



No Growth - Things

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Colossians 3:2

Thought - Matthew 6:34

Heart - Psalms 44:1

Idol - 1 Corinthians 10:19

Neglect - Hebrews 2:3

God - 1 Corinthians 3:17
2 Corinthians 6:16

Satan - 2 Corinthians 2:11

To start the day, what is the first thing that comes to mind? The three possibilities could be anything, or something, or nothing. Whatever the choice, this will be the difference maker for the day ahead. Whether it be our feelings, thinking, attitude, or how we respond to others in public, the things we have focused on within us will navigate. However, the things that consume us are they good or bad? For believers, the first thing that should be on our minds is our Savior, Jesus Christ. To welcome Him in devotion for His guidance and protection, to see another day that He has made where we should rejoice and be glad for it. Our thoughts should occupy the things of Christ where He now dwells, where our final home will be, and where our big interests are. Since we are raised from the death of sin and

made to live anew, the great object of our contemplation should be the heavenly world. However, the tendency is to focus on the natural things before us: Wealth, honor, pleasure such as houses and lands, on scenes of fashion and entertainment that are low and debasing enjoyment. Unless our affections are on above, we will never seek. To set signifies to mind them, and think on them, to favour and approve of them, to be affectionately desirous of them, and concerned for them; for where the treasure is, the heart shall be; and as the saints best things are above, their minds and affections should be there likewise; their contemplation should be on those things, and their conversation should be in heaven; nor should they regard anything but what is there, or comes from thence, for they belong not to this world, but to another and better country: their citizenship is in heaven, and there, in a short time, they must have their everlasting residence; and therefore should seek after, and highly prize and value heavenly things, and set their affections on them, and not on things on the earth; not mind earth and earthly things, temporal enjoyments, riches, and honours; and though food and raiment, and the necessaries of life, are to be sought after, and cared and provided for, yet not with anxiety and perplexity of mind, in an over thoughtful and distressing manner; nor should the heart be set on those outward things, or happiness placed in the possession of them. Moreover, worldly lusts, the members of the earth, earthly pleasures that are sinful. The denial of worldly lusts, the mortifying of the deeds of the body, the gratification and indulgence of carnal desires, and provision is not to be made for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts; and particularly the vain philosophy of Jews and Gentiles, the traditions of the elders, the ceremonies of the law, which lay in earthly things, in worldly observances, the difference of meats and drinks, keeping of days, months, and years, new moons, feasts, and sabbath days; the rudiments of the world, the commandments and doctrines which were of the earth, and lay in not touching, tasting, and handling certain things that are on earth, and which perish with the using, as opposed to the doctrines of the Gospel, and ordinances of

Christ, which are from above, and come from heaven, and have a spiritual and heavenly use.

Things begin with a thought. There will always be something that will tend to occupy our minds. When we are awake, it will be something. However, when we are not, it could be anything. For believers, Philippians four, verse eight, sums up how a servant of God should think, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

No such thoughts as before mentioned, for God will provide for you tomorrow when tomorrow comes. Besides, every new day will bring forth some new cares, and you know not what tomorrow will bring forth, nor what you will need tomorrow; and if you did, why should you torment yourselves before the time? It will be time enough when you feel the evils of a succeeding time. You need not think with prophesying against yourselves, what it may be shall never be; or if it be, you had not need weaken yourselves for the encountering such evils, by a previous disturbance of your thoughts about them. Luke

Second Corinthians ten, verse five, states, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." The challenge for all believers and unbelievers begins in the mind. Thought first appears in Genesis twenty, verse eleven, when Abraham journeyed to Gerar with Sarah to encounter Abimelech, who was the king. His thoughts nearly cause adultery with his wife and other problems in the chapter. Another example in Genesis is chapter thirty-eight, verse fifteen, where Judah thought Tamar was a harlot because she covered her face only to be fooled that she was not but his relative.

Things come from the heart. All people sometimes take things seriously to heart. Hearing words, seeing actions, and especially saying something can affect the person from deep within. In Luke seventeen, verse thirty-two, one of the shortest verses in the

Bible, "Remember Lot's wife." The verses before it in thirty-one says, "In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back." The verse after in thirty-three, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."

Lot's wife had her heart on Sodom and Gomorrah as she left with her family. At the beginning of chapter nineteen, in Genesis, the two angels came to Sodom and spoke to Lot in verses twelve through thirteen. However, what may have made this situation more challenging for Lot's wife to leave the city concerning what the angels said is she was so accustomed to the things in Sodom. Despite the sinful lifestyle, from her reaction to looking back and turning into a pillar of salt, she cherished things more than instruction from the Lord and the angels.

Things can be an idol. Idols are first mentioned in Leviticus nineteen, verse four, under the section that explains personal conduct. The chapter is about when the Lord spoke to Moses, beginning in verse one until the end of the chapter, and gives him instructions to follow. In Leviticus twenty-six, verse thirty, it is under the section of the punishments of disobedience that starts from verses fourteen through forty-six. An idol is something that people tend to serve because it is an image. However, all things created are by someone God gave the knowledge and wisdom to make things in general. Yet, people default to serving images made of wood, stone, or things they desire. Luke sixteen, verse thirteen, specifies, "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The beginning of First Chronicles sixteen, verse twenty-six, declares, "For all the gods of the people are idols." Psalms one-hundred and six, verse thirty-six, says, "And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them." Eventually, it will be their trap in the end. In the first book of John five, verse twenty-one, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." The verse here means those who read and obey to do so. Avoid heathen idols and

idolatry, into which the saints are liable to be drawn because of their dwelling among idolaters and being related to them. All God's people should avoid eating things sacrificed to idols, especially if they know.

Things may entice us to neglect everything else. Many people have suffered loss, disappointment, failure, experienced struggle, and setbacks due to carelessness, disrespect, or indifference. Eve, in the Garden of Eden, along with Adam, experiences a situation involving an oversight. Both received instruction from God not to touch the fruit of the tree amid the garden in Genesis three, verse three. Did Eve know she would neglect the instruction of the Lord in the Garden of Eden concerning the tree of good and evil? Of course not.

On the other hand, the serpent, through temptation, got the attention of Eve by deception, which led her to neglect all God had said before in the Garden of Eden. Things can make us ignore other important stuff that requires our surveillance. Adam and Eve did not uphold the word they received from God. Instead, convinced by that thing said by the serpent and saw in that fruit tree amid the Garden of Eden. First Corinthians fifteen, verse thirty-three, states, "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners." The enemy used the serpent to corrupt Eve and Adam through conversation, which led to the desire for the forbidden fruit.

Things come from God. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who believers have in their hearts after they have received salvation, is the first words in Matthew six, verse eight, concerning things, declares, "Be not ye, therefore, like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye need of before ye ask him." So God already knows the things needed and advises not to imitate them and follow their ways, who have only the dim light of nature to guide them. The outcome would be shameful for believers to do as they do when you have a divine revelation for your direction. There is a difference for those who are followers of God to follow: God will provide as His children continue in faith.

However, after this verse, Jesus informs what believers should pray when things attempt to enter within: the Lord's prayer. The following verses, beginning from nine through sixteen,

are known for a model prayer. Still, these words come right after verse eight and should be the response by believers when enticing things would attempt to come to us. Later, in chapter six, verse twenty-one states about treasure. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Concerning things, near the end of the same chapter six, verse thirty-two gives the words of Jesus, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." However, the verse before, in thirty-one, explains not to be like the Gentiles, which are those in the Old Testament who were not Jewish, but today, it also means those who are unbelievers. Many hear this verse and say they will obey and follow it but do not see the result they expect. Why? Many attempt to do it with the intention of getting something in return while their heart is far from God because they have that something so much on their hearts that it is between them and God and not genuinely doing it, which many misunderstand.

Things also come from the evil one. He brings things to people, especially believers, to deceive, distract, and destroy. In First Peter five, verse eight, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The enemy uses the things of the world to cause unbelievers to sell themselves for the sake of something they want so bad and make it almost impossible for them to come out of. For the believers, the devil will use worldly things to frustrate and attempt to sever the relationship between God and His people.

Why many unbelievers are not believers today? Things. Whatever is holding people back must be something in the way, and they know.