

How to use this compilation of Questions / Exercises

In a small group or in your home...

These exercises can be used as the primary topic of discussion in a small group, or they can be used to prime the pump when things stagnate.

Simply take one “Proud/Broken” couplet at a time and discuss how you see that manifestation of pride lived out in your lives (only answer for yourself). Work your way through the list

Follow this with a time of confession to God and to one another (if necessary) and pray for the work of the Holy Spirit to produce the brokenness described in the couplet – Is 57:15; Psalm 51:17

Do the same with the “Orphan vs Sons/Daughters” exercise.

On the “IDENTIFYING YOUR IDOLS” by Tim Keller simply read through the list as ask God to show you how that issue comes into play in your life. Some will be quite clear; others may not really be an issue for you. You might ask “What does it look like, feel like, or sound like when my heart is locked in on that “idol”? If you’re not seeing any of it in your life then ask a friend, spouse or your kids, and give them the freedom to be honest without fear of retaliation.

Follow with a time of confession and prayer for the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

The other exercises are simply working through a list of questions for reflection and discussion. Ask God to show you what is going on in your heart. Don’t over think it.

PROUD –Broken Exercise

(The Heart God Revives)

Isaiah 57:15; Colossians 3:12ff

by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Proud people focus on the failures of others.

Broken people are overwhelmed with a sense of their own spiritual need.

Proud people have a critical, fault-finding spirit; they look at everyone else’s faults with a microscope but their own with a telescope.

Broken people are compassionate; they forgive much because they know how much they have been forgiven.

Proud people are self-righteous; they look down on others.

Broken people esteem all others better than themselves.

Proud people have an independent, self-sufficient spirit.

Broken people have a dependent spirit; they recognize their need for others.

Proud people have to prove that they are right.

Broken people are willing to yield the right to be right.

Proud people claim rights; they have a demanding spirit.

Broken people yield their rights; they have a meek spirit.

Proud people are self-protective of their time, their rights, and their reputation.

Broken people are self-denying.

Proud people desire to be served.
Broken people are motivated to serve others.

Proud people desire to be a success.
Broken people are motivated to be faithful and to make others a success.

Proud people desire self-advancement.
Broken people desire to promote others.

Proud people have a drive to be recognized and appreciated.
Broken people have a sense of their own unworthiness; they are thrilled that God would use them at all.

Proud people are wounded when others are promoted and they are overlooked.
Broken people are eager for others to get the credit; they rejoice when others are lifted up.

Proud people have a subconscious feeling, "This ministry/church is privileged to have me and my gifts"; they think of what they can do for God.
Broken people's heart attitude is, "I don't deserve to have a part in any ministry"; they know that they have nothing to offer God except the life of Jesus flowing through their broken lives.

Proud people feel confident in how much they know.
Broken people are humbled by how very much they have to learn.

Proud people are self-conscious.
Broken people are not concerned with self at all.

Proud people keep others at arms' length.
Broken people are willing to risk getting close to others and to take risks of loving intimately.

Proud people are quick to blame others.
Broken people accept personal responsibility and can see where they are wrong in a situation.

Proud people are unapproachable or defensive when criticized.
Broken people receive criticism with a humble, open spirit.

Proud people are concerned with being respectable, with what others think; they work to protect their own image and reputation.
Broken people are concerned with being real; what matters to them is not what others think but what God knows; they are willing to die to their own reputation.

Proud people find it difficult to share their spiritual need with others.
Broken people are willing to be open and transparent with others as God directs.

Proud people want to be sure that no one finds out when they have sinned; their instinct is to cover up.
Broken people, once broken, don't care who knows or who finds out; they are willing to be exposed because they have nothing to lose.

Proud people have a hard time saying, "I was wrong; will you please forgive me?"
Broken people are quick to admit failure and to seek forgiveness when necessary.

Proud people tend to deal in generalities when confessing sin.

Broken people are able to acknowledge specifics when confessing their sin.

Proud people are concerned about the consequences of their sin.

Broken people are grieved over the cause, the root of their sin.

Proud people are remorseful over their sin, sorry that they got found out or caught.

Broken people are truly, genuinely repentant over their sin, evidenced in the fact that they forsake that sin.

Proud people wait for the other to come and ask forgiveness when there is a misunderstanding or conflict in a relationship.

Broken people take the initiative to be reconciled when there is misunderstanding or conflict in relationships; they race to the cross; they see if they can get there first, no matter how wrong the other may have been.

Proud people compare themselves with others and feel worthy of honor.

Broken people compare themselves to the holiness of God and feel a desperate need for His mercy.

Proud people are blind to their true heart condition.

Broken people walk in the light.

Proud people don't think they have anything to repent of.

Broken people realize they have need of a continual heart attitude of repentance.

Proud people don't think they need revival, but they are sure that everyone else does.

Broken people continually sense their need for a fresh encounter with God and for a fresh filling of His Spirit.

ORPHAN VS SONS/ DAUGHTERS

World Harvest Mission

How we think, speak, and act when we're growing - or not growing - in Christ.

When we fall ill, our doctor can run diagnostic tests to identify the problem. This exercise is a self-diagnostic tool to help us identify where our *faith* may be out of sorts. On the top are twenty symptoms of an "orphan spirit." Below them are the corresponding fruits that will appear as we learn to rest in the lovingkindness of our Heavenly Father *and* rest in Jesus' perfect righteousness as our "whole and sole righteousness" (Luther).

1 ORPHAN: **I feel** distant from God, anxious, and joyless. I'm a vacuum of self-concern.

SON: **I have** a growing intimacy with God. His love frees me from self-centeredness. (I Jn.4:16; Mtt.5:25ff)

2 ORPHAN: **I'm giving in** to my pet sins and am growing less and less sensitive to them. I don't feel needy or sinful. (I Jn.1:6-10 "If we say we have no sin...")

SON: **I still mess up**, but I'm repenting more quickly. I have a growing consciousness of and sensitivity to my sins. (1 Tim.1:15; Rom.8:1-9)

3 ORPHAN: **I live** on a success/fail basis. I must be right and look good (performance oriented)

SON: I want to make *God* look good. *It's not about me*. Only God is always right

4 ORPHAN: I **feel** guilty, insecure, and unworthy. I worry about how people view me and whether I fit in.

SON: I **feel** loved, forgiven, and secure because I am *consciously* clothed in Jesus' righteousness.

5 ORPHAN: I **doubt** that "*all thing work together for good*", or that God has my best interest at heart.

SON: I **have** a growing childlike trust that God's sovereign plan for my life is wise and good.

6 ORPHAN: I **say** "yes" to everything and fear saying "no". I try to please everybody, but then burn out.

SON: I **say**, "*Can you wait a bit, please? I want to ask my Senior Partner first.*" (Jn. 14:13; 15:16)

7 ORPHAN: I **tend to use** rather than love people. I'm self-centered. I want to be helped, not be helpful.

SON: I **am** growing more self-forgetful and often think, "*What can I do to help and bless them?*" (Phil. 2:4)

8 ORPHAN: I **get** angry and defensive at the suggestion that I might be self-righteous. I am resistant to praying Psalm 139: 23, 24 ("*Search me O God...*")

SON: I **know** I'm self-righteous. I want God to show me my sin so that I can repent, be cleansed, and so bring more glory to Him. (Ps. 139:23,24)

9 ORPHAN: I **must** be right about everything. I can't tolerate criticism. I crave the approval and praise of others. (Matt. 23:5; Jn. 5:44; 12:43)

SON: I **can** admit to wrong and can accept criticism because Jesus is my righteousness. I need no "record" to boast in. (1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 3:7-9)

10 ORPHAN: I **must** point out my many accomplishments or they might go unnoticed! (Gal. 6:14)

SON: I **point** others to Jesus, and am learning to boast in my *weaknesses*. (2 Cor. 12:9,10)

11 ORPHAN: I **think** "*I'll show them!*" "*Just watch me!*" "*Where those people failed, I will succeed.*" (will power)

SON: I **think** "*I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength!*" (Phil. 4:13 is not just a memory verse.)

12 ORPHAN: I **use** my tongue like a sword to cut others up. (James 3:5-8)

SON: **The Spirit** is helping me use my tongue to praise, thank, edify, and build others up. (Eph. 4:29, 30)

13 ORPHAN: I **constantly compare** myself with others which leads me to pride or depression—depending on how good I think I look by comparison.

SON: I **am growing** more secure in God's love for me in the Gospel, so I don't need to get my sense of worth from others. (Phil. 3:9; 1 Cor. 4:3,4)

14 ORPHAN: I'm a **charter member** of The R.O.C.L. (The Royal Order the Curled Lip). I'm an expert at pointing out anything and everything wrong. Favorite meal: *Carp & Chips*.

SON: I **am not** blind to the wrong all around me, but as I grow to love the good, like Paul, I *choose to focus* on what is "*good and lovely.*" (Phil. 4:8)

15 ORPHAN: I **like to** confess other people's sins (gossip). Can I help it if God has given me the gift of discernment? Besides, criticizing others diverts attention away from my faults. (Prov. 17:9)

SON: **Nowadays** I am able to be honest about my faults and can confess them to others. I'm becoming more teachable and correctable. Good heavens! I'm often wrong! (Jas. 5:16)

16 ORPHAN: **Prayer?** Actually, I'm quite prayerless. When all else fails, I pray. To be truthful, I pray more in public than I do in private.

SON: **I don't limit** conversations with my Father to morning devotions. He wants me to partner with Him throughout the day. (1Thess. 5:16-18)

17 ORPHAN: **I'm rather** self-centered and controlling. *"They must see things my way!"* I have a deep need to be in control of people and situations.

SON: **I'm becoming** more Christ-controlled and so am learning to pray and trust the Holy Spirit to change people and situations. (Gal. 5:24)

18 ORPHAN: **Position, possessions,** and busyness make me feel worthy and significant. Knowing Jesus certainly doesn't satisfy me. (Compare Phil. 3:8)

SON: **"And having Him, I desire nothing else on earth."** (Ps. 73:25) *"May I never boast except in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord..."* (Gal. 6:14).

19 ORPHAN: **I'm not good enough.** If I could just do more, I'd feel worthy, accepted, and ah yes, *righteous.*

SON: **I'm believing the Gospel more!** Jesus is my worthiness, my *whole* and *sole* righteousness.

20 ORPHAN: **I would be** quite embarrassed to share my faith. After all, faith is an intensely personal thing. If I ever do say anything for Christ, it is more to defend my position than to express my loving concern for lost people. (Rom. 15:13)

SON: **I long for** others to know God the way I know him. *"May God...fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* (Rom. 15:13, and see 2 Cor. 5:11, 14)

Are you frustrated that your spiritual growth is so sporadic? Welcome to the club. Our progress from the

Top trait to bottom will vary from rapid to a snail's pace. What's worse is that we'll all suffer painful retreats back to the left. Take heart. Jesus died for messes like you and me, and when we struggle, we're in good company with St. Paul himself. (See Rom. 7:15-24 *"The good that I want to do, I don't do..."* †) The Bible describes the Christian life as a race to be run (1 Cor. 9:24; Heb. 12:1-3), as a wrestling match (Eph. 6:12), and as a fight (1 Tim. 6:12, etc.). That's why Peter says, *"Don't be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering as though something strange were happening to you!"* (1 Pet. 4:12). So beware of people who claim to have found "the secret of holiness". If you meet such a person, ask if you can move into their guest room for two weeks. What you're sure to find is another big sinner like yourself—perhaps a worse one! Think about it. If perfection were possible, Paul, the man who penned thirteen of the New Testament's twenty-seven books, would have achieved it.

But if there are no "seven easy steps to holiness" and no secret formulas, how *do* we begin to move away

from the left-hand side of the page toward thinking, feeling, and behaving like God's loved sons and daughters?

To be sure, human effort won't get you there, but Gospel faith will (Gal. 3:1-5). Want proof of that? Try this.

A little exercise: Try to identify *what one must consciously believe* about the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, to produce the twenty lovely *byproducts* listed on the right-hand side of these pages. This should get you going:

The Father has set his love on you, adopted you into His family, delights in you, and, for His honor and glory, is totally committed to your care and, keeping now and for all eternity. (Rom. 8:1, 14-39; Eph. 1:3-21; 1 Jn. 3:1, etc.)

The Son has died for our sins, in your place. He was raised to life for you, and *this very moment* he is seated at the right hand of the Father presenting himself to his Father *as your righteousness!* The result is that in the Father's eyes, sinner that you are, you are *beautiful* because he sees you "clothed" in the perfect "gift- righteousness" of his Son (Rom. 8:34; I Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:24f; Gal. 3:27, etc.). Hang in there; this gets even better.

The Holy Spirit is living in your heart right now, and is crying "*Abba, Father!*" so that you can echo back that

cry to the Father (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15). *Cry it!* Fix your eyes on Jesus and keep them there (Heb. 12:2). It is our

trust in Jesus' gift- righteousness that saves *and* sanctifies us. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit will be like

rivers of living water" in us as we "*keep coming*" to him and "*keep drinking*" of him. (Jn. 7:37ff) That's heavy!

Your brother in Christ, *Johnny Long*

A PRIDE TEST – Nancy DeMoss

As I read through these, which ones does the Spirit of God kind of point His finger in your heart and say, “I see that in you sometimes or generally or a lot of a time.” What are some of these characteristic evidences of pride? This will help us to see areas that we need to identify as issues of pride in our lives.

1. Do you look down on those who are less educated, less affluent, less refined, or less successful than yourself?
2. Do you think of yourself as more spiritual than your mate or people in your church or people in your workplace, other believers. Do you think of yourself as more spiritual than other believers you know
3. Here’s another one: Do you have a judgmental spirit toward those who don’t make the same lifestyle choices that you do? Dress standards, how you school your kids, entertainment standards. Think of other believers you know. Do you tend to have a judgmental spirit? Now maybe you don’t think you do. If you wonder on some of these, you may want to go ask somebody who knows you really well, “Do I come across that way, as having a judgmental spirit toward those who have different lifestyle choices than I do?”
4. Here’s another one: Are you quick to find fault with others and to verbalize those faults to others? Do you have a sharp, critical tongue? We would call it discerning, analytical.
5. Here’s another one: Do you frequently correct or criticize your mate or your pastor or other people in positions of leadership—your kids’ teachers, youth director. Think about the people who are involved in your life, people in leadership. Are you quick to correct or criticize them? To them or to others?
6. Are you proud of the schedule you keep? How disciplined you are? How much you’re able to accomplish? You’re a real producer, a real performer. Is that something that you’re proud of?
7. Are you driven to receive approval, praise, or acceptance from others? You always need to have a pat on the back, have someone telling you how well you’re doing or you get discouraged. Are you driven to receive approval from others?
8. Are you argumentative? You have to have the last word. Think about what it’s been like in your home for the last day or two. Proverbs tell us that only by pride comes contention. So where there’s contention . . . “Yes,” you say, “I know. My husband. He’s a proud man. That’s why we have so much contention in our home.” No, it takes more than a proud husband to have contention in a home. It’s a proud husband and, more often than not, a proud wife too. Are you argumentative?
9. Do you generally think that your way is the right way, the only way, or the best way? Think about how you go about cleaning up your kitchen and then your husband comes along and he does it differently. Is your way the right way? It has to be done your way.
10. Do you have a touchy, sensitive spirit, easily offended? Do you get your feelings hurt easily? This is another one of the evidences of spiritual pride that Jonathan Edwards talked about—people who take offense easily. He said:

Spiritual pride takes great notice of opposition and injuries that are received and is prone to be often speaking of them . . . humility on the other hand causes a person to be more like his blessed Lord

when reviled: quiet, not opening his mouth, but committing himself in silence to Him who judges righteously.

11. How about this one? Are you guilty of pretense? Trying to leave a better impression of yourself than is honestly true. Here's a way to go about seeing if you have that one. Would the people that know you at church be shocked if they were to come and discover what you're like at home, behind the four walls of your own home?

12. Another one: Do you have a hard time admitting when you are wrong? Is it hard for you to say, "I was wrong." Or do you wait for the other person to admit that they were wrong?

13. Do you have a hard time confessing your sin to God or others? Not just in generalities. We all say I need to be a better woman. I need to love the Lord more. I need to read my Bible more. But when it comes to the specific issues. "I'm in love with food. I'm in love with television. I love entertainment more than I love God." I mean the specifics. Do you have a hard time confessing those?

14. Are you excessively shy? You say, "Shy? That's proud?" Excessive shyness. What is it? Self-centeredness. What do other people think about me? That can be an evidence, a subtle form of pride.

15. Do you have a hard time reaching out and being friendly to people that you don't know at church? Do you stick to your own little group there, hard to reach out to new people? That can be pride.

16. Do you become defensive when you are criticized or corrected? That anger that wells up. What is that? That's a fruit that grows on the root of pride. Why do we get angry when somebody criticizes us? We may not express it outwardly, but inwardly. Because our pride gets hurt.

17. Are you a perfectionist? Here's another evidence of pride perhaps in your life. The way you keep your house, the way you do your job, the way you raise your kids. Are you a perfectionist? Everything has to be just perfect and you get impatient and irked with people who aren't.

18. Do you tend to be controlling of you mate? If you're not sure, by the way, ask your mate.

19. Do you frequently interrupt people when they're speaking? The Lord really spoke to me about this as I was working on this list. I realized what I'm saying when I interrupt you when you're speaking is, what I have to say is more important than what you have to say. It's pride.

20. Do you often complain about the weather, your health, your circumstances, your job, church? Complaining. How's that pride? You think you deserve better. It shouldn't be happening to me.

21. Do you talk about yourself too much? Are you more concerned about your problems, your needs, your burdens than about other people's concerns?

22. Do you worry about what others think of you? About your reputation or your family's reputation. By the way, that's one thing that motivates a lot of parenting, isn't it? With mothers, "What are people going to think if my child is this way?" That can be pride.

23. Do you neglect to express gratitude for the little things to God, to your mate, to others. An ungrateful spirit, that's pride.

24. Do you neglect prayer and intake of the Word? How's that pride? Well, I'm saying I can live my life without God. I can manage without Him.

25. Do you get hurt if your accomplishments or your acts of service are not recognized or rewarded? In your home? At your job? In your church?

26. Do you react to rules? And who of us doesn't? Do you have a hard time being told what to do? Do you have an issue with authority? That's pride.

27. Do you avoid participating in certain events for fear of being embarrassed or looking foolish? Do you avoid being around certain people because you feel inferior compared to them? Feel like you just don't measure up.

28. Are you uncomfortable inviting people to your home because you don't think it's nice enough or you can't afford to do lavish entertaining?

29. Is it hard for you to let others know when you need help? Maybe practical help or spiritual help. You have an independent spirit. I can do this on my own. I won't let anybody else help me.

30. Here's a way to measure your pride quotient. When is the last time you said these words to a family member, to a friend, to a co-worker, "I was wrong. Will you please forgive me?"

Let me tell you if it's been more than a month (let me just pick a figure) if it's been more than a month, mark it down. Haven't you sinned in a month? When's the last time you said that to your husband, "I was wrong. Will you please forgive me?"

Why is it so hard for us to say those words? Why? Because we're proud. We have to humble ourselves to say those words.

Let me just throw in this last question. Are you sitting here thinking how many of these questions apply to someone you know? You're feeling pretty good that most of things don't really apply to you. You want to get a copy of this session and hand it to about a dozen people you know. Could that be an evidence of pride?

HUMILITY TEST...(Hunter Dockery)

1. Do you take criticism well?
2. Are you a good listener?
3. Are you in frequent power struggles and arguments?
4. Do you often believe you are the only one right?
5. Do you ever take the lowest place?
6. Are you known as gentle and merciful, or is there a hard edge to your personality?
7. Is anger often lurking just below the surface?
8. Would others characterize you as critical?
9. Is prayer the first movement of your life?
10. Is it important to defend yourself to others?
11. Are you easily offended and hurt? Do you quickly perceive things as slights and insults?
12. Do situation quickly turn into a case of "how does this affect me?"
13. Do you quickly impute negative motives to others?
14. Do others experience grace in and through my words?
15. When you correct others do you include the gospel of hope knowing that your sin is as great as that of the person being corrected?
16. Are you a forgiving person?
17. Do I confess my sins consistently within an appropriate context?
18. Do I confess specific instances of sin or just general categories or references to sin?
19. Do others find it easy to correct you?
20. Are there some key people who know the areas of temptation in my life at present?
21. Do they know the most pronounced patterns of sin in my life at present?

Check 6 Questions- for Men

Check 1: What encouragements or successes have you seen this week?

Check 2: What biblical insights from your Quiet Time have stood out this week?

Check 3: What Christ like character quality do you see God wanting you to learn right now?

Check 4: FAMILY LEADERSHIP

- a. What has been the most difficult part of being the spiritual leader lately?
- b. What needs of your wife are you focusing on meeting?
- c. What are you doing to disciple your kids?
- d. Do you need to change

Check 5: ACCOUNTABILITY : Since our last meeting

- a. How has your daily time with God been going?
- b. Have you looked at sexually explicit material
- c. Have been too emotional or physically close to a woman who is not your wife?
- d. Do you need to fix a broken relationship?
- e. Have you been praying for and seeking an opportunity to share your faith?
- f. Have you lied to anyone or been dishonest?

Check 6: What spiritual battles can I help you fight by praying for you?

(Optional questions)

*What is it that you don't want to tell anyone? Find a safe friend that you can talk to about it.
Are you investing your time, talent, and treasure in a way that honors God and His eternal values.*

X-Ray Questions

(Originally formulated by David Powlison in his course *Dynamics of Biblical Change*)

"The questions that follow can help you do this more effectively. Repentance is not true repentance unless it is specific and intelligent. We don't sin in the abstract; we sin in concrete, particular ways. Since that is true, we need to take an honest look at our lives – both heart and behavior. Spiritual awareness is a blessing. Through it we can experience change. Use these questions to turn away from idols and turn to the mercy and power of Christ. As you do, don't forget that you are married to Christ. His assets are your assets. Your sin has been dealt with at the Cross and you don't have to be afraid to take a good look at yourself!

- 1) What do you love? Is there something you love more than God or your neighbor?
- 2) What do you want? What do you desire? What do you crave, long for, wish? Whose desires do you obey?
- 3) What do you seek? What are your personal expectations and goals? What are your intentions? What are you working for?
- 4) Where do you bank your hopes? What hope are you working toward or building your life around?
- 5) What do you fear? Fear is the flip side of desire. For example, if I desire your acceptance, then I fear your rejection.
- 6) What do you feel like doing? This is a synonym for desire. Sometimes we feel like eating a gallon of ice cream, or staying in bed, or refusing to talk, etc.
- 7) What do you think you need? In most cases a person's felt needs picture his or her idol cravings. Often what we have called necessities are actually deceptive masters that rule our hearts. They control us because they seem plausible. They don't seem so bad on the surface and it isn't sin to want them. However, I must not be ruled by the "need" to feel good about myself, to feel loved and accepted, to feel some sense of accomplishment, to have financial security, to experience good health, to live a life that is organized, pain-free, and happy.
- 8) What are your plans, agendas, strategies, and intentions designed to accomplish? What are you really going after in the situations and relationships of life? What are you really working to get?
- 9) What makes you tick? What sun does your planet revolve around? Where do you find your garden of delight? What lights up your world? What food sustains your life? What really matters to you? What are you living for?
- 10) Where do you find refuge, safety, comfort, and escape? When you are fearful, discouraged, and upset, where do you run? Do you run to God for comfort and safety or to something else? (To food, to others, to work, to solitude?)
- 11) What do you trust? Do you functionally rest in the Lord? Do you find your sense of well-being in His presence and promises? Or do you rest in something or someone else?
- 12) Whose performance matters to you? This question digs out self-reliance or self-righteousness. It digs out living through another. Do you get depressed when you are wrong or when you fail? Have you pinned your hopes on another person? Are you too dependent on the performance of your

husband, wife, children or friends?

13) Whom must you please? Whose opinion counts? From whom do you desire approval or fear rejection? Whose value system do you measure yourself against? In whose eyes are you living?

14) Who are your role models? Who are the people you respect? Who do you want to be like? Who is your "idol"? (In our culture, this word is used for role model.)

15) What do you desperately hope will last in your life? What do you feel must always be there? What can't you live without?

16) How do you define success or failure in any particular situation? Are your standards God's standards? Do you define success as the ability to reach your goals? The respect and approval of others? Is it defined by a certain position or the ability to maintain a certain lifestyle? By affluence? By appearance? By acceptance? By location? By accomplishment?

17) What makes you feel rich, secure, and prosperous? The possession, experience, and enjoyment of what would make you happy? The Bible uses the metaphor of treasure here.

18) What would bring you the greatest pleasure? The greatest misery?

19) Whose political power would make everything better for you? Don't just think in a national sense. Think about the workplace and the church. Whose agenda would you like to see succeed and why?

20) Whose victory and success would make your life happy? How do you define victory and success?

21) What do you see as your rights? What do you feel entitled to? What do you feel is your right to expect, seek, require, or demand?

22) In what situations do you feel pressured or tense? When do you feel confident and relaxed? When you are pressured, where do you turn? What do you think about? What do you fear? What do you seek to escape from? What do you escape to?

23) What do you really want out of life? What payoff are you seeking from the things you do? What is the return you are working for?

24) What do you pray for? The fact that we pray does not necessarily mean we are where we should be spiritually. On the contrary, prayer can be a key revealer of the idols of our hearts. Prayer can reveal patterns of self-centeredness, self-righteousness, materialism, fear of man, etc.

25) What do you think about most often? In the morning, to what does your mind drift instinctively? When you are doing a menial task or driving alone in your car, what captures your mind? What is your mindset?

26) What do you talk about? What occupies your conversations with others? What subjects do you tend to discuss over and over with your friends? The Bible says it is out of the heart that our mouths speak.

27) How do you spend your time? What are your daily priorities? What things do you invest time in every day?

28) What are your fantasies? What are your dreams at night? What do you daydream about?

29) What is your belief system? What beliefs do you hold about life, God, yourself, others? What is

your worldview? What is the personal "mythology" that structures the way you interpret things? What are your specific beliefs about your present situation? What do you value?

30) What are your idols or false gods? In what do you place your trust or set your hopes? What do you consistently turn to or regularly seek? Where do you take refuge? Who is the savior, judge, controller of your world? Whom do you serve? What voice controls you?

31) In what ways do you live for yourself?

32) In what ways do you live as a slave to the Devil? Where are you susceptible to his lies? Where do you give in to deceit?

33) When do you say, "If only..."? Our "if onlys" actually define our vision of paradise. They picture our biggest fears and greatest disappointments. They can reveal where we tend to envy others. They picture where we wish we could rewrite our life story. They picture where we are dissatisfied and what we crave.

34) What instinctively feels right to you? What are your opinions – those things that you feel are true?

35. Where do you find your identity? How do you define who you are?

"These questions can help you think more clearly and deeply about why you do the things you do. They can give you a better idea of which things typically morph from good to god in your life. These discoveries are a blessing because they help you to see how truly lavish the grace of God is.

Gospel Diagnostic Questions

David Fairchild was the co-founder and preaching elder of Kaleo Church in San Diego and now

Preaching the gospel to ourselves and to others is an art all of us must grow in if we seek real, lasting change in our lives. It is often assumed that the gospel is only for those who have not yet trusted Christ. This is a faulty view of the gospel and limits its work to a personal salvation experience rather than the explosive power and catalytic dynamic for renewal in our hearts on a continuous basis.

To sum up, the life of the Christian is one of continual repentance and belief, without which we slip into a boss/employee, earn/wage, work/rights relationship with our God.

It then becomes the loving responsibility for each of us to run gospel diagnostics to determine whether or not what motivates our heart and lives is “in step” with the gospel (Gal. 2:14).

Here are twenty gospel questions to ask ourselves:

- (1) What is my greatest nightmare? What do I worry about most?
- (2) What, if I failed or lost it, would cause me to feel that I did not even want to live? What keeps me going?
- (3) What do I rely on to comfort myself when things go bad or get difficult?
- (4) What do I think about most easily? Where does my mind go to when I am free? What pre-occupies me?
- (5) What prayer, unanswered, would make me seriously think about turning away from God?
- (6) What makes me feel the most self-worth? What am I the proudest of?
- (7) What do I really want and expect out of life? What would really make me happy?
- (8) What position of authority do I desire to give me a sense of power?
- (9) Whose opinion of me do I hold so dear that if lost I would be undone?
- (10) What type of financial loss or gain would change my sense of security?
- (11) What one criticism would cause me to respond in anger (wife, children, work, ministry, family, friends, etc.)? What am I most touchy about when brought to my attention?
- (12) If I had _____, then I'd be truly happy and feel as if my life has meaning and value.
- (13) If I lost _____, I would be undone.
- (14) I'm impatient because I'm _____.
- (15) I'm critical because I'm _____.
- (16) I'm angry because I'm _____.
- (17) I'm unhappy because I'm _____.
- (18) I'm in despair because I'm _____.
- (19) I have hope because I'm _____.
- (20) I feel worthy because I'm _____.

These are only a few questions to help us be truthful with ourselves about the gospel. There is no benefit answering these questions with the “right” answers at the expense of the “true” answers (how we really feel and think).

It is only when the “true” answers come to light that the “right” answers will have any power.

We must spend time excavating our idols by asking these questions. When we sin, we do so because some idol has promised us power, prestige, influence, joy, peace, satisfaction, security, pleasure, etc. – that is far more attractive than Christ at the moment. We don't sin with a gun held to our heads. We sin willingly because it is overwhelmingly appealing.

We need to discover why sins are so appealing by asking these questions and then remind ourselves that idols:

are weak - can't deliver when you succeed
can only raise the bar
can't forgive when you fail
will only condemn you
are harmful to you and to others
hurt you spiritually, emotionally, and physically
hurt others by undermining your ability to love
are grievous to God

By pursuing this idol you are saying to God, "Jesus is not enough. I also need _____ to be happy."
Our daily struggle is to realign ourselves with the truth of the gospel, to discover new ways to surrender our trust to Christ and grow.

—

IDENTIFYING YOUR IDOLS- Tim Keller

A. Examine examples of idol-based "life-lies":

Power idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I have power and influence over others.

Approval idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I am loved and respected by

Comfort idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life."

Image idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I have a particular kind of look or body image.

Control idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of ."

Helping idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--people are dependent on me and need me."

Dependence idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--someone is there to protect me and keep me safe."

Independence idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone."

Work idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I am highly productive getting a lot done.

Education idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I'm seen as being well educated and I'm getting my kids into the right schools."

Achievement idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I AM being recognized for my accomplishments, if I am excelling in my career."

Materialism idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions.

Religion idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I am adhering to my religion's moral codes and accomplished in it activities."

Irreligion idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and with a self-made morality.

Racial/cultural idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if--my race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior."

Individual person idolatry: "Life only has meaning / I only have worth if--this one person is in my life

and happy there and/or happy with me."

Inner ring idolatry: "Life only has meaning if I only have worth if—a particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in."

Family idolatry: "Life only has meaning if I only have worth if—my children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me."

Relationship idolatry: "Life only has meaning if I only have worth if—Mr. or Ms. 'Right' is in love with me."

Suffering idolatry: "Life only has meaning if I only have worth if—I am hurting in a problem—only then do I feel noble or worthy of love or am able to deal with guilt."

Ideology idolatry: "Life only has meaning if I only have worth if—my political or social cause or party is making progress and ascending in influence or power."

B. Examine yourself when you are experiencing negative emotions. Find the possible idolatrous sources. For example:

1. If you are angry. Ask, "is there something too important to me? Something I am telling myself I have to have? Is that why I am angry—because I am being blocked from having something I think is a necessity when it is not?" Write down what that might be:

2. If you are fearful or badly worried. Ask, "is there something too important to me? Something I am telling myself I have to have? Is that why I am so scared—because something is being threatened which I think is a necessity when it is not?" Write down what that might be:

3. If you are despondent or hating yourself: Ask, "is there something too important to me? Something I am telling myself I have to have? Is that why I am so down—because I have lost or failed at something which I think is a necessity when it is not?" Write down what that might be:

C. Use diagnostic questions:

1. What is my greatest nightmare? What do I worry about most?

2. What, if I failed or lost it, would cause me to feel that I did not even want to live? What keeps me going?

The Twenty-two Questions Members of John Wesley's/George Whitefield Spiritual Growth Club Asked Themselves Every Day In Their Private Devotions More Than 200 Years Ago.

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me every day?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone else of my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?
12. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
13. Do I disobey God in anything?
14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrusting?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?
20. Is there anyone I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?

George Whitefield (1714-1770) before he retired each night, opened his journal and probed his soul with these questions which he'd placed in the flyleaf:

Have I...

1. Been fervent in prayer?
2. After or before every deliberate conversation or action, considered how it might tend to God's glory?
3. After any pleasure, immediately given thanks?
4. Planned business for the day?
5. Been simple and recollected in everything?
6. Been meek, cheerful, affable in everything I said or did?
7. Been proud, vain, unchaste, or envious of others?
8. Recollected in eating and drinking? Thankful? Temperate in sleep?
9. Thought or spoken unkindly of anyone?
10. Confessed all sins?

SPIRITUAL INVENTORY

JR Vassar – Apostles Church NYC

In our series, The Church Jesus Wants, I have been challenged as I have reflected on the Seven Churches of Revelation. Jesus continues to tell the Church that He wants her heart. He desires her to be a pure bride that perseveres in truth and holiness. As I was preparing to teach on Revelation 3:1-6, The Church at Sardis, I had to ask myself some really probing questions about my heart. I wanted to share those questions with you as a tool to help you evaluate your hearts condition before God. I hope you find these questions helpful. I encourage you sit down with a journal and your bible as you walk through these questions.

Do I love Jesus with a demonstrable love? Is there anything or anyone that I love more deeply than Jesus or pursue more intensely than Jesus?

Do I look forward to spending time with Jesus in the Scriptures and in prayer? Do I miss out on other things to spend time with Him?

Am I regularly discovering new things in the Word of God that impact my daily life?

Do I sincerely desire and intend to obey God in every area of my life? Do I sincerely desire purity of heart, mind, and body?

Do I sense the Holy Spirit's presence in my life leading me and strengthening me? (If He were to leave my life, would I sense a great loss?)

Do I sincerely confess my sins to God with a broken heart? When did I last weep over sin in my life?

Is there anything in my life I am hiding from others that I am afraid will be exposed?

Is there anything in my life right now that I know displeases God, but I am not willing to repent of?

Do I spontaneously and whole-heartedly give thanks to God for saving me by His grace?

Do I give my resources regularly and sacrificially to see God's purposes for this world fulfilled?

Is my life marked more by thanksgiving or by complaining and criticizing?

Do I sincerely love others and seek their good as passionately as I seek my own? Am I as patient and forgiving toward others' failures as I am toward my own?

Do I show genuine humility toward others? When have I recently sacrificed my time and money for the good of others?

Am I able to admit when I am wrong and able to say to others, “I am sorry, please forgive me.” Or, am I slow to admit failure and do I make excuses for my behavior?

Have I forgiven others the wrongs done to me? Or, do I have bitterness toward others who have wronged me?

Am I currently grieving the Holy Spirit with unloving attitudes and harmful actions toward others?

Do I truly desire for my friends to know Jesus and honor him in their lives? Do I earnestly pray for His increased fame and renown in my city?