

# **Canvas Of Life (Putting God First) (Giving) (Serving God)**

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:22*

## **The Basic Bible Truth**

We live our lives as Christians guided by the Bible. However, we are often influenced greatly in the little decisions of life by our gut feeling and desires. What and who we are at our core, in our heart, is of great importance. A godly heart will result in God centered choices. A worldly heart will push us away from Him.

## **The Object**

Saltpeter  
Water  
Mixing Bowl  
Hobby Size Small Paint Brush  
White Tissue Paper  
A Wood Stand To Hold The Tissue Paper

I buy saltpeter at the local gardening supply. It is commonly used as a powdered stump remover, because of its strong oxidation properties. Using the mixing bowl, I stir together a tablespoon of saltpeter and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water and allow the water to become super saturated with the chemical. It will not absorb well, but, allowing it to saturate for a couple of hours will do fine, stirring occasionally. I prefer white tissue paper because it does not show the saltpeter solution much at all. Stretch the tissue paper across the wood frame, using clothespins to hold it. Tape will work as well. "Paint" a thin line of solution on the tissue paper creating the outline of a cross, then allow it to dry completely. It will practically disappear. Typically, I will place a very small pen mark at the center of the base of the cross so that I know exactly where to start the burn. When you are ready to start the fire, using a fireworks punk, not an open flame, place the smoldering punk at the middle of the base of the cross. If you have enough saltpeter solution applied, the saltpeter line that you painted will slowly but surely burn only the painted line and the outline of a cross will eventually be left. You may or may not want to do this indoors. There will be some

smoke, but usually not a lot. Be sure to test your processes before hand to make sure that you have everything the way you want it to work.

### **The Lesson**

When Jesus walked this earth, His disciples watched His life closely. At one point, after observing Him deep in prayer to His Father, they asked Him to teach them how to pray. His response is what we often term “The Lord’s Prayer.” It is in reality a sample prayer, an example or pattern that we can use when communicating with God. It begins with a very important element—a recognition that God is to be “hallowed”. That is not a term we use often outside of a church building, so I want to make sure we understand exactly what the phrase means in the prayer. God is to be greatly revered and respected. He is to be esteemed and looked up to, the desire of our hearts.

I am an analog audiophile. In the mid 70’s, I was in college and on a self imposed strict budget. But I loved popular music. I found several guys in the dorms who belonged to record clubs. For those of you who are not old enough to have experienced them, let me explain how they worked. For a fairly reasonable monthly fee, you could have a record album or two of your choosing shipped to you on a monthly basis. They were yours to keep, of course, and the record company made their money by having you as a regular monthly customer. I convinced several of them that I would pay for a small part of their subscription if they would allow me to be the first to play through their new albums on arrival. I would only play it once and then they could have it back for eternity. I had a very, very nice transcription turn table, running through a Marantz amplifier system, feeding the signal through to a professional, separate, Dolby noise reduction unit, and finally recorded to an extremely high quality reel to reel tape recorder. I was able to “clean up” an album, removing slight background tape hiss from the master recording and also small clicks from microscopic particles in the record grooves. The end result was some absolutely fantastic audio recordings. The quality, when played back and listened to through very nice, but quite heavy, headphones was almost like sitting in the recording studio. Reluctantly, I have come into the digital age, but occasionally, I will play the old reel to reels through the same old system that I have kept all of these years. They still sound as good today as they did back then. I have a deep and abiding respect for the old analog recordings and their quality. I guess you might say that I hallow them. I hold them up as the standard by which I judge all others. And believe me when I say that digital does not even come close!

When we understand that concept of reverential fear and respect, our lives can then reflect the tone of Proverbs 3:5. We are to trust Him with our whole heart, our entire being. Someone who we hold high in esteem is also someone who we can trust implicitly. In fact Proverbs 23:26 takes it even a step farther. We are to give our hearts to God. My immediate thought goes to the last wedding I attended. Two young adults, committing to each other and pledging and giving their hearts, their everything, to each other. In reality, God has pledged Himself, His love, to us. Our response is to be like that young couple—I do.

A heart pledged and given away like that is to be guarded. Proverbs 4:23 cautions us to guard our hearts. That is a conscious effort on our part to keep ourselves pure to the one to whom we made the promise. If I have given my life to Christ, then I am to keep myself for Him only. The world must fade away and forever be set aside. A number of years ago I had the opportunity to work on a very expensive home. As a woodworker by trade, I considered it the job of a lifetime. This home would be solidly ranked among the top 100 homes in the nation. Over the 7½ years that I worked there, I noticed a definite trend in the security features on the job site. Very early on in the process, security was essentially non-existent. But as the construction progressed, so did the levels of security. The last two years there were marked by a 24 hour guarded gate, and an impressive video surveillance system. Everyone on site was by invitation only, and there was a standing, very strong reminder that no photographs of any kind were allowed on the job premises. The reason for the stepped up security were the priceless antiques that furnished the

house, and the impressive works of art in the art gallery. In life, what we hold as priceless and valuable, we must guard carefully. Our heart, given to God, fits that description.

And because of that special, close, relationship with God, we can step out into our lives with confidence, knowing that He is ever there with us.

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