Introduction: *Check for understanding using “Think-Pair-Share” technique.*

The main precept we focus on in this session is God’s desire for His people’s repentance. In light of this, put into your own words instructions for the *Think-Pair-Share* technique:

“Give some examples of how people across the world deal with guilt. **Think** for thirty seconds about this. Now I want you to **discuss** this in **pairs** with a person on your left or right who is not your spouse. ” **Pause** for sixty seconds. Call on 3-4 pairs to share one idea with the entire group.

**Point 1: Use a quote stimulating thinking.**

Display the following Os Guiness quote for your group to consider:

> Idolatry is huge in the Bible, dominant in our personal lives, and irrelevant in our mistaken estimations.

Divide into two groups and allow couple of minutes for each group to discuss the quote together. Then instruct each group to share with the rest of the class.

**Point 2: Evaluate your group’s level of understanding.**

Ask the following question: “What does it mean for us to praise the Lord?”


Praising God is simply giving Him the recognition He deserves. One way we can define what we mean by praising God is to consider the end result. The end result of giving God praise is to exalt Him and His name … We can praise God in song, and singing praises to God was common even back in biblical times. The main purpose of the Psalms is to praise God—indicated
by the numerous songs on praise. We can also praise God in dance, prayer, proclamations, studying God’s Word, and the list goes on.

After reading the excerpt, raise again the same question: “What does it mean for us to praise the Lord?” Ideally, the group will have a better understanding after hearing the excerpt from the article.

**Point 3: Challenge for personal application.**

It is easy to do the “right thing” but not have the right motive. Lead your members to break into groups of 3-4. Read Mark 12:28-34 aloud to the groups and ask them to discuss the following questions amongst each other:

- What does Jesus identify as the greatest commandment?
- What is the second greatest?
- What should our motive be for obeying God’s commands?

Encourage group members to examine their lives in light of these truths, to confess and forsake sin as the Holy Spirit exposes it, and to thank God for His love and His law.

**Conclusion: Challenge group members to live out the session’s message.**

Make the following statement in your own words: “We often have a tendency to minimize the presence and impact of idolatry in our lives, usually by learning to compartmentalize it in such a way that it is safely disconnected from our lives. We see idolatry as a problem that affects other people who participate in ungodly behaviors such as sexual promiscuity, pornography, drug use, or the occult. Sadly, we mistakenly relegate idolatry only to those who are involved in grotesque outward expressions of evil. We take great comfort in embracing the false understanding that idols are always these kinds of ‘bad’ things and essentially someone else’s issue.”

Then say, “The Bible, however, speaks very differently when it addresses idolatry.”
Instruct group members to read Ezekiel 14:3: “Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and have put their sinful stumbling blocks in front of themselves. Should I actually let them inquire of me?”

Raise the following questions for discussion:

- To whom is the prophet Ezekiel speaking?
- Why did these religious leaders set up idols in their hearts?
- Do we have the same problem today? Explain.

Then draw things to a close by asking group members to interact with the following statement: “Idolatry is not just failing to obey God, but it is setting our hearts on something other than God.”

**Teaching Tip of the Week**

The imagination is crucial when communicating with people. Too many times our material is packed with “Bible facts,” information that students can regurgitate but never seem to be able to apply in their lives. Consider the following quote:

> While the responsibility for their disobedience is totally their own, the responsibility for making the proclamation of God’s truth exciting and personal rests with those of us who preach. The “hearers of the Word” can’t easily become “doers” if their “hearing” doesn’t become “seeing.”

Seek to engage your group members’ “seeing” through the use of stories and metaphors that stimulate their heads and hearts.