

## THE OBSTACLE OF MAN'S INTERESTS

## I. MAN'S INTERESTS

<sup>18</sup> "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades(physical death) will not overpower it. <sup>19</sup> "I will give you(future) the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup> Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ. (Matthew 16:18-20 <sup>NASB</sup>)

- Jesus was encouraging Peter about his eternal inheritance in the resurrection of the age to come. He was giving the disciples confidence that death would not have the ultimate victory. 'Gates of Hades' would be translated 'Gates of Sheol' in Aramaic.

*"I said in the middle of my life I am to enter the gates of Sheol; I am to be deprived of the rest of my years." (Isaiah 38:10 <sup>NASB</sup>)*

*From that time on Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. <sup>22</sup> Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." (Peter was likely expecting a throne of authority with the messiah immediately-the keys of the kingdom) <sup>23</sup> But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." <sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself(**his interests**), and take up his cross and follow Me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wishes to save his life(**self-preservation**) will lose it; but whoever loses his life(**self-control**) for My sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world(**worldly success**) and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:21-26 <sup>NASB</sup>)*

## II. THE GOD OF THIS AGE, SATAN'S INTERESTS AND MAN'S INTERESTS

## A. Self-Preservation

1. We are told that self-preservation is human instinct, and that it is the key element in ensuring a sustainable, enjoyable, satisfying, and productive life. It means to protect and maintain all that we possess, and have achieved up to this point.

It comes very natural for us to protect and preserve ourselves. There are songs written about it being first priority, and the basis for all morals. Humanistic psychology will advice it. Divorce counseling can imply it. The world's mantra is: 'if your not happy move on or cut the negative people out of you life.'

It's implied in the phrase: 'Make America Great again!'

“Telling us to obey instinct is like telling us to obey ‘people.’ People say different things: so do instincts. Our instincts are at war.” ~ C.S Lewis ~

2. Political allegiance and gospel allegiance must be distinguished. Gospel freedom is not confined to political freedom. In fact, historically, more often gospel freedom has been found in places of political difficulty. The reason being, is that political freedom tends to produce a sense of security, along with a temptation to blend in to society.

### B. Success in this age, is for this age

*Do not love the world or the things that belong to the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. 16 For everything that belongs to the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the **pride in one's lifestyle**—is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 And the world with its lust is **passing away**, but the one who does God's will remains forever. (1 John 2:15-17 <sup>HCSB</sup>)*

### C. Some Surface Questions We May Ask

- Does this mean I need to avoid success and live like a failure?
- What if my career demands that I climb the corporate ladder?
- On a surface level, what you instinctively protect?
- What kind of circumstances cause your security to feel threatened?

### D. The Deeper Questions We Could Ask

- How much motivation do you have to mature in self-control?
- Is the reward of the age to come, compelling enough to motivate me to sojourn through the present age?

### E. The Two-Sided Motivation For Self-Control

*For the **grace of God** has appeared (**1st coming**) that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and **to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age**, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory (**2nd coming**) of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-13 <sup>NIV</sup>)*

### F. The Reward of the Age to Come

*and I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that **there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked**. 16 **So I strive always** to keep my conscience clear before God and man...25 As Paul talked about righteousness, **self-control** and the **judgment to come**, Felix was afraid and said, “That's enough for now! You may leave. **When I find it convenient**, I will send for you.” (Acts 24:15-16, 25 <sup>NIV</sup>)*

### G. The Warning of the Day of the Lord

### III. THE PATTERN OF PERSEVERANCE, POWER, AND PARADOX (2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-10)

*And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the **grace of God** in vain...We put **no obstacle** in anyone's way, so that **no fault** may be found with our ministry, but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions...in the word of truth(**gospel message**), in the power of God(**in our weakness**); by the **weapons of righteousness** for the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report regarded as deceivers and yet true; as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, **as poor yet making many rich**, as having nothing **yet possessing all things**. (2 Corinthians 6:1,3,7-10 <sup>NASB</sup>)*

#### A. Perseverance in the Grace of God

#### B. Proclaim the Message of the Gospel by the Power of God

1. Because the message is displayed in the voluntary weakness of the messenger (2 Tim 1; 1 Cor. 2)
2. Fight the good fight by the weapons of righteousness - The sword of the Spirit in the right hand, and the shield of faith in the left hand

#### C. Paradox

1. Living for the age to come in the midst of this evil age is the church's call to be a faithful witness. Saying we live for the age to come, and actually living for the age to come are determined by how we use our time and resources.

<sup>29</sup> And I say this, brothers: **The time is limited**, so from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none, <sup>30</sup> those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they **did not possess**, <sup>31</sup> and those who use the world as though they did **not make full use of it**. For this world in its current form is passing away (1 Corinthians 7:29-31 <sup>HCSB</sup>)

<sup>17</sup> Instruct those who are rich in the **present age** not to be arrogant(**wise in their own eyes**) or to set their hope on the **uncertainty** of wealth, but on God, who **richly provides us with all things to enjoy**. <sup>18</sup> Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share, <sup>19</sup> **storing up for themselves a good reserve for the age to come, so that they may take hold of life that is real**. (1 Timothy 6:17-19 <sup>HCSB</sup>)

- The three headed monster of living for this age in self-preservation is boasting in 'man's interests' of **survival wisdom, strength of the flesh, and the security of wealth**.
- The call of the gospel is dependence upon the Holy Spirit, voluntary weakness, and contentment with what we have.
- In order to submit to the call of the gospel, we need to know how to fight the good fight with the provided weapons of righteousness as mentioned in 2 Corinthians 6.

#### D. Our Response

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<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen. <sup>2</sup> For our ancestors won **God's approval** by it (Hebrews 11:1-2 <sup>HCSB</sup>)

1. Proclaim the gospel - Bear witness
2. Live the gospel - Live as a witness