

"Y' DO WE DO THE THINGS WE DO?"

I. What is the heart?

In the Bible, the word "heart" (Hebrew: mostly *leb*; Greek: *kardia*) is probably the most comprehensive term to describe the inner person – what is going on inside, in contrast to the outer physical being.

A. The "heart" is used over _____ times in the Bible.

B. The "heart" is the inner man, NOT the:

1. Seat of the _____, exclusively or
2. Physical organ

C. The heart is the "real me," and it has come to stand for the man himself, so that what we say "in our heart" is what we truly believe.¹

1. It is the inner self that thinks, believes, feels, and decides, in contrast to the outer man.

Matthew 15:8: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

2. It is our true character or personality; the center of our moral, spiritual, and intellectual life; the mind, spirit, soul, emotions, passions, understanding, will, and the affections.
3. The word is sometimes used for the conscience.
4. It is where change begins. ***
5. "Resolving to quit sin is like trying to kill a weed with scissors. Only a transformed root will transform character."²

D. In the Bible, the word "heart" has a much broader meaning than it does to our modern minds. The heart is that which is central to man.

1. Nearly all references to the heart in the Bible refer to some aspect of human personality.
2. The heart may:
think (Esther 6:6) understand (Job 38:36) imagine (Jeremiah 9:14)
remember (Deuteronomy 4:9) be wise (Proverbs 2:10) make decisions
speak to itself (Deuteronomy 7:17)
It can have purpose (Acts 11:23), intention (Hebrews 4:12), and will (Ephesians 6:6) are all activities of the heart.³

E. Question: What causes me to do what I do and to think what I think?

F. God's Word says our thinking, behavior, emotions are the ____ of the condition of our hearts.

Luke 6:43-45 The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. NIV

1. The fruit of a good or righteous heart will be good, godly thinking, words and behavior

¹ Deuteronomy 7:17, NKJV

² Pastor Scott Sauls, <https://www.facebook.com>, Thursday, February 19, 2015.

³ Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright (c)1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

2. The fruit of an evil heart will be _____
3. The heart, like the roots of a plant, determines the type of fruit/outward thinking and behaviors that will be produced.
4. If we only try to correct thinking and behavior, the result will be what?

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

Matthew 23:25-26 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean."⁴

Isaiah 30 (vs. 9, particularly)

Who chose to remain in the "old heart" and serve "idols" with some "good" behaviors?

G. The heart can

1. Be wholly devoted to something/someone or
2. Be divided in its loyalties.

James 1:6-8 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is *like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind*. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a *double-minded* man, unstable in all his ways.

Ephesians 4:13-15 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may *no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,*

II. How are we called to love God?

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Matthew 22:37 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."⁵ III. What keeps us from functioning with the "mind of Christ"-- from glorifying Him?

III. Although we are called to live for God's glory and yield to Him, we exchange this calling for substitutes that we think will give us what we want. These substitutes become idols.

We don't want to be ruled by idols. Instead, we want to *use* them....Idolaters want nothing above themselves, including their idols. Their fabricated gods are intended to be mere puppet kings, means to an end....Idols, however, do not cooperate. Rather than mastering our idols, we become enslaved by them and begin to look like them. As idols are deaf, dumb, blind, utterly senseless, and irrational, so 'those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them' (Ps. 115:8). Idolaters lose their spiritual moorings; they are lost at sea....

We set our affections on ourselves and choose idols that will (we hope) satisfy us, and we avoid the worship of the true God.⁶

⁴ Matthew 23:25-26, NIV

⁵ Matthew 22:37

A. After the fall in the Garden of Eden, man's heart became _____ .

Jeremiah 17:9 "deceitful above all things, and desperately sick: who can understand it?"⁷

B. Apart from Christ, we live a "natural, normal" human way. Can we glorify God in that state?

Our problem? We can choose only to love and serve what God created; we have exchanged loving and serving what God created for doing everything for the glory of God.

I Corinthians 10:13 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God

C. What is an idol? An idol is: _____

"The things people desire are delightful as blessings received from God, but terrible as rulers."⁸

"I had a friend describe an idol to me this way: They said, 'An idol is anything that you think will save you from what would be your 'functional hell'.' And I put that in quotes. So, for me, my 'hell' was imagining life without someone who loved me, without a close relationship with a guy. And so the idol, that little "g" god that I worshiped and loved and pursued with everything in me was guys."⁹

D. These idols ("saviorettes") may be

1. Material forms to look like gods, made of stone or wood

2. Non-material, such as:

appearance	appreciation	attention	comfort	control	education	family	fairness
health	Independence	leisure	love	marriage	ministry	money	peace
perfectionism	pleasure	possessions	power	respect	rest	safety	security
significance	sports	success	traditions	wealth	work	luxury	alcohol
substance	honor	authority	fame	approval	order	calm	lists done

E. Our hearts are incessant idol factories, demanding—not just desiring--satisfaction

Isaiah 44:15c-20 Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. 16Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!" 17And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!"

18They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. 19No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" 20He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

1. "The evil in our desire does not lie in what we want, but in the fact that we want it too much."¹⁰

⁶ Welch, Edward T. *Addictions, A Banquet in the Grave* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2001), 49-50.

⁷ Jeremiah 17:9, ESV

⁸ Powlison, David. *Seeing with New Eyes: and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture*, Phillipsburg, (NJ: P&R, 2003), 151.

⁹ Hendricks, Paula. Interview by Nancy Leigh DeMoss: <https://www.reviveourhearts.com/radio/revive-our-hearts/my-little-g-god/>

¹⁰ Powlison, David. *Seeing with New Eyes: and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture*, Phillipsburg, (NJ: P&R, 2003), 160. Also attributed to John Calvin.

2. These cravings become increasingly so enslaving (James 4:1-5) that the “self” is willing to sin to fulfill its cravings.

F. Apart from the Lord, we are enslaved to these “saviorettes,” seeking to glorify “self,” to gratify self (with its unquenchable thirsts).

G. What are some ways of knowing the condition of my heart—if I’m heading away from the Lord? Our words and behavior *reveal* what was already going on in our hearts.

Mark 7:21-23 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

H. It often starts gradually. Little by little, the “desires” we thought we could control start to control us. The old self refuses to bow to God: it ends up bowing down to the “desires-turned-idols” we thought we controlled.

I. We will begin to think we must have them, so we start to expect, need, and think we have a right to them. We will lust after them. (Lust literally means “strong desire.”)
“Don’t let your happiness depend on something you may lose.” - CS Lewis¹¹

J. They become the first priority of our lives; we are worshipping “substitute gods.” We turn to them for comfort, for pleasure, for feeling good about myself, for success, etc.

Isaiah 44:15c, 17b-d, 18, 20, NIV

...he makes an idol and bows down to it...he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, “Save me; you are my god.” They [idolators] know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand....He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, “Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?”¹²

K. These desires will grow increasingly enslaving, so man evolves in his thinking from godly thoughts to godless ones:

”Not my will, but Yours, oh Lord. I desire....”-->

“I desire-->I must have, I demand..., nothing must stand in the way of attaining it.” -->

“I desire-->I need, because now I am envisioning the desire as essential to life, so “I will....” ->

“I desire-->I expect you to help me get my ‘need,’ so I say, ‘You should....’” -->

“I desire-->You didn’t meet my expectation, so I’m disappointed. You didn’t...”→

“I desire-->I will punish you for your insensitivity to my needs. “Because you didn’t, I will....”—
Now, I am loving things and using people, instead of loving God, people, and using things.¹³

L. What was God’s response to man’s placing anything else as higher importance and priority than Himself?

Ezekiel 14:3-8

M. Therefore, God encourages us: Little children, _____ yourselves from idols (1 John 5:21)

Proverbs 4:23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

God made us as desiring and worshipping beings. Are all desires are bad?

Psalms 37:4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

¹¹ Pastor Scott Sauls, Facebook, August 7 at 9:35am ·

¹² Isaiah 44:15c, 17b-d, 18, 20, NIV

¹³ Edited from: Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2002), 85-88.

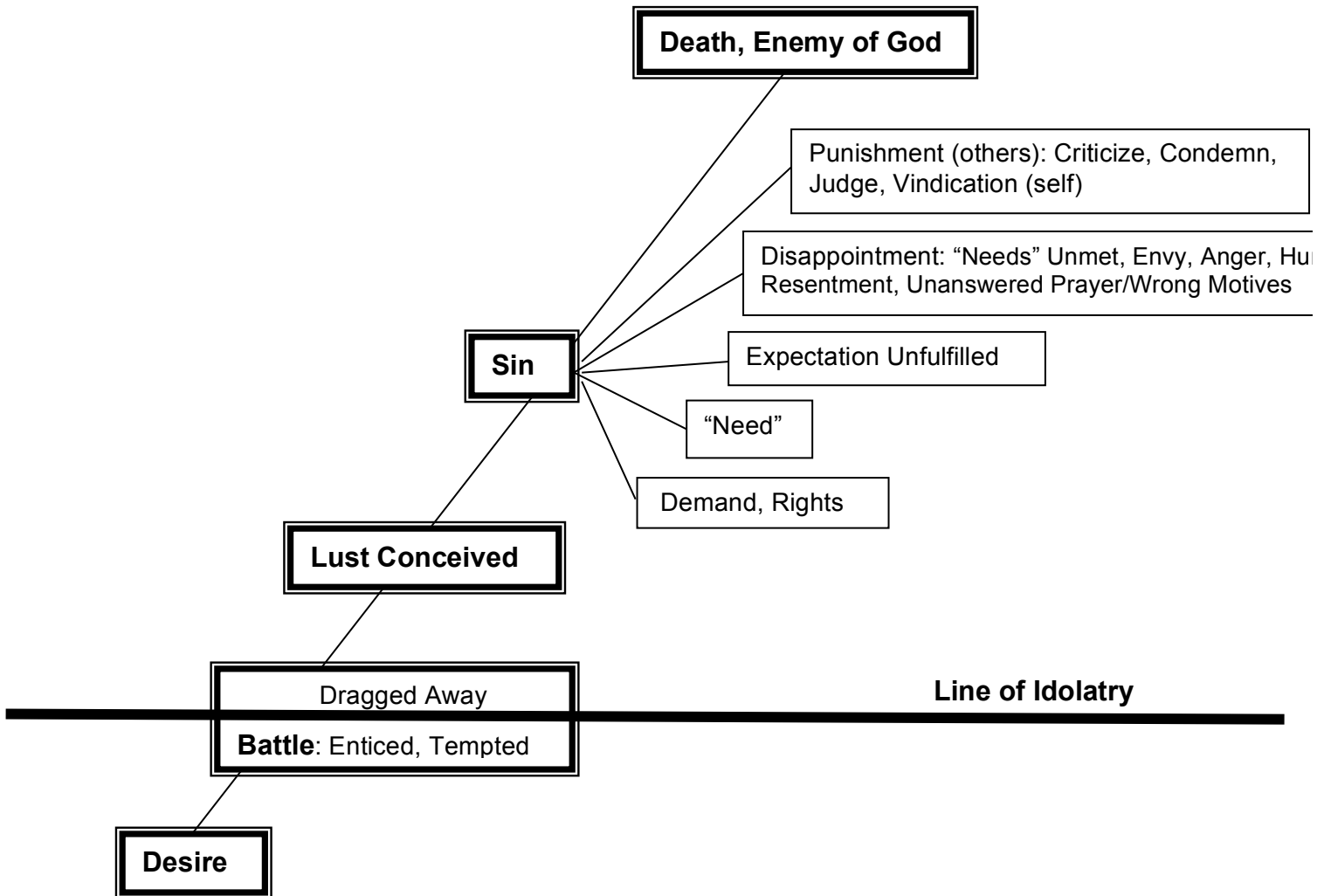
The Level of Desire¹⁴

James 1:14-15

14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. NASU

James 4:1-4

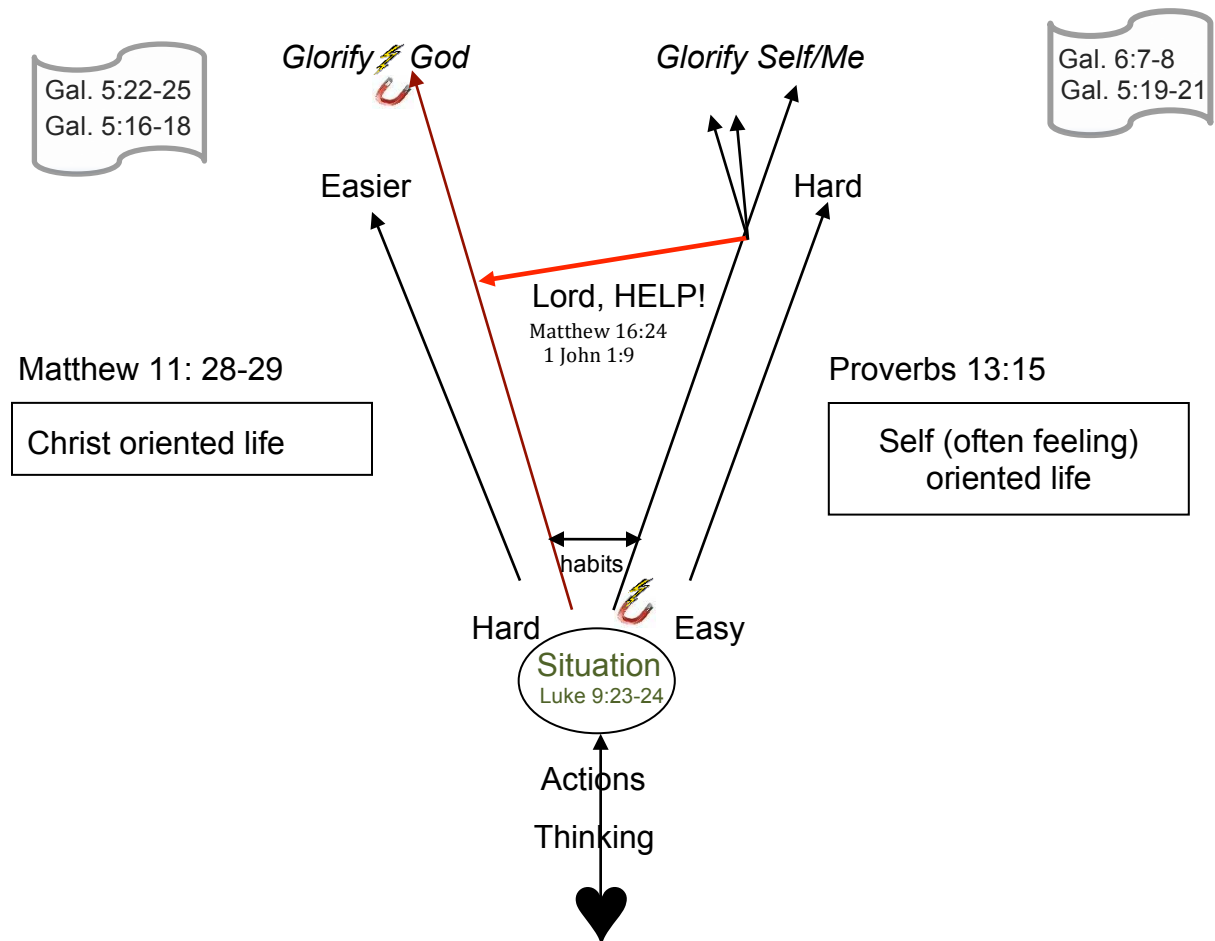
1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. NASU



¹⁴ Adapted from: War of Words, Paul Tripp; Drawing of Jeremy Lelek, M.A., Christian Associates

Y Chart¹⁵
James 1:13-17

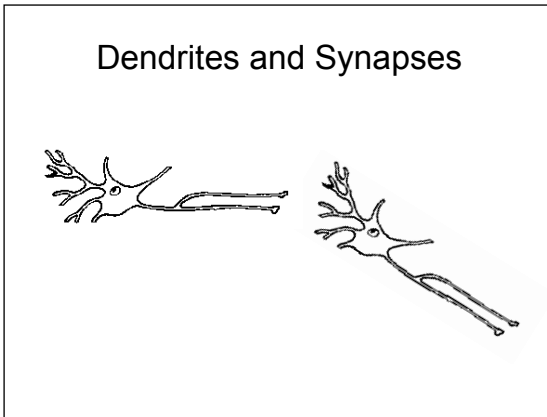
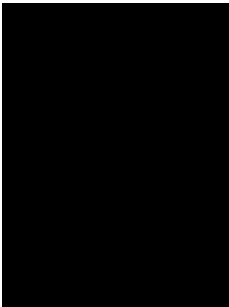
- Read the following statements 2-3 times/day—with references
 - Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:9
1. My goal in life is to _____.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:9
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31
 - 1 Corinthians 6:20
 2. I please God by being like _____.
 - Romans 8:28-29
 3. God knows I will not be PERFECT, but He does expect me to be _____.
 - 2 Peter 3:18



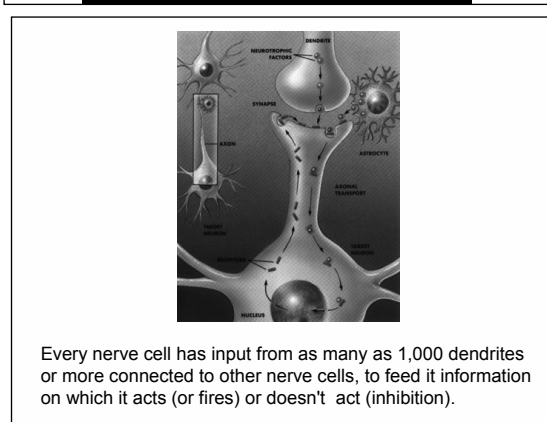
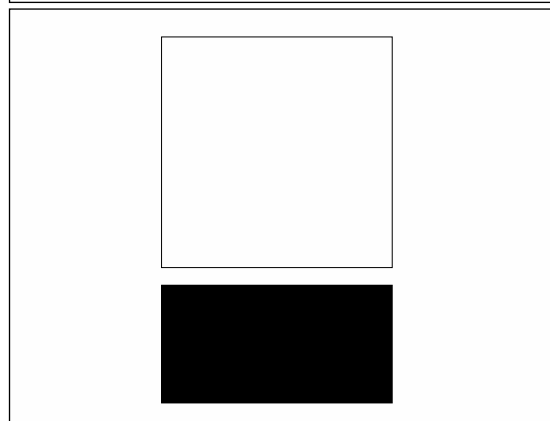
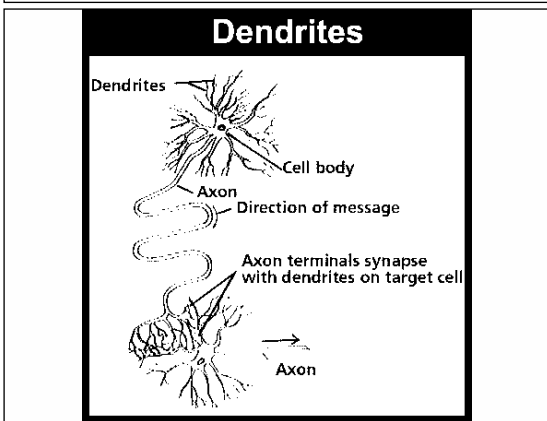
Matthew 15:18-19
 Thinking and actions flow out of my heart.
 Outward behavior is a demonstration of what's going on in my heart ♥.
 If all I do is try to correct my behavior,
 I'll be a nice-looking Pharisee, but not somebody who is godly.
 What do I want so much that I'm willing to sin to get it?
 Every response to temptation is an act of worship--either I will worship God or worship Self.

¹⁵ Edited and adapted from "Observation Videos" by Faith Baptist Church, Lafayette, IN by V. Stewart


Dendrites, Neurons, and Synapses

- Every nerve cell has input from as many as 1,000 dendrites or more connected to other nerve cells, to feed it information on which it acts (or fires) or doesn't act (inhibition).




How does it happen?



- When the electrical impulse reaches the end of the axon, it is transferred to the next nerve cell so the message can continue.
- At the end of the axon, the cell widens out and forms a bulb which comes close to but does not touch the next nerve cell. It is this tiny space between the two cells that is referred to as a **synapse**.
- Transmission of the signal across a synapse involves the release of a chemical, called a **neurotransmitter**, which passes from one cell to the other across the synapse. The neurotransmitter acts on receptor sites on the second cell's membrane, changing its permeability to sodium ions and thus stimulating depolarization.
- In this manner the nerve impulse is transferred to the second cell.

What do we do to make new dendrites?

- When your brain is stimulated by a new challenge, you make new branches from your neurons, called dendrites, that are essential for processing and assimilating information. Think of it as adding...RAM to your hard drive....
- You can make dendrites--and even neurons old age if you keep your brain active. (The Better Brain Book by [David Perlmutter](#))
- Note the title: Practice Makes **Dendrites** by (Paperback - Jul 6, 2006). (??)



III. To have lasting change, the heart must be radically transformed.

What is man's only hope of having a pure heart?

A. If a person changes only his thinking and behavior, change will be _____.

B. When pressure is applied, it often reveals the "old, sinful heart," with its accompanying sinful beliefs and actions, to which the person will revert.

1 Samuel 16:7 Although "man looks at the outward appearance, ... the LORD looks at the heart."¹⁶

C. Can the heart of a man without Christ be "improved"? Bad news: it is totally corrupted, but-- GOOD NEWS!--God has promised that He will give us a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh"¹⁷ to provide eternal change in man.

GOOD NEWS! Ezekiel 36:26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh".

D. Has man without Christ been cleansed of his sin by believing in the finished work of Christ on the cross as the only means to salvation?

God's provision of salvation is the believer's only hope of a pure heart.

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

E. Once man is "in Christ (Christ is in Him)," God directs him to humble himself by submitting to God, confessing his sin, and repenting

James 4:6-10

But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 1Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Even after we have experienced salvation, we can grow in worshipping God alone, because old habit patterns will tend to draw us back to idolatry. We "can be compromising and syncretistic in their worship of God – they can be involved in partial and voluntary idolatry."¹⁸ We will migrate back to being deceived, to believing the lie that serving and worshipping the creation (instead of our Creator) is the way to abundant life.

¹⁶ 1 Samuel 16:7, NIV

¹⁷ Ezekiel 36:26, NIV

¹⁸ Dr. Stuart W. Scott, as presented at the NANC Conference, 2006.

Ponder and discuss:

- Ask myself:
 - What do I want, love, crave, hope for?
 - What do I fear, worry about?
 - What angers me?
 - What are my goals?
 - What would “success” look like for me? What about “failure”?
 - What rights, dreams, fantasies, or needs that I think about have not been fulfilled?
 - Finish this sentence: “If only....”
 - When do I turn to substance abuse to medicate your frustration?

- When I’m having a hard time following the Lord, what can I ask myself?
 - What was the situation/trigger?
 - What was I thinking?
 - What did I feel?
 - What did I do?
 - What did I want (enough to sin to get it)?
 - What would have been the godly response?

- But, David Powlison cautions us to:
 - Avoid the pitfalls that skew ministry:
 - × Don’t get lost in endless introspection
 - × Don’t read another’s motives
 - × Don’t think that analysis equates to solutions
 - × Don’t mistake pietism for the faith that works through love
 - × Don’t substitute cognitive rehearsal for the relationships of faith
 - × Don’t become formulaic
 - Find the way of wisdom that nourishes ministry
 - ✓ Do foster accurate self-knowledge
 - ✓ Do minister God’s timely self-revelation
 - ✓ Do help people move into both transaction and action¹⁹

Ponder: We have the mind of Christ, yet we are told to put on the mind of Christ.

We have a new heart, but we are to guard our hearts.

“When changed by God Himself, the heart’s selfish and anti-God motives are not erased, but they are gradually replaced by a desire to love God and live for Him alone.”²⁰

¹⁹ David Powlison, NANC Conference Speech: *Where Do We Go from Here?* Fort Worth, TX: Oct. 3, 2007.

²⁰ Welch, Edward T. *Motives*, P&R Publishing, 2003.



October 19, 2014

Finding Release From Our Spiritual Mistresses By Pastor Scott Sauls²¹

God's intention is to restore believers in Christ and turn them into new people. "If anyone is in Christ," the Scripture says, "he is a new creation. The old has gone and the new has come." As Christians, it is our job to cooperate with this "new creation" vision for our lives.

Our motivation for embracing newness of life in Jesus is quite different than moralistic motivation. Religious moralists "obey" God's rules to feel morally straight and morally superior, and also to earn applause from God, from others, and even from themselves. Christians, on the other hand, are able to obey God precisely because they don't have to.

Let me explain that one.

If you are a Christian—that is, if you have anchored your trust in the perfect life and substitutionary death of Jesus on your behalf, then you need to know that God smiles over you before you lift a finger to do anything good. Christianity is different than moralism in that unlike moralism, God's embrace comes to us at the beginning of our journey versus at the end of our journey. He approves of us not because we are good people, but because Jesus was a truly "good person" in our stead. His moral straightness, his righteousness and beauty, have been laid upon us as a gift. That, and that alone, is the reason we obey...because it makes us want to obey. God does not decide to love us because we first loved him. No, we love God because he first loved us. That is biblical Christianity.

How idolatry works

Imagine you are married woman and your husband tells you he wants to start dating around. "It's not that I don't love you," he says. "I'm not saying that I want a divorce. You are extremely important to me. We have been through so much together. But I just think that my life would be more complete if I could also date some other women—play the field a little bit, you know?"

Absurd as this may sound, this is precisely what we do to God whenever we disobey Him. Every act of disobedience flows from a desire for something or someone besides God to be our first love, our true north, our reason for being. Each of us has his/her own unique potential "mistresses"—whether money, power, cleanliness, control, a relationship, material things, entertainment, or even a spouse or children. Whenever anything becomes more essential to us than God Himself (by the way, "anything" is usually a good thing), it becomes an idol. According to God, our true and everlasting Husband, we become spiritual adulterers. An idol is any person or idea, any created thing that captures our deepest affections and loyalties and will—and in so doing steals our attention away from God. An idol is anything that becomes more precious to us than Him. It's not that we love the thing (whatever it is) too much. Rather, it's that we love God too little in comparison to it.

Idolatry is the sin beneath every other sin

Idolatry is the root beneath all sin and beneath every choice we ever make to go our own way instead of following Jesus in faith and obedience. Sin, ultimately, is not a matter of behavior, but a matter of desire.

We always obey that which we desire the most.

When we desire something more than we desire God, we will obey that something if ever and whenever we are faced with a choice to obey God or to obey it. So this is what keeps us from being good in the purest sense. Our distorted over-desires escort us into the arms of adulterous lovers, pseudo-saviors,

²¹ <http://scottsauls.com/blog/>

counterfeit Jesuses that put a spell on us and make them appear more life-giving than Jesus, our one true love.

How do we do this? Thanks to David Powlison and his insightful essay, *Idols of the Heart and Vanity Fair*, there are several diagnostic questions that can help us effectively identify and name our specific spiritual mistresses:

- What do I feel I cannot survive or function without? What do I feel I must have in order to enjoy life, be acceptable as a person, etc.? What are the things I am terrified of losing or obsessed about having?
- Where do I spend my time and money with the least amount of effort? The things we give time and money to most effortlessly are absolutely the things that we worship and serve. They are the things that we believe in our hearts will give our lives the most meaning.
- What do I think and talk about the most? Where do my thoughts go most quickly and most instinctively when I am alone in the car, when I awake, when I am alone in a quiet, undistracted place? As Archbishop William Temple once said, "Your religion is your solitude."
- Which biblical commands am I most reluctant to obey? What do I treasure so much that, if it is threatened, I will disobey God to keep it? What is so essential to me that I will disobey God to get it?
- What things anger me the most? What kinds of people, things, or circumstances irritate me the most, and what about these people, things, or circumstances give them this kind of power over me? What, if it happened, would strongly tempt me to curse God or push Him out of my life? (Remember Job's wife. See Job 2:9)
- How would I fill in the blank? I cannot and will not be happy unless .

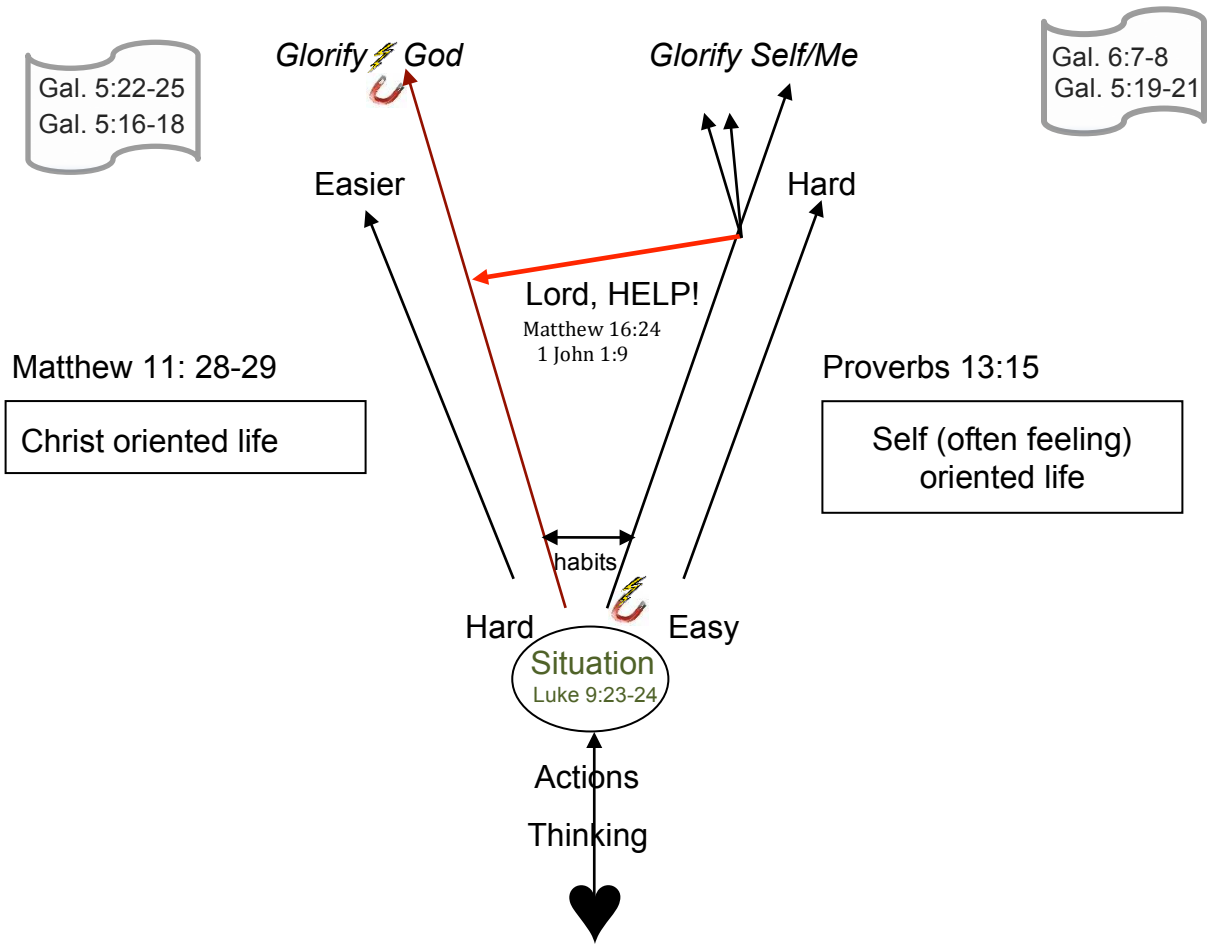
Dismantling idols after they are identified

Idols are dismantled when they are first exposed and then replaced. Dismantling our idols requires that we labor in our study and meditation of Scripture to understand the many ways that Jesus fills our emptiness in a much more adequate, life-giving way than any Jesus-substitute we may be tempted to worship and serve. Replacing our spiritual mistresses means giving them a back seat to Jesus in our hearts and lives. Basically, every idol (and every sin) traces back to a self-salvation strategy. We use this strategy every time we attempt to replace something that only Jesus can provide, with a counterfeit. What does this mean for us?

It means that we must face head-on our own idols, and humbly admit exactly how the things we love more than Jesus will reduce us, empty us of ultimate meaning, and even destroy us. We must admit that our "over-desires" cannot bring us the lasting wholeness, happiness, or fulfillment (salvation!) we desire. Only Jesus can. Ironically, only when we love Jesus more than these things, we actually end up enjoying these things to a much fuller extent! As CS Lewis once said, "Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you will get neither."

Y Chart²²
James 1:13-17

- Read the following statements 2-3 times/day—with references
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4. My goal in life is to _____.
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- 2 Peter 3:18



Matthew 15:18-19
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What do I want so much that I'm willing to sin to get it?
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