

Gospel Treason

What Happens When We Give Our Hearts to Idols

What Would an Idol-Free Life Look Like?

Correlates with Ch. 12-13 of *Gospel Treason* book
Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Feb. 12, 2023

I. You'll Start to Really Get Free Maybe for the Very First Time!

Hebrews 12:1-3 “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”

You'll start to get free and live the Christian life so much better. Remember: Idols blind you and bind you. Neither one is good for running very effectively because to run effectively, you need to see Christ clearly – and idols get in the way of all that!

Living with idols is like trying to run with your hand in front of your face. You can do it, but not very effectively; yet most of us have spent our lives running and living this way.

II. You'll Have a Revival of Gratitude for the Gospel

It doesn't matter how long you've been a Christian – when you start to repent of the idols of your heart, you'll be even more grateful for the Gospel because you'll see more than ever your great need for it.

That's where the good news of the Gospel comes flooding in!

Romans 1:16–17 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power [*dunamis*] of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”

“The path of change goes through the heart and continues on to the Gospel, where God chose to most fully reveal Himself in the death and resurrection of Christ.”

~ Ed Welch, Biblical Counselor

Colossians 3:1–5 (ESV) “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴**When Christ who is your life** appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. ⁵Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire [**epithumia – longing, craving**], and covetousness [**pleonexia – to add, to expand, the annexing of more**], which is idolatry.”

Make sure you don't get lost in the heart; continue on to the Gospel! You're not done until you're resting and rejoicing in the Gospel again!

III. You Might Start to See Relationships More Clearly for the First Time in Your Life

This means having a much more accurate assessment of yourself and others around you, especially those closest to you.

When your heart is teeming and surging with the deception of idols, you don't see things very clearly. That's why the Bible always tells you to start with yourself when you're trying to figure out what's going on around you.

Matthew 7:3-5 “And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck out of your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.”

Do you know what most of those “planks” are that need to be removed? Idols!

- See your own sin first.
- See your own sin as worse.
- See your own sin as what you need to be working on most.

IV. You'll have a Better Perspective on Trials and How God Uses them for Our Good

In the 1600s, Samuel Rutherford was a godly pastor who spent two years in prison for preaching the Gospel and he says it was there in that prison that he made a great discovery about the source of enduring happiness.

“If God told me some time ago that He was about to make me as happy as I could be in this world, and then had told me that He should begin by crippling me in all my limbs, and removing me from all my usual sources of enjoyment, I should have thought it a very strange mode of accomplishing His purpose. And yet, how is His wisdom manifest even in this! For if you should see a man shut up in a closed room, idolizing a set of lamps and rejoicing in their light, and you wished to make him truly happy, you would begin by blowing out all his lamps; and then throw open the shutters to let in the light of heaven.”

~ Samuel Rutherford, quoted by John Piper in *A Godward Life*

That's us so often – bowing down to the little flickering light of our children, marriage, hobbies, career, image, status, or stuff. All the while, there's a greater and more glorious light that's found in Christ and the Gospel. But God knows that most often we'll never turn from our little flickering lamps to that greater light until He starts to blow some of them out.

“O how I pray that when God, in His mercy, begins to blow out my lamps, I will not curse the wind.”

~ John Piper, *A Godward Life*

2 Corinthians 4:3-7 “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”

V. You'll Start to Feel More Conviction of Sin

You'll feel more conviction because now you're seeing the sin beneath the sin – and that's almost always much more severe than the surface sin. For the first time in your life, you might be able to move past just being vaguely guilty for the sinful things you do and start to be brokenhearted over your sin.

Being brokenhearted puts you in a really good position because the Bible says:

Psalms 34:18 “The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart...”

Isaiah 66:2 “...But on this one will I look: On him who is humble and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.”

“As the inner light increases, you will see the imperfections which you have heretofore seen as basically much greater and more harmful than you had seen them up to the present...But this experience, far from discouraging, will help to uproot all your self-confidence, and to raze to the ground the whole edifice of pride. Nothing marks so much the solid advancement of a soul, as this view of his wretchedness without anxiety and without discouragement.”

~ Francois Fenelon

As you get free from the idols of your heart, you'll start to experience true conviction of sin that just doesn't leave you wallowing and paralyzed, unable to get past it, but rather appropriately stung and invigorated to look up to your Savior for help and hope to forsake that sin!

Homework

1. **“Identifying Personal Idols”** worksheet – several times.
2. **Read “Gospel Treason” book:** Ch. 12-13
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. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”