help, in the moment, to opt for going after the spiritual treasure rather than the temporal one.

So, I have chosen one of eight categories of temporal treasure to illustrate the battle between focusing on temporal treasure or spiritual treasure. Added into that is the brokenness that is woven into our DNA, just wanting to suppress truth so that we can just do what we want to do.

Please note that we illustrated from our core brokenness, and from temporal treasure. We did not choose to illustrate how any one of the fourteen Epic Battles listed can consume a lot of heart energy and focus.

Jesus desires that above all others, and temporal things, He desires that our hearts treasure Him and things spiritual above all else. Because human hearts, treasuring temporal things, come to worship temporal things. Only Jesus is worthy of our worship, not things temporal.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where ne ither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

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Life

"If a ruler hearkens to lies, all his servants are wicked". Proverbs 29:12

"What you honor, dignify, emphasize, pay attention to, and reward, is what you get."

Honor Him and His Word by my example and emphasis

If Jesus has our heart, then we will follow His ways. If He has our heart, then our life will show that above all else, we want to honor Him. Someone has said, *"A man's life will be lived in light of the treasure he is seeking." Our life demonstrates what we treasure. The apostle Paul said,* ***"For me to live is Christ." Phil 1:21***

Clearly, as you read the New Testament, including the epistles that Paul wrote, you will see that both in ***example and emphasis*** he honored, dignified, emphasized, paid attention to, and rewarded, lifting up Jesus Christ!

"What you honor, dignify, emphasize, pay attention to, and reward, is what you get."

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Legacy

"…I have purposed it. I will also do it." Isa 46:11c

Purpose it in your heart, then do what you purposed.

Purpose in my heart to embrace His purposes as my own

For a long time I have loved this passage in Isaiah 46.

8 Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. 9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

God is making it clear that He alone is God. He declared the end from the beginning. He will use heathen nations to discipline His people. God is the God of history. He is in control. He says, ***"I have purposed it, I will also do it."*** This is an awesome statement. God has divinely decreed purposes, and he will carry out what He has purposed. He will do it. There is purpose and there is integrity. Before the foundation of the world God purposed creation, redemption, and His eternal reign. He will do it.

God has given to mankind the capacity to purpose in heart what we will go do, and the capacity, to will, to act with integrity to go do what we have purposed to do. Athletes purpose to go to the Olympics, and focus and work to get there. Others purpose to become business owners, preachers, etc., and they pursue these ventures with determination to go accomplish it.

We can purpose as a believer to…

Run to Jesus, love Him with all my heart
Honor Him and His Word by my example and emphasis
Purpose in my heart to embrace His purposes as my own

May we appropriate the grace, the enablement, He gives to live for Him!

RUN TO JESUS –
LOVE HIM WITH ALL MY HEART?

So, we come to these Gates, important navigational guides, these important aspects of Christian life. See what's here. Understand what God wants. Give serious thought to these questions. Where am I presently with regard to heart life? Does my life honor God? If I were to die today, what would be my legacy?

What does God Desire?
Before the God of Heaven, where am I presently?
How, by His grace, do I move toward what God desires?

HONOR HIM AND HIS WORD –
BY MY EXAMPLE AND EMPHASIS?

What does God Desire?
Before the God of Heaven, where am I presently?
How, by His grace, do I move toward what God desires?

PURPOSE IN MY HEART -
TO EMBRACE HIS PURPOSES AS MY OWN?

What does God Desire?
Before the God of Heaven, where am I presently?
How, by His grace, do I move toward what God desires?

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