

Leadership

Buck Jacobs • Leadership

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WARNING: The following may be dangerous to our comfort.

What if all Christians were buried in the same graveyard? And what if that graveyard was separated into three sections. The first section called "Nominal Christians", the second "Normal Christians", and the third "Radical Christians." Which section do you think would be the largest? Which section would you hope to be put to rest in? This question is intended to be taken seriously. In your true heart of hearts, where would you aspire to be?

If there were such a thing, where would your personal Christian hero or heroine be likely to be found? Where do you think we would find the remains of: John Wesley? Paul of Tarsus? Hudson Taylor? John Calvin? Mother Teresa? Keith Green? Barnabus? St. Francis of Assisi? Jim Elliott? C.T. Studd? Andrew Murray? David Livingstone? Pete Marovich?

Look at the person on your left. The person on your right. Where do you think they would be? If the passion in the heart of Christians for service to Jesus in the Body of Christ today were graphed in a bell curve, with hot at one end, cold at the other, and lukewarm in the middle, where would you fit?

Is all this a little morbid? Are you wondering where we are going with this? And what does it have to do with my ministry in God's business? Well, we are going to propose that God is looking for some new heroes. The heavenly Hall of Fame is not yet full. The most prominent place is taken but there are vacancies yet to be filled and some of them will come from our generation and will be produced through the work done in marketplace ministry. As we move toward the Day of The Lord, and the end of time, new heroes will emerge and be identified with those who have gone before. These new heroes won't travel to far off lands or penetrate lost tribes, they will do their work in the jungles of the marketplace among the secular humanists, materialists, and hedonists.

But none of the new members will come from among those who would be willing to rest in the company of the normal or the nominal, or from the great lukewarm. The heroes of heaven are radically Christian and our goal here is to encourage radically Christian CEOs.

Radically Christian CEOs will live differently while they are here on earth. They won't look like the others. They will have a different agenda, a different paradigm of life. Today we are going to look at some of the key differences.

The first and most important key, and the key from which all others flow, is the key of the sold out heart. 11 Chronicles 16:9 says, "The eye of The Lord searches to and fro across the face of the earth, seeking to show Himself mighty on behalf of He

whose heart is wholly His." Heavenly heroes are those whose hearts belong to God lock, stock, and barrel, nothing held back. God can work through them and accomplish His goals because there is no conflict between them in their hearts. The heart refers to the most basic part of us. It is the place of our will. It is where we make our choices. Radically Christian CEOs follow the choices of God's Spirit within, nominal and normal Christians follow the choices of the flesh or of the world without.

The wills of heaven's past heroes were not in conflict with the will of the Father. He could show Himself mighty through them because there was no resistance in their hearts. It was wholly His.

Not that their lives were always perfect, they weren't. David is there, Abraham is there. But perfect performance is not the criteria, the criteria is a matter of the heart alone, set by faith alone. The new heroes won't be perfect, but their hearts will belong to God alone. The way to the Hall of Heavenly Fame begins with the set of the heart.

Only when our hearts are sold out to God can, or will we be able to see life on earth from an eternal perspective. God is eternal. Everything God does is eternal. God's heart is eternal. God's plan is eternal. To be in harmony with God's heart our heart must beat with His, our heart must be set on eternity.

Jesus lived on earth with His heart in eternity. The things He did while on earth all pointed Him to and fed His eternal purpose. God drew Jesus who, "for the joy set before Him suffered the cross", into His eternal plan and place. Jesus' heart was wholly God's.

If we would hope to be among the heroes of heaven we must begin as they did, with our hearts. God makes it possible for any one of us, or all of us, to become heroes. He isn't a respecter of persons. It isn't the size of our accomplishment that will bring us into The Heavenly Hall of Fame, there will be thousands of members that were totally unknown during their lives on earth. No one knew of them but God. They weren't famous on earth, they were obedient out of a sold out heart on earth. A sold out heart is a servant's heart.

A radically Christian CEO has a servant's heart. Many of us stumble here. We have a servant's heart toward God, but a ruler's heart toward the people He places in our lives. A servant's heart is a humble heart. Humility is seeing God as He really is, and self as who self really is, and acting appropriately.

Most of us have been trained and influenced by the world to see others in a utilitarian, manipulative way, especially those we do business with. The world teaches us to look at others in terms of what they can do for us, God wants us to see them with His heart, in terms of what we can do for them. This is a radically different paradigm, but a totally biblical view.

Test your heart here. What is your first thought when you encounter an applicant for work with your business? Is it "How can I learn what this person's gifts and talents are so that I can help them fulfill their God given purpose and make sure they are a

fit for the job we have open?" Or is it "What can this person do to help me do what I want to do and how little can I pay him to do it?"

What is your typical first thought when meeting a new salesperson from a new supplier? Is it "I wonder if she knows Christ?" Or is it "What can I gain from giving my business to this person?"

On a first sales call, when meeting a prospect for the first time, is your first thought, "How can I gain the favour of this person so I can sell them our product?" Or is it, "How can I build a bridge with this person that will allow me to witness?"

Of course, it is the business that brings us the opportunity to meet the person in each case. And we all know that we are to do our work with diligence and excellence, we are called to do no less by God Himself. But excellence in these things will never take precedence in importance in a heart that is God's. The apostle Paul made tents and sails. He worked in the marketplace everyday. It is inconceivable that he did shoddy work, his work was done "as unto The Lord." But the work itself was never at the top of his mind. It was never an end, only a means to an end. The end was to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone and anyone he could. Paul's whole heart was God's. Paul's world-view was radically Christian.

Paul was single-minded. Nominal and normal Christians are double-minded. To be double-minded is to have a heart that is partly in the world and partly with God. To value the things of God but also the things of the world. To want both. A heart wholly for God wants only the things of God, eternally valuable things. A heart that belongs completely to God embraces poverty as quickly as riches, the criteria being not comfort but compliance with God's plan. A heart that God can honour in The Heavenly Hall of Fame seeks not earthly gold but the heavenly goal of the upward call of God in Christ.

A sold out heart is a faithful heart. A faithful heart isn't controlled by circumstance or the opinions of others. A faithful heart can only be determined as it perseveres.

The hearts of Radically Christian CEOs are exposed to be faithful during trials and tribulation. When circumstances are good and all the things of life are peaceful and harmonious one doesn't need to be faithful, only grateful. It is when the world turns against us, friends misuse us, enemies attack us, those we trust betray us, when we are tested, that we can prove to have a faithful heart. Abundance and approval prove nothing about our heart's faithfulness. It is when our material security, or physical comfort, or emotional stability are threatened, and we stay the course in spite of, not because of, our circumstances, that we show and know we have a faithful heart.

Of course the opposite can be true as well, prosperity and pleasure can be as much a snare and distraction as can lack or threat of loss. Only a truly faithful heart can withstand the temptation to trust in, and try to hold on to, worldly things when they are abundant. Many have started the race well only to be tripped by prosperity and fall into reliance on things rather than on God.

A truly faithful heart can be either in want or in plenty, as Paul said he had learned to be. "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content." Philippians 4:11.

How much do we love our "stuff?" One easy test is to imagine that it was all lost in a storm or a fire. How much would we care? A heart that is wholly God's doesn't care much. It knows it will all be lost to fire, it's not a matter of if we will lose or leave it all, it's only a matter of when.

A heart that is wholly God's is a free heart. It is not encumbered by a love of the things of this world which are passing away. It uses all things, and all things are available for it to use, but it isn't used by things. To a heart that is wholly God's things are utilitarian to the work of the gospel. That is, they have value only in how they can be used to promote the cause of Christ. Things are used to gain souls, souls are not used to gain things. A truly free heart can give freely, can give completely. Can give anything or everything. Owns nothing, stewards all things.

Lastly, a heart that is wholly God's is a heart for the lost to be found, saved, and set into the Kingdom. God's heart is to see the lost saved, God is evangelical.

In fact, of all the things God cares about, nothing matters more to Him than being restored into a right relationship with His children. Nothing. How can we know that? We can know it by looking at the price He was willing to pay to make it possible. The price was the sacrificial suffering and death on a cross of His only son.

Think about it. God only had to speak to create the heavens and the earth. He spoke and it all came to be. He made man and woman and every living thing and never seemed to break a sweat. All creation was easy for our Creator. But to solve the problem of separation that came between He and His children He had to give the life of His Son, and He did it. Nothing else that we know of what He is or has done comes close in its' price to the cost of giving His Son to die for us so that we could be saved. It's God's heart that the separated be returned, and a heart that is wholly His can't be indifferent to the lost. Does that mean that a heart that belongs to God must beat in the chest of an evangelist? No, of course not. There are only a few true evangelists given to serve the Body. A heart for evangelism, a passion to see the lost saved, and active participation in the process by making giving and living a good witness a priority, reflects the Father's heart.

There are other qualities and keys we could name and other factors involved in becoming a member of Heaven's Hall of Fame, but time and space limit so we will stop here.

There is a great cloud of heavenly witnesses watching us right now. The Father, our Lord Jesus, the angels, and all those who have gone before us are watching you and I as we run the race that God has set before us. They are pulling for us, cheering us on! They know well how hard and how long the race is. They also know the prize that awaits all who run it and finish. There are rewards in heaven. We don't know exactly what they are, but we do know who will award them and who created them, and whatever they are, they will be wonderful beyond belief.

They are there for the taking for the man or woman whose heart is wholly His.

Worksheet

For our worksheet, give yourself a heart examination. We will list the keys given in our segment, and a rating range. In a quiet time, read and think about Psalm 139:23,24, and then reread the segment and rate yourself on each of the keys listed below from 1-10. 1 being low and 10 high.

- 1- Do I have - A Sold Out heart? Do I want what God wants, nothing more, nothing less?" 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 _____
- 2- Do I have an Eternal Heart? Do I do what I do with my eye on eternity? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 _____
- 3- Do I have a Servants Heart? How do I really see others? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 _____
- 4- Do I have a Humble Heart? Who really sits on the throne of my life? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 _____
- 5- Do I have a Single Heart? Are my affections divided? God first? The world? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 _____
- 6- Do I have a Faithful Heart? For richer or poorer? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 _____
- 7- Do I have a Free Heart? No strings to things? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 _____
- 8- Do I have a Heart For The Salvation of The Lost? Do I really care? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 _____

A perfect score would be 80. Probably 9's or 10's will be required to be a hero in heaven. Maybe not. The point is not to get a score so much as it is to test our hearts and let God show us where He would like us to grow closer to Him.

After you have completed the questions, take them one at a time and talk to God about the score you have given yourself. It may be high or low, He will tell you.

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