

Gospel Treason

What Happens When We Give Our Hearts to Idols

How Do Idols Wreck My Relationships?

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Oct. 14, 2012

Proverbs 4:23 “Guard your heart with all diligence for out of it flows the issues of life.”

An idol = **Anything** or **Anyone** that begins to **Capture** our **Hearts** and **Minds** and **Affections** more than God.

Psalm 139:23-24 – “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”?

"If you don't surrender to Christ, you surrender to chaos." - **E. Stanley Jones**

Your relationships take some of the biggest hits because of your idols. It's the people closest to us – husbands... wives... kids... parents... co-workers that are bearing the brunt of so much of our idolatry every day – while we go on thinking that it's all because of these other people that we've got so many problems and frustrations.

“Do you have any conflict in your life? Do you experience moments of extreme irritation toward someone you otherwise love? Are there people who simply push your buttons more than others? Do certain things drive you crazy on a daily basis?... Why does it seem that people, things, and situations are in our way? Why do we seldom go through a day without some experience of conflict? The answer to all of these questions is that we think of our lives as our own, and we are more committed to the purposes of our own kingdom than we are to God's. We need to recognize that the people in our way have been sent to us by a wise and sovereign King. He never gets a wrong address and always chooses just the right moment to expose our hearts and realign them to His.” *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul David Tripp, p. 75-76, 106-107

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Ecclesiastes 7:14 “In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity, consider: surely God has appointed the one as well as the other...”

God is using your circumstances and the people in your life to expose your heart!

“After I was saved, and before I was married, I lived under the mad, undaunted delusion that I was spiritually mature. Mine was a rich and largely imaginary kind of holiness. If ignorance is bliss, I was in permanent ecstasy. The infrequent examinations of my seemingly innocent heart revealed little need for improvement... then it happened. I got married and became a blame-shifter.

John Bettler has said, ‘Your spouse always hooks your idol.’ But marriage didn't simply hook my idols; it hoisted them six feet in the air and towed them around the house. I can't tell you how many times I thought, ‘I never had these problems before. This must be my wife's fault.’ The truth is, I'd always been a blame-shifter it's just that after getting married there were so many more good opportunities to express this fault!” *When Sinners Say 'I Do'*, David Harvey, pp. 68-69

Three Reasons for so much of the conflict and confusion in our relationships.

I. Your Idols Have Declared War on Everyone Else Around You

When idols set up camp on the throne of your heart... so much of your day will be spent promoting your own agenda... and your own kingdom at all costs.

James 4:1-3

The real problem under the surface of all our conflicts is that two kingdoms are colliding. What's ruling your heart and what's ruling my heart are meeting head on... and we both can't be ‘King’ at the same time.

“‘I just feel rage,’ Steve said, looking like an overheated car. ‘Every time the guy in the next office walks by me, he shoots me a condescending look. I can understand why people murder.’ Then Ed Welch says, ‘Steve is angry and controlled by this other person. That’s obvious. But why is he angry? Chances are that Steve’s anger has something to do with his worship. Perhaps he worships at the altar of respect, and he has not been given the respect he demands. As a result, he is against his co-worker. He has declared war! But even more, he is against God, resisting the fact that God uses difficult people to refine us. Instead of submitting to God’s sovereign decisions and learning to forgive and love, Steve is saying, ‘I will be God, at least in this case.’ His desires rule... Here is a general principle: your attitude toward God will be revealed in your worst human relationship. If you hate someone, you are ultimately hating God. If you don’t forgive, you are usurping God’s authority to act as judge.” *Motives: Why Do I Do the Things I Do?*, Ed Welch, p. 16

II. Your Idols Change the Way You See & Treat Everyone Else Around You

If my heart is ruled by a certain desire, there are only **Two Ways** I can respond to you:

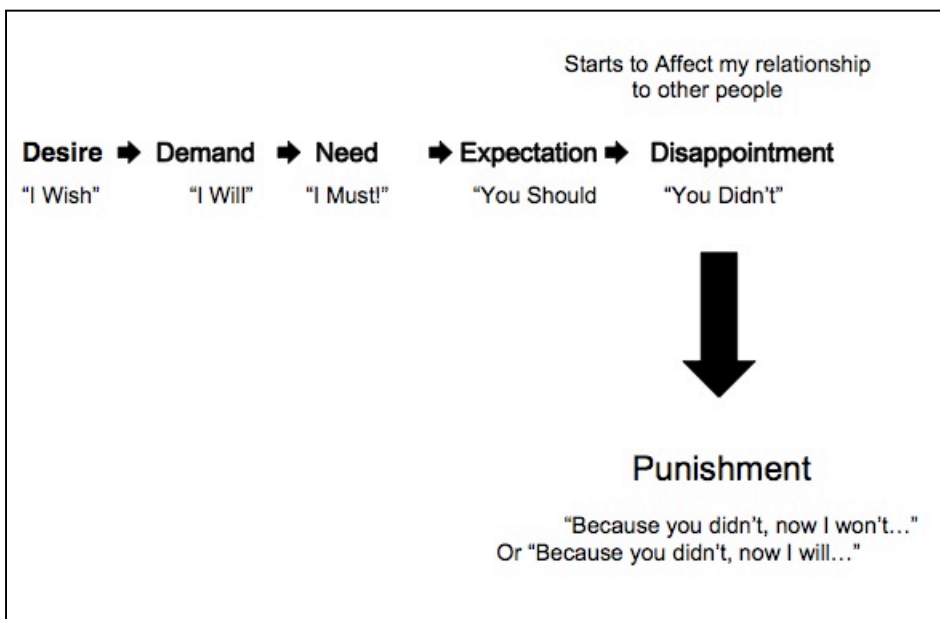
- (1) If you’re helping me get what I want, I’ll be happy with you... treat you well... allow you into my world
- (2) But if you stand in my way, I will be angry, frustrated, and testy when I am with you. There will be times when I wish you weren’t even in my life... because you stand in the way of what I crave so I lash out at you... or I push you away... or shut you out.

Instead of loving people, you start using people, and avoiding people, and attacking people who get in your way.

“I have yet to meet a couple locked in hostility (and the accompanying fear, self-pity, hurt, self-righteousness) who really understood and reckoned with their motives. James 4:1-3 teaches that cravings underlie conflicts. Why do you fight? It’s not ‘because my wife/husband...’ – it’s because of something about you. Couples who see what rules them – cravings for affection, attention, power, vindication, control, comfort, a hassle-free life – can repent and find God’s grace made real to them, and then learn how to make peace.” David Powlison, *Seeing With New Eyes*, p. 151

Think about where you have the most conflict in your life right now. The two are not unrelated. Cravings underlie conflicts.

III. Your Idols Ultimately Hijack Legitimate Desires and Turn Them into Ugly Demands



John 4:10, 3-14

The satisfaction you’re looking for starts with Jesus Christ... when you turn away FROM the things in this world that you keep trying to inflate to religious proportions to make up for the absence of God in your life.

“If you get married as Jacob did, putting the weight of all your deepest hopes and longings on the person you are marrying, you are going to crush him or her with your expectations. It will distort your life and your spouse’s life in a hundred ways. No person, not even the best one, can give your soul all it needs. You are going to think you have gone to bed with Rachel, and you will get up and it will always be Leah. This cosmic disappointment and disillusionment is there in all of life, but we especially feel it in the things upon which we most set our hopes.” **Counterfeit Gods**, Timothy Keller, pgs.38-39

“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world [something supernatural and eternal].” C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, “Hope.”