

STEWARDSHIP

January 30th & 31st, 2010

Live to Honor Christ

Introduction:

“A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse (money) from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority will always vote for the candidates promising them the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy and is always followed by a dictatorship.

The average age of the world’s greatest civilizations has been 200 years. These nations have progressed through this sequence: From bondage to spiritual faith; from spiritual faith to great courage; from great courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to selfishness; from selfishness to apathy; from apathy to dependence; from dependence back again into bondage.”

Alexander Tyler

First: Make Christ your Greatest Treasure

A “*treasure*” is something that is of “*great value*,” something we “*highly esteem*.”

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”
(Galatians 2:20)

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.”
(Philippians 1:21-23)

“More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the

loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,” (Philippians 3:8)

How much evidence is there in the way you spend your time and money, and how you live your life, that Jesus is your greatest treasure?

Second: Develop a War-Time Mentality and Lifestyle.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”
(Ephesians 6:10-13)

A “wartime lifestyle...“tells me that there is a war going on in the world between Christ and Satan, truth and falsehood, belief and unbelief. It tells me that there are weapons to be funded and used, but these weapons are not swords or guns or bombs but the Gospel and prayer and self-sacrificing love (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). And it tells me that the stakes of this conflict are higher than any other war in history; they are eternal and infinite: heaven and hell, eternal joy or eternal torment (Matthew 25:46) I need to hear this message again and again, because I drift into a peacetime mind-set as certainly as rain falls down and flames go up. I am wired by nature to love the same toys that the world loves. I start to fit in. I start to love what others love. I start to call earth ‘home.’ Before you know it, I am calling luxuries ‘needs’ and using my money the way unbelievers do. I begin to forget the war. I don’t think much about people who are perishing. Missions and unreached peoples drop out of my mind. I stop dreaming about the triumphs of grace. I sink into a secular mind-set that looks first to what man can do, not at what God can do. It is a terrible sickness.” John Piper

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

“A war-time mentality will lead to a war-time lifestyle...in wartime, major expenses for complex weapons and troop training are needed...these may

be very expensive, but the whole country sacrifices to make them happen...A wartime lifestyle implies that there is a great and worthy cause for which to spend and be spent.” John Piper

“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.” (Mark 8:35)

Third: Sacrifice for His Cause (Luke 9:23-24)

*“And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and **take up his cross daily and follow Me**. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.’” (Luke 9:23-24)*

Suffering and Death.

Sacrifice Daily.

“Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? No, there’s a cross for everyone and there’s a cross for me. The consecrated cross I’ll bear till death shall set me free. And then go home my crown to wear, for there’s a crown for me.”

You only get one shot at life... don’t waste it.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

"But our citizenship is in heaven." Philippians 3:20

"Obsessed people are more concerned with obeying God than what is expected or fulfilling the status quo. A person who is obsessed with Jesus will do things that do not always make sense in terms of success or wealth on this earth. As Martin Luther put it – 'There are two days on my calendar, this day and that day'." Francis Chan – *Crazy Love*

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:21-23, Philippians 3:8

OBSERVATION:

- Read Galatians 2:20.
- What observations can you make out of this passage in regard to faith and love for Christ?
- Read Philippians 1:21-23
- What observations can you make out of this passage in regard to Paul's desire to serve Christ, yet torn between serving on earth and being in heaven?
- Read Philippians 3:8
- What really mattered to Paul?

APPLICATION:

Taking the above study into consideration, consider the following:

- Brainstorm a list of ways that we, as believers in Christ, live lives dictated by culture and tradition instead of by the Bible.
- Google the word "obsessed" and review or discuss the top ten responses. What is the attraction?
- Are you obsessed with Jesus?
- Does your life demonstrate that Jesus is your greatest treasure? What areas in your life can you change to demonstrate that Jesus is your greatest treasure?

PRAYER:

How can others pray for you in regard to this week's study?

(Many of the thoughts in this week's study come from Francis Chan's book – Crazy Love.)