

Gospel Treason

What Happens When We Give Our Hearts to Idols

Why is the Heart Such a Big Deal?

Correlates with Ch. 3 & 6 of *Gospel Treason* book
Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Jan. 22, 2023

Reasons why idolatry is such a big deal:

I. Idolatry is 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.’³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

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 heartbroken, 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

See Ezekiel 14:1-8

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, best thoughts, 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*

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

In the Old Testament, the characteristic and summary word that describes our drift away from God is “idolatry.”

In the New Testament, the word “**Passions**,” “**Desires**,” or “**Lust**” is the characteristic and summary word used to describe the same thing that the Old Testament is talking about when it uses the word “idolatry.” The Greek word used in the New Testament is “epithumia” – which refers to any desire that’s strong enough to motivate behavior.

Ephesians 2:1–3 “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the **passions** [“epithumia” – desire, craving, longing] of our flesh, carrying out the **desires** [“thelema” – will] of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

Ephesians 4:20–22 “But that is not the way you learned Christ!— ²¹assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²²to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through **deceitful desires** [‘epithumia’ – desire, craving, longing].”

Idolatrous lusts are always deceitful!

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

Jeremiah 2:12-13 “‘Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate,’ declares the LORD, ¹³‘for My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.’”

Webster defines “**desolate**” as “devastated, crushed with grief, feeling abandoned.”

Are you continually devastated by the people around you and life’s circumstances? If so, that’s a sure sign that you’re expecting way too much from the people around you 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

John 4:10, 13-14 “...‘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’...¹³ And Jesus said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again. ¹⁴But 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!

“Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.” ~ Augustine

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

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

Homework

1. “**Identifying Personal Idols**” worksheet – several times.
2. Read “**Gospel Treason**” book: Ch. 3 & 6
3. **Ask God** to show you who or what your idols are.
4. **Pray 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.”