

Gospel Treason – Study Guide

Betraying the Gospel with hidden idols.

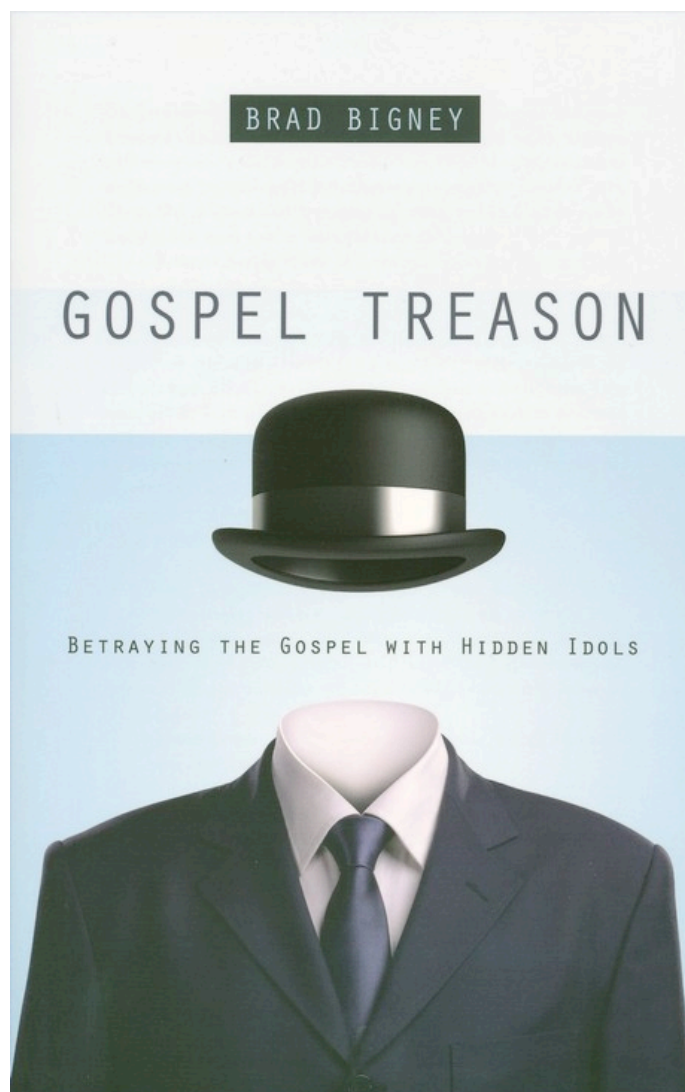


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CHAPTER 1

IDOLATRY STARTS WITH GOSPEL DRIFT

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

1 Corinthians 15:1-3 1 John 5:21 Isaiah 42:8 Luke 10 Jeremiah 17:9 James 4:1-3 Ephesians 5
Exodus 20:3 Matthew 22:37-38 Colossians 3:5

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. What is your definition of an idol?
2. Would you consider yourself an idolater, and why?

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. List the thing(s) or person(s) that you think truly holds your trust and loyalty?
2. If I asked the closest person to you (kids, wife, friend, parents, etc) "What really motivates you the majority of days", what would they say and why?
3. List the areas in your life right now that seem to have the most chaos (worry, confusion, strife, drama, etc) surrounding them.
4. List the areas in your life right now where you find yourself doing the most complaining.
5. List the times over the past few weeks when you became irritable, raised your voice, and/or became angry.
6. How would you describe your prayer life for change? Would you say most of the requests are for others to change or are focused on areas in your own life? If others, why, and if on yourself, list the areas of change you pray about often.

ACTION

1. Review your answers above and begin to look for what idols God might want to show you during this study. Write them below.
2. Begin to pray Psalm 139:23-24, and ask God to show you where He wants to work in your life through this study.

CHAPTER 2

IDOLATRY IS AN INSIDE JOB

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

Romans 1:19-25 Romans 2:15 Psalm 139:23-24 Ephesians 1:17 Romans 8:1 Jonah 2:8
Prov. 4:23

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. How and why do you become an idolater?

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

Identifying Personal Idols

Ask Yourself...

1. Am I willing to sin to get this?
2. Am I willing to sin if I think I'm going to lose this?
3. Do I turn to this as a 'refuge' and comfort instead of going to God?

Questions to Ask Yourself as you search your own heart...

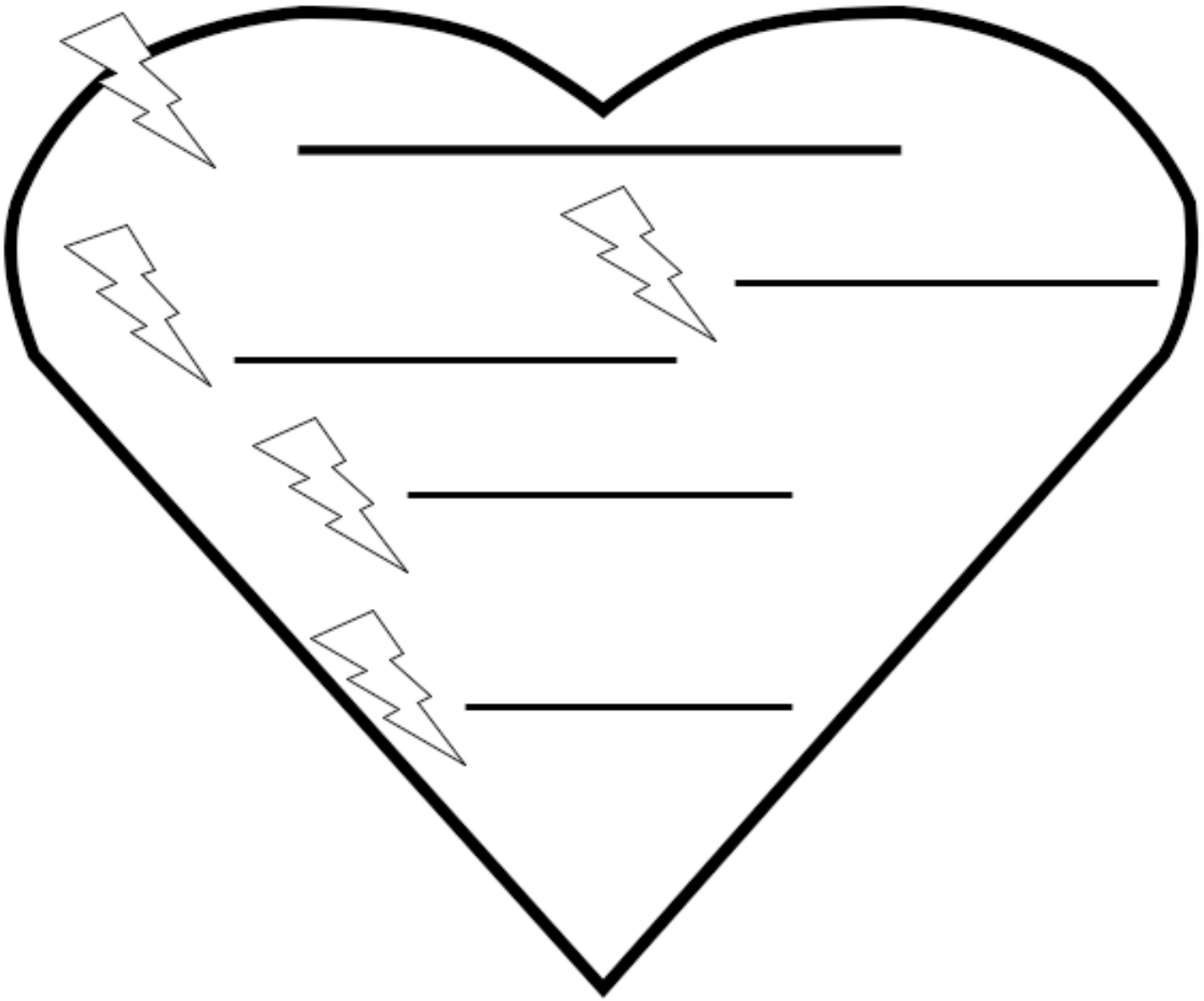
- What do you want, desire, seek, aim for, pursue, hope for?
○
- What are your goals, expectations, intentions?
○
- What do you feel like doing? Do you want what you want, or do you want Christ's lordship over your life?
○
- Where do you look for security, meaning, happiness, fulfillment, joy, or comfort? Where do you put your 'basic trust'?
○
- What would make you happy?
○
- What do you fear? What do you tend to worry about?
○
- What do you love and hate most of all?
○
- How do you define success or failure in a particular situation?
○
- What image do you have of who you are? Ought to be or want to be?
○
- At your deathbed, what do you would sum up your life as worthwhile?
○
- What do you see as your 'rights'?
○
- When you are pressured or tense, where do you turn? What do you think about?
○
- What do you pray for?

Place a next to the items / issues that you think might be current or potential idols in your life.

- Performance, especially for significant others: You try to please in order to get or keep acceptance and approval. Example for parents or spouse: When you seek to please a person rather than God, this is idolatry. If this is the case, then you are worshiping that person rather than God. Being fearful of what others think rather than obeying God is a problem.
- Performance of self (perfectionism): You try to perform to standards that you have set. Becoming a Pharisee is a danger. When you meet the standard, you feel good; when you don't, you feel bad. You have made a personal list for yourself to follow that is higher than what God says.
- Performance of others: You make a list of what others should do. Example: "For my spouse to be a good husband/wife, he/she *must* _____." If your spouse doesn't do these things, you become judgmental and unloving.
- Good health: This shouldn't be your goal, except to glorify God. It's okay to pray for healing, but getting healed should not become an idol. God may want you to be sick in order to glorify Him (see John 9).
- Love of money: You take a promotion just to get more money.
- Success: What's a good day to you? What made it a good day in your mind? Usually it's along these lines: "I got a lot accomplished/done." Or "I pleased significant others." Or "I got my way. Others did for me what I wanted them to do."
- Fairness: Life has to be fair (Ps. 73)! "I've been trying to please God; others aren't even trying, yet they prosper." This can cause you to almost forsake the faith (Ps. 73:2).
- Hurt-free/pain-free life: "I don't want to deal with problems. There shouldn't be any difficulties. I shouldn't have to go through anything unsettling . . . because I just want peace."
- Christian marriage and home: "I want people to look at our marriage and think we have the best marriage in the world." Or "I cannot serve God and have joy until my spouse changes and starts doing _____." Or "I'll be successful if my children turn out right."
- Physical appearance.
- Being respected/admired.
- Being self-sufficient/independent.
- A material thing—for example, car, house, jewelry.
- Athletic abilities/achievements.
- Hobbies—sports, reading, etc.
- An ideal—for example, pro-life movement, peace movement, political party.
- Success/position/power.
- Worldly pleasures—for example, drugs, alcohol, food, sex.
- Being in control.
- Meeting goals/achievements.
- A child or children.
- Getting married.
- Having your "needs" met.
- Other (don't forget your work from Chapter 1): _____.

ACTION

- Now write the top five current or potential idols from your checklist onto this heart:



CHAPTER 3

ENOUGH IS NEVER ENOUGH

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

Matthew 22:37 Deuteronomy 6:5 Exodus 20:3 Ephesians 4:22 James 1:14 Romans 7:15, 24
Romans 8 Ephesians 4:19 Ecclesiastes 2 John 4:14 Psalm 36:7-9 John 7:37-38 1 Timothy 6:17
1 Peter 2:11 John 14:27 Mark 4:39 Psalm 73:25-27

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. What comes to your mind when you think of the word lust?
2. On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 10 (couldn't be better) how satisfied with your life do you feel right now, and why?

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. What have you been specifically doing to put to death your idols/sin over the past few weeks?
2. Have you been drinking salt water or God's water over the past few weeks? If salt water, list what specifically it is.

ACTION

Idolatry Repentance Plan of Action

Specific Plan to "Put Off" and "Put On" new attitudes and behavior so that genuine repentance and change takes place.

- Be specific and not abstract or vague. We don't change and grow in 'fuzzy land.' ("I want to be nice, or more loving" is too vague. State specifically the ways you are going to be more loving – what are you going to do? How & what are you going to think now?)
- Make the goals attainable – be realistic.
- Be biblical – does God ask you to do this? Do you have a biblical principle as the basis for doing it?
- Be positive and not negative – not merely, "I won't be critical," but "I will express appreciation for at least two things every day." The Bible talks about replacing sinful behavior, not just stopping wrong behavior. The joy and peace comes in doing righteousness, not just in avoiding sinfulness.
- Examples:
 - a. I will smile when I enter the house.
 - b. I will say "I love you" at least two times a day.
 - c. I will call her from work to express my love.
 - d. I will lead family devotions once a week.
 - e. I will plan my day so I can spend 30 minutes with God.

In the chart below write out your idols and specific steps to change in that area. How does your thinking need to change? What will you stop doing? What will you begin to do?

Idols that need to be thrown down	New ways of thinking about this area/issue	New ways of acting in this area/issue
Idol #1		
Idol #2		
Idol #3		
Idol #4		
Idol #5		

IDOLATRY WREAKS HAVOC IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

James 3:16 Psalm 139:23-24 Romans 8:28 Ecclesiastes 7:14 James 4:1-10 Ezekiel 14:3
1 Peter 5:5 Deuteronomy 5:9-10 Johan 2:8

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. What do you think is the number one thing that causes issues in relationships, and why?
2. List the top 5 things that frustrate you the most.

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. As you have identified the list of idols from the previous Chapters, can you now look back and see conflict caused by them? List one or two idol-related conflicts you have identified.
2. Is there an area or a topic in your relationship that never seems to be completely worked out? What is it, and what do you think is behind that?
3. What is the picture beginning to take shape on the “negative film roll” of your heart? What is God starting to show you that has been there all along, and now is being brought into focus by identifying the idols in your life?
4. List some desires that you need to keep an eye on or that have already gone too far. As you list them label them on the progression of Desire, Demand, Need, Expectation, Disappointment, or Punishment.

ACTION

- In a one-on-one setting share your above answers with someone close to you (wife, friend, parent, etc), and ask them to help you identify an area that might stand out where your heart is deceiving you. Idols love to have us lie to ourselves. List any areas that you or this person identified as potentially deceitful.

CHAPTER 5

IDOLATRY CHANGES YOUR IDENTITY

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

Romans 1:21-25 Proverbs 4:23 2 Chronicles 16:9 Philippians 1 John 3:26-30 2 Corinthians 5:9
1 Samuel 15 Mark 15:15 Acts 10:13 Proverbs 29:25 Colossians 3:1-2 2 Peter 1:2-15

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. Try to examine yourself, and identify what you perceive is the identity you convey to others. Take a few notes on that before reading the chapter.

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. Brad mentions several idols that we exchange God's glory for - our kids, spouse, job, house, etc. Identify one or more damaging idols in your life that God would have you turn over to Him. Look for a theme running through your answers.
2. Does achievement mean more to you than it should? Do you give God the glory or do you thrive on it for yourself?
3. John 3:27 says that we can receive nothing unless it has been given to us from heaven. Can you think of something in your life that God gave you, and then took away for His glory and your good? Perhaps a painful trial that you experienced.
4. As parents, if we're to avoid living through our children as the identity of who we are, what might this look like? How do you prioritize and keep Christ as your highest focus? If single, how do you stop "you" being the highest focus?
5. Are idols any different for believers than for non-believers? If so, how?

ACTION

- Take some time this week and write out what it would look like in your life to stand on Christ and Christ alone. What would your life be like if Christ was your main identity? What would stay and what would need to go?

CHAPTER 6

WE NEED AN X-RAY OF THE HEART

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

James 4:1-3 Ezekiel 14:1-8 Proverbs 4:23 Jeremiah 17:9-10 James 1:14 Acts 3:19 James 4:8
Romans 1:16

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. What do you think the relationship is between our idols and our sense of God's presence in our life?

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. Who is responsible for your idols? Who are you most likely to blame?
2. Why can't you see your idols?
3. What do you think might be causing you to stumble into iniquity?
4. What is the outcome of repenting of the idols that you've settled in with?
5. Why do you prefer to live on substitutes that never really satisfy?

ACTION

- If you haven't yet, get on your knees this week and repent of the idols the Holy Spirit has revealed to you. Pray the prayer on the bottom of page 113 and pray Psalm 51.

CHAPTER 7

FOLLOW THE TRAIL OF YOUR TIME, MONEY, AND AFFECTIONS

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

Matthew 6:21

Romans 1:21-25

Luke 6:45

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

- Without doing research, just off the top of your head, list the top 3 things you spend your money on.
 -
 -
 -

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

- Over the past few weeks have you been delighting most in a robust love for your Savior? If not what have you spent most of your time delighting in?
- How well does your functional theology line up with your confessional theology? Where do you have gaps?
- If I followed you around for a month and watched your actions, speech, and where your money went, what would I conclude to be the most important thing in your life and why?
- On most nights as you lay your head down to go to sleep, are your thoughts mostly on Christ or on something else and why?
- Do you have anything that you are inconsolable over, and why?

ACTION

- Look back over all the questions you have answered so far. Do you see a pattern? Write it in the blank below and check the boxes if it applies. God is showing me _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Do you sacrifice for it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you spend time on it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you spend money on it?
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you talk about it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you protect/defend it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you serve it?
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you perfect it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you think about it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you worry about it?
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you get angry when it's messed with?	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you build your schedule around it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Does it keep you from serving God?

LOOK FOR CHAOS!

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

James 3:16 James 4:1

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. Describe what you think a relationship filled with chaos would look like?

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. Where are you quick to either erupt with anger or pull back with manipulation and pouting?
2. Do you currently have any relationships that are tainted with chaos, and why do you think they're that way?
3. Describe your "Olan Mills" moment and what was behind it?
4. Is there anything in your life right now that you have decided you "have to have?" What is it that the thought of God messing with gives you that knee jerk reaction inside of "NO, not that"?

ACTION

- As we continue to hone in on the idols in our hearts, ask God to help you honestly answer the questions below around the answers you have provided to the past questions.
 - Am I willing to sin to get _____?
 - Am I willing to sin if I think I'm going to lose _____?
 - Do I run to _____ for refuge instead of to God?
- Remember that sin is not just adultery, stealing and murder. We slander, gossip, get angry, are not kind, punish, withdraw, etc to get what we want. That is sin too.

CHAPTER 9

DON'T DARE FOLLOW YOUR HEART

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

Proverbs 23:7 Jeremiah 17:9 Proverbs 28:26 Proverbs 23:19 Proverbs 4:23 Proverbs 4:23 Psalm 15:1-2
Obadiah 3 Psalm 139:23-24

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. How much do feelings influence your decision making? Is that good or bad, and why?

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. How seriously have you taken the commands to guard your heart? How well have you been doing that in the past?
2. Do you blindly trust your own heart because it's "you" or do you frequently question yourself by asking "What does God's word say about what I'm thinking right now"? How important do you think it is to question yourself and why?
3. If emotions are heart indicators, what indications are you getting about your heart based on your emotions for the past several weeks?
4. Have you ever used or thought the statement "That's just who I am"? As a Christian, should we ever use that statement? Why or why not?
5. Is there anything in your life that you think God is denying or blocking you from having? Why do you think that might be the case?

ACTION

- Build a Thinking Log this week.
 - Spend some time paying attention to what you are telling yourself.
 - Take some notes.
 - Be very aware of your thoughts this week. Especially notice those times when you're walking along, driving, brushing your teeth, etc., those zoned out moments. What are you telling yourself?
 - See how much Word you are telling yourself.
 - Catch yourself when you're thinking idol-serving thoughts, and write them down.

RECOGNIZE WHERE YOUR HEART IS MOST VULNERABLE

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

1 Corinthians 10:13-14 1 Peter 5:8 Luke 22:31 1 Peter 4:12 John 16:33 Proverbs 5:22 Hebrews 12:1-2
Hebrews 3:12-13 Jeremiah 17:5-8 Psalm 118:8-9 2 Corinthians 7:5 2 Corinthians 1:8-9
Philippians 3:18-19 Jonah 2:8 Deuteronomy 33:27 Psalm 31:1-7 Psalm 46:1, 10-11 Psalm 73:27-28

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. Without looking at the book, give the working definition of an idol we've been using in the book.

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. Why is it so hard to stop a particular sin even when God, through his Holy Spirit, convicts you?
2. Can you identify where your heart points when it's under pressure, and why you think it points there?
3. Look back over the past few weeks. When you have had sinful responses, did you own them or blame someone else for "causing it?" Why do you think you respond that way when the pressure's on you?
4. If God uses pressure to expose our idols and sin, and through that mercifully grants us repentance, why do we act like the world has stopped when the pressure hits? What would it look like in your life to be thankful and joyful for the pressures God allows? What would it look like to actually be excited about the sanctification process?
5. Where is the greatest pressure on you right now (your own sin, someone else's sin, Satan, the broken world, sickness, or outside pressure) and why?

ACTION

- Take time this week and memorize one of the verses listed on page 163 or 164. Or if God has laid on your heart some other verse about taking refuge in Him, memorize that one. Really meditate on it this week. Delight in God this week through your memory verse.

CHAPTER 11

LET GOD BE GOD!

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

Hebrews 12:2 Matthew 1:1-17 Genesis 38 Romans 5:20 1 Corinthians 15:10 2 Corinthians 4:5-7
Romans 3:23 1 Peter 4 Galatians 3:3 John 15:5 Philippians 3:3,9

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. In your own words, how are you justified (saved) and how are you sanctified (made to look more like Christ)?

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. How close to home did this chapter hit for you? Are you trying to be your own redeemer? Explain.
2. Would you describe your spiritual disciplines as joyful or burdensome? Would those watching describe you as a spiritual killjoy who is cranky and tired, or someone full of life who is joyful and thankful?
3. Describe how you handle your sin. What do you do when you sin?
4. Describe how you handle someone else's sin. What do you do when you're sinned against?
5. How much of the Gospel is in your answer to questions 3 & 4? Describe how the gospel *should* impact your answer to questions 3 & 4.
6. Do you operate with a spiritual checklist? If yes, describe what your life would be like without one.

ACTION

- Be purposeful in your prayers this week. Focus them on the cross, grace, and your beautiful Savior. You can start by praying the Puritan prayer on page 181.

CHAPTER 12

GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR FREEDOM

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

Proverbs 20:5 Galatians 5:17 2 Timothy 3:4 Hebrews 4:12-13 Psalm 119:28-32, 42-45 Proverbs 18:1
Hebrews 10:25 Psalm 139:23-24 Matthew 15:19-20 1 Samuel 13:12-13 Joshua 24:15 Romans 13:14
Romans 7:15, 24 John 8:31-32,36 Proverbs 4:18 1 Peter 5:7 Matthew 11:28-30 Proverbs 13:15
Hosea 8:7 1 Timothy 4:7 2 Peter 2:14 Hebrews 5:14 Galatians 5:22-23 2 Corinthians 5:9
Psalm 24:3-4 John 3:30 Ephesians 4:22-24 Philippians 2:3-5 Jeremiah 29:11-13 Ephesians 2:10

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

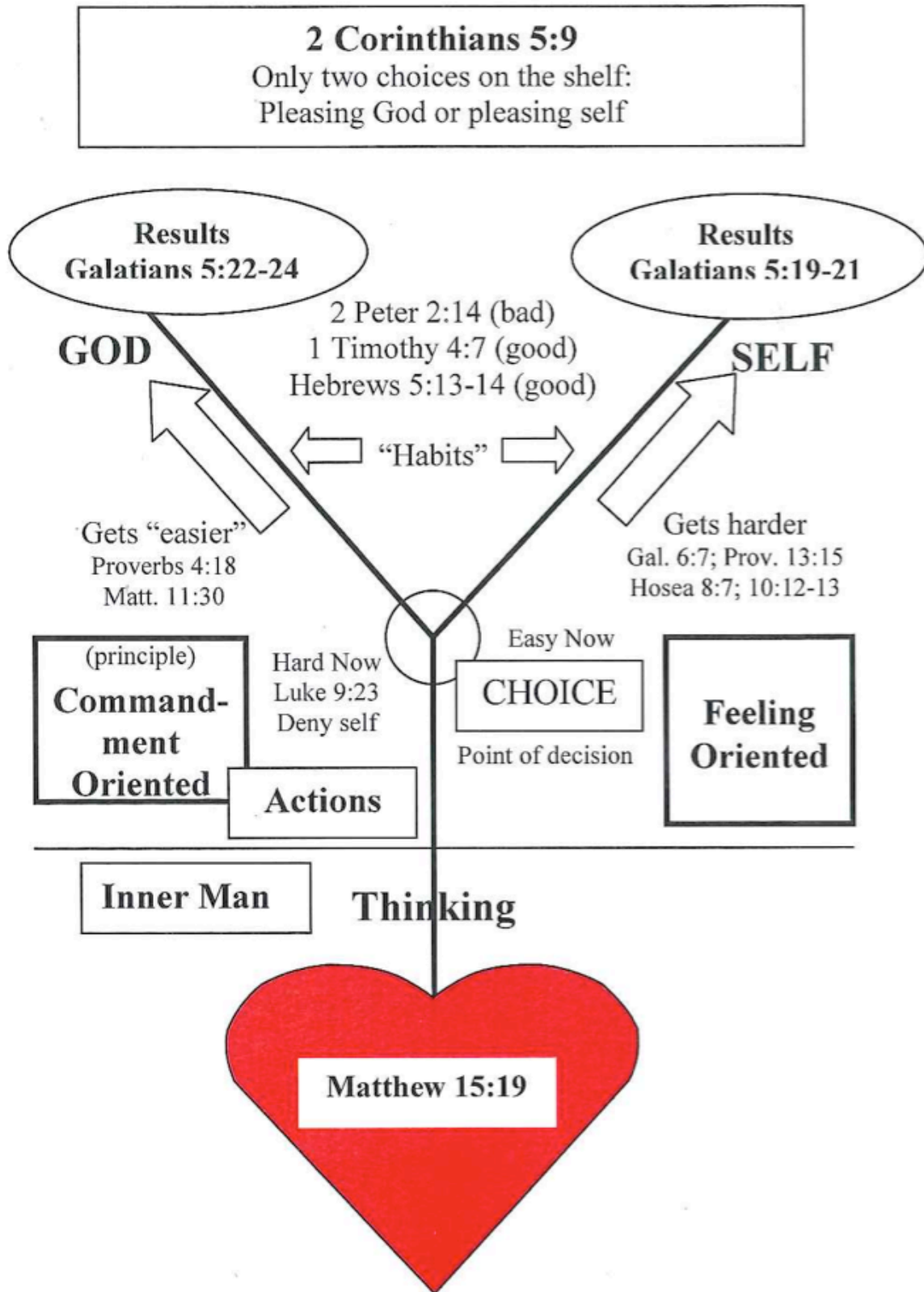
1. Have you zeroed in on the idol(s) God wants you to really start working on? List them now, before reading about how to find freedom from them.

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. What does living in a wartime mentality look like in your life right now, in specifics?
2. Currently where are your closest relationships (outside of your immediate family) located? Church, small group, work, ball field, etc., and why are they there?
3. What does living a commandment oriented life look like specifically in your life right now? What small things might need to change?
4. If Christ says that the truth shall set you free, how free do you feel right now and why?
5. How have you seen the principal of sowing and reaping play out in your life to date?

ACTION

- Work through the Y diagram, applying it to your life choices this week. Be sure to look up the verses as you work through it.



CHAPTER 13

WHAT WOULD AN IDOL-FREE LIFE LOOK LIKE?

BIBLE VERSES REFERENCED

Colossians 2:14

Hebrews 12:1-2

Ezekiel 14:3

1 Corinthians 1:17

Matthew 7:3-5

Proverbs 28:13

Luke 7:36-47

BEFORE READING THE CHAPTER

1. If you could drop your idol right now, what would be the #1 thing you would be looking forward to in your new idol-free life?

AFTER READING THE CHAPTER

1. As you have begun the battle to tear down your idols, do you see that you're running the Christian race a little more freely? Describe why or why not.
2. As you've examined your heart over these Chapters, has your opinion of yourself changed? Have you moved from the "Not So Bad" to "OH MY, I need a savior?" Explain why or why not.
3. How have your idols specifically stopped you from seeing clearly? How have they tainted the view of your relationship problems, work problems, money problems, etc..
4. What do you think of the final thought in Fenelon's quote on page 216? Do you see that playing out in your life and, if so, how? Do you see it without discouragement?
5. How much do you love? How much do you give for others' needs without expecting anything in return? How much do you love others like Christ loves you?

ACTION

- Develop a go forward plan. Be specific.
 - How are you going to continue this fight against your idols?
 - What spiritual disciplines are you going to put in place to help in the battle?
 - How are you going to fall more in love with Christ each day, and less in love with your idols?