

THE IDOLATRY OF HEDONISM PART 2



Loving Christ is imperative to being saved by Christ. Hence the reason Paul can say, “If anyone has no love for Lord (Christ), let him be accursed.” (1Co 16:22). Loving Christ however means living for the glory of Christ as my highest good, goal, priority and purpose in life – to this end we are saved (2Th 2:13-14; 2Co 5:15; Tit 2:11-14; Phi 1:21). This then is not only “Gospel 101” – what every genuine Christian knows and agreed to in order for Christ to be their Savior (Luk 14:26), but also what confirms Christ to be the God they worship (since He is the One they love, live for and glorify above all else). As such, one of the most important duties that a church and Christian parents can perform, is making sure that those Christians under their charge have not replaced their love and worship of Christ w/someone else – most specifically, themselves. This form of idolatry is known as Hedonism – or the worship of self as god (Pro 22:15; Rom 1:21-25). As such it operates by the belief that our highest good, goal, priority and purpose in life is to seek to the glory of oneself - and that through the pursuit of pleasure (or the avoidance of personal pain). Hedonism - or the principle of hedonism, is frequently alluded to in many of the bible’s words/phrases (covetous, folly, flesh, selfish ambition, pleasure, passion, sensuality, lovers of self, lovers of pleasure, appetite, their god is their belly, deceitful desires, glutton, drunkard). Hedonism is a direct attack on the first commandment (Exo 20:3) and (as should be expected) a very serious capital crime (Exo 22:20). Knowing then how to diagnose when a Christian is living for self (pleasure/fun) is key to avoiding/preventing the charge of hedonistic idolatry. UNIVERSAL MAXIM: where you will experience happiness is determined by what you choose to live for. To therefore believe that living for Christ cannot bring happiness is entirely false. Additionally, living for self/pleasure will bring the least amount of happiness (Hedonic/Pleasure paradox - if you live for self/pleasure, you will fail to achieve long lasting or ideal happiness).

**DIAGNOSTIC**

The Christian who lives for...	SELF (Pleasure/Fun)	CHRIST (His glory)
<b>1.1. Your focus</b>	Finding/getting to the next pleasurable/fun thing you can do (irrespective of whether it glorifies Christ and His gospel).	Being faithful to God’s Word, church and gospel since this is how I glorify/love/live for Christ.
<b>1.2. How you view your re: to God</b>	He exists to please you (Cosmic bellhop).	You exist to please Him.
<b>1.3. How you view God’s Word: receiving it and obeying it</b>	It is burdensome, bland, and hard (to understand, listen to and practice).	It is not burdensome, but your delight, wisdom, counselor and good.
<b>1.4. Your level of commitment to guarding your mind, seeking godly fellowship, thankful prayer, meditating on and memorizing Scripture</b>	Low/Non-existent. Since none of these disciplines are directly associated w/pleasure, they are the last on your list of things to do/be committed to.	High. You understand how important all three are to living for Christ and so make them a priority.
<b>1.5. The level of your commitment and loyalty to your church family</b>	Only to the degree that it doesn’t get in the way of your selfish desires, then you abandon your church family.	Over anything/anyone in the world (incl. our blood families – Luk 8:21). No desires, persons, things, issues, sacrifice or sin will ever cause you to leave them or fail in your commitment/service to them since your love for Christ is determined by your love for them.
<b>1.6. The level of your commitment and loyalty to your blood family</b>	Too low or too high, depending on how they bring pleasure to self.	Only to the extent that they serve and obey Christ.

<b>1.7. Kind of thinking you possess</b>	Foolish and corrupted: easily deceived by your desires/enticed to sin if it is presented as entertaining or pleasurable.	Intelligent/Wise/Not easily deceived or enticed: since this is what those living for Christ seek (Heb 5:11-14...6:6, 7-8)
<b>1.8. How you view work</b>	An obstacle to be avoided or accomplished as quickly as possible. Quality, excellence and righteous behavior only matter if you get a reward/more pleasure.	An opportunity to serve Christ. Quality, excellence and righteousness are therefore everything (Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:23-4:1).
<b>1.9. Kind of conscience you possess</b>	Guilty and unable to handle life's trials, or seared and apostate (contra 1Pe 3:15-16 and 1Ti 1:17-19; Psa 32:3-4, 1Ti 4:2).	Clear and able to persevere (1Pe 3:15-16; 1Ti 1:1-5 w/17-19; e.g. 2Co 1:12 w/4:1-2, 5, 7-9).
<b>1.10. Kind of sorrow/grief you feel when you sin</b>	Worldly (not unto QUICK confession/repentance) (2Co 7:10b).	Godly (unto QUICK confession/repentance) (2Co 7:9-11).
<b>1.11. Kind of person you are</b>	A cowardly, corrupted by sin (in bondage), chameleon and can-kisser who is self-deceived - i.e. you view yourself by how you feel/what you want to be rather than what you do. This is always the result of those who worship self – it leads to self-deceit (2Ti 1:5-9 [contra], 3:5, 12-13; 2Pe 2:1-3 w/13 w/18-19; Rom 16:18; Jam 1:16-17).	A courageous, confident, conqueror (Phi 4:13; Rom 8:31-39).
<b>1.12. The fruit you produce in the lives of those Christians you spend the most time with (e.g. spouse, kids, close friends).</b>	1) Little to None. B/C your life is devoted to seeking self-pleasure, you spend more time pursuing your desires, dreams, career, etc. than investing in the lives of other Christians. BTW: it is impossible to invest in the lives of others in any kind of a fruitful way w/o knowing God's Word and spending lots of time talking/demonstrating it to them (2Ti 2:15-21 "dishonorable" = poor theology/thinking; 1Co 1Co 3:10-11; 1Th 2:8-12; Joh 10:11-13). IOW: drive-by bible-studies, selfish behavior and biblical ignorance ("pastor says") do not beget better Christians. 2) Rotten. Your life of self-worship has inspired them to do the same (serious - 1Co 3:12-17; Mat 18:5-10).	Very fruitful: They obey and glorify Christ more b/c of your influence and investment in their life (Phi 1:21-26; e.g. Eph 5:25-27).

**The Christian who lives for...**

**SELF (Pleasure/Fun)**

**CHRIST (His glory)**

<b>OUTCOME/RESULT</b>	<b>SELF (Pleasure/Fun)</b>	<b>CHRIST (His glory)</b>
	Unlike the pagan who may experience blessings in this present life (though not living for Christ), your original commitment to Christ guarantees this will not be true in your case should you choose to desert Him. You are instead promised a life filled w/curses, frustration and confusion followed by an after-life filled w/excruciating and eternal suffering in Hell (Deu 28:20, 28; Mat 7:26-27; Pro 13:21; Mat 16:24-27; 2Pe 2:21-22; Rev 21:8, 14-15; in general, poverty comes to those who live for pleasure – Pro 21:17, 23:20-21).	A present life filled w/abundant blessings, certainty/clarity, prosperity/ peace, stability/security, happiness and an after-life filled w/the eternal pleasures of heaven (Joh 10:10; Jam 1:25; Psa 37:1-4; Pro 28:9, 30:5; Mat 7:24-25; Psa 119:165; in general, wealth comes to those who pursue the path of wisdom/righteousness – Psa 112:1-3; Pro 8:18, 21:20, 24:3-4).

