

Gospel Treason

What Happens When We Give Our Hearts to Idols

Why is the Heart Such a Big Deal?

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Sept. 23, 2012

Reasons why idolatry is such a big deal

I. Idolatry is Simply False Worship – so it Flies in the Face of God

Exodus 20:3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.”

Matthew 22:37–39 “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

The very essence of idolatry is false worship.

An idol is **ANYTHING** or anyone that begins to **CAPTURE** our **HEARTS** and **MINDS** and **AFFECTIONS** more than God.

You and I were meant to live on God, so the bottom line with idolatry is that you’re living on substitutes that will ultimately leave you heart-broken, disappointed, disillusioned and demanding far more from the people around you than they can ever give.

II. Idolatry is Rooted in the Desires of Your Own Heart – so there’s No One to Blame but You

Idols BIND you and BLIND you. They want to make you a slave to your own desires; and they keep you from seeing yourself, God and other people the way you should. Idols enslave you and twist your very perception of life.

Idols are terrible masters because they demand your first love and best thoughts and time and affection, but they never satisfy and always leave you in a state of agitation and dizzy discontentment.

“We know a good thing has become a counterfeit god when its demands on you exceed proper boundaries... An idolatrous attachment can lead you to break any promise, rationalize any indiscretion, or betray any other allegiance, in order to hold on to it. It may drive you to violate all good and proper boundaries. To practice idolatry is to be a slave.” Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: the Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters* (New York: Dutton, 2009) 23-24.

Psalms 106:36 “They served their idols, which became a snare to them.”

“Idolatry is by far the most frequently discussed problem in the Scriptures... the relevance of massive chunks of Scripture hangs on our understanding of idolatry.” David Powlison

In the OT – the characteristic and summary word that describes our drift away from God is ‘idolatry.’

In the NT – the word “**Desires**” or “**Lust**” is the characteristic and summary word used to describe the same thing that the OT is talking about when it uses the word ‘idolatry.’ And the Greek word used in the NT is ‘epithumia’ –it refers to any desire that’s strong enough to motivate behavior.

Ephesians 2:1–3 “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our

flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

Ephesians 4:20–22 “²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”

Lusts are always ‘Deceitful’!

Ephesians 4:19 NIV “Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.”

Use the emotional highs and lows in your life to trace your way back to some potential idols.

Jeremiah 2:12-13 “‘Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be very desolate,’ says the LORD. ‘For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn for themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.’”

- Are you continually devastated by the people around you and life’s circumstances?

That’s a sure sign that you’re expecting way too much from the people around and not looking nearly enough to your Savior.

III. Idolatry is Just a Shallow Substitute for Christ – that Always Leaves You Thirsty and Looking for More

Psalms 36:7-9 “How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. For with You is the fountain of life...”

John 4:10, 3-14 “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water’... And Jesus said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again. But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’”

Christ has the thirst-quenching satisfaction you’ve been looking for in all the wrong places!

Idolatry is a monster that’ll never be satisfied. It has to be put to death, not satisfied. It cannot be appeased because people, promotions, and earthly passions can never fill the God-shaped vacuum you carry around with you.

IV. Idolatry Requires a Specific Plan of Action & Repentance – Because It’ll Never Go Away on its Own

Matthew 11:28–30 “²⁸ Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”