

II

NO IDOLS

Exodus 20:4-6

“You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Exodus 20:4-6; Deuteronomy 4:15-19; Isaiah 40:18-22; Colossians 3:5-7.
2. What is an idol?
3. The worship of idols (called idolatry) is more than the worship of a physical image, but includes various sins. Why would the Apostle Paul call selected sins idolatrous?
4. Idolatry is an issue of the affections of one's heart. What are some good things in our lives that can squeeze out our affection for the God of the Bible?
5. How does one successfully live a God/Christ-centered life?
6. How has your family been blessed by following Christ?

DAY 6 - NO IDOLS

Idle Idols

Psalm 135:15-18

I think it is fair to say that in your lifetime you will never see an idol do something meaningful. In fact, you won't see them do anything at all because they are simply the works of human hands. They can't speak, see or hear because they have no breath in their lungs. They are lifeless creations of inadequate creators.

Why is it that sinful people think that they can carve out a deity who will be worthy of their praise? If we believe that to be true, then we are just like them. We don't speak the truth. We don't see reality. We don't hear God's voice. We are lifeless and spiritually dead. Those who make idols and those who worship them are exactly like them.

I was in Asia a few years ago and on almost every street I saw temples where people brought daily sacrifices to idols made by their own hands. They worship lifeless objects in the hope of gaining eternal life, but their devotion will only lead to destruction.

You and I were made to worship the living God. Jesus is alive today and He came to give us life. Give thanks to God because He speaks to you, sees you, and hears when you pray. And pray for the lost who worship idols made by human hands. Pray that their eyes would be opened and that they would receive the truth.

Application: "Father in heaven, I am so grateful that you are not a god who does not see, does not hear, and who is so distant that I am not known by you! Purify my life so that only You reign supreme! Holy Spirit search my heart. While I may not have any carved images of a false god, I know my heart is prone to wander and seek the joy of things rather than finding my delight in You! Heavenly Father remove anything in my life that stands in the way of me better knowing and enjoying You more! Amen."

REFLECT

What did you hear? _____

What do you think? _____

What will you do? _____

Now talk with God... _____

DAY 7 - NO IDOLS

Putting Others Before God

Matthew 6:33 / Romans 12:2

I love my family. I have an amazing wife, Christine, and five awesome kids; Silas, Mary, Nehemiah, Ezra, and Boaz. They are so special to me and I want what's best for them. I don't like to see them hurt, or have bad habits, or even have a hang-up.

Sometimes I let what is going on in their life dictate how I feel and how I respond. I can hide the truth when I'm in a conflict because what I would share might hurt them. Or when one of them is upset I let the way they are feeling dictate to me how I must feel and respond.

When I let the world around me or even my family dictate my mood or how I am behaving without prayer and measuring it against the truth, the Word of God, then I am placing them above God. I can still love my family, but it is imperative for my walk with God that they never replace God in my life. They are not my Savior. I must seek God first and let Him guide my emotions and actions.

Application: How have you placed family or others in God's place?

REFLECT

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Now talk with God... _____

DAY 8 - NO IDOLS

Loving The Gift More Than The Giver

James 1:17

Everything we have comes from God. The second commandment is God's appeal to us to love Him as the Giver of all things. He knows that we are prone to "*exchange the truth about God for a lie, and worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator*" (Romans 1:25). When we do this, we abuse His gifts and grieve His heart. We become idolaters when we love the gifts of God more than we love God Himself. What is the antidote for our idolatrous hearts? Simply put, it is an ever-increasing love for God Himself.

George Müller was a man whose life reveals how powerful an increasing love for God can be. During his lifetime, he built five orphanages and provided care for over 10,000 orphans in England. At the end of his life, he reflected on the moment he gave his life to Christ, saying, "I loved Jesus Christ then, but I loved Him more the year after, and more the year after that, and more every year since." As his love for Christ grew over the years, Müller found more and more power to live selflessly. The same can be true of us if we give ourselves to Christ and seek Him first.

Application: Ask God to show you if there is anything other than Him to which you are bowing down. Is there anything which you are giving too much of your love? Pray that He would deliver you from this temptation to love the gift more than the Giver. Take a moment to praise Him. "*To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*" (1 Timothy 1:17)

REFLECT

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DAY 9 - NO IDOLS

Our God Jealously Loves Us

Ephesians 3:14-21

Often, when we think of “jealousy” we think of it in negative terms. Jealousy and envy are synonymous. We are jealous and envious of someone getting a promotion that we thought we deserved. We are envious and jealous of someone’s new car, new house, etc. This kind of jealousy is not the attitude Christ wants in His followers.

One of the names of God is “Jealous” (Exodus 34:14). When this word is used of God, it speaks of God’s desire to have an exclusive relationship with His people. God desires and deserves to be first place in the affections and motivations of our heart. Even Jesus said, *“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”* Jesus also promised great reward to those who were willing to sacrifice all for His name’s sake (Matthew 19:27-29).

How do we do this? God’s love for us is infinite, unmeasurable, broader and wider, deeper and higher than we can ever imagine. Though we are weak, fallen, and prone to wander, God’s love for us never ends. And, He is worthy of all our affections and desires. No one and nothing else can compare to who our God is and His love for us!

Application: “Father in Heaven, refine my heart to better sing your praises and to find my deepest joy in You. Thank you for the many blessings of my life but Lord, it is You that I long to see and hear say, ‘Welcome home!’ Amen.”

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DAY 10 - NO IDOLS

Seeking The Healing More Than The Healer

Mark 3:7-10

Mark 3 describes a scene where Jesus was being sought out by a great crowd of people. He had healed people and all those who had diseases were so eager for healing that they would have crushed the Healer in an attempt to receive healing had Jesus not pushed out into the water on a boat.

This passage came to mind a couple years ago when I first really listened to the song “More Than Anything,” by Natalie Grant. It’s chorus rings out, “Help me want the Healer more than the healing. Help me want the Savior more than the saving. Help me want the Giver more than the giving. Oh help me want You Jesus more than anything.” We know that to want anything more than God is to make the object of our desires an idol. An idol isn’t necessarily a golden calf; sometimes our idols are otherwise “good” things. We make idols out of objects, relationships, and even desires.

When I first really listened to Grant’s song, I realized that I had made my desire for healing an idol because I was seeking it more than I was seeking the Healer. You see, I had been diagnosed with breast cancer a number of years before and more recently it had spread and I was Stage IV—incurable—terminal. I was determined to seek and find healing. I sought God’s wisdom and followed His leading, but I was more focused on the healing than I was on knowing the Healer better. I am overjoyed to say that God, in His loving kindness, faithfully showed me how to heal but more importantly, He showed me my sin of idol worship so I could repent and draw closer to Him.

Application: What areas in your life have you sought or are you seeking something more than you are seeking the Lord? Ask God to reveal any idols you are blind to and seek forgiveness for them.

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