

TREATING GOD LIKE AN IDOL
JUDGES 10-11
3-5-23

Judges 10:6-7 - *"The people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines. And they forsook the LORD and did not serve him. ⁷ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites..."*

I. WHAT IS AN IDOL?

"Anything we serve, love, desire, trust, fear, and worship...apart from God to give us love, joy, peace, freedom, status, identity, control, happiness, security, fulfillment, health, pleasure, significance, acceptance, and respect" – *Gospel Transformation*

II. EXAMINING IDOLATRY

- 1. Idolatry leads to enslavement.**
- 2. Idolatry over-promises.**

III. GOD'S RESPONSE

Judges 10:10-14 - *"And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, 'We have sinned against you, because we have forsaken our God and have served the Baals.' ¹¹ And the LORD said to the people of Israel, 'Did I not save you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites and from the Philistines? ¹² The Sidonians also, and the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you, and you cried out to me, and I saved you out of their hand. ¹³ Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods; therefore I will save you no more. ¹⁴ Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress.'"*

- 1. He gives them over to their idols.**
- 2. He gives them a new judge.**

IV. IDOLATRY'S AFFECT

Judges 11:29-31 – *"Then the Spirit of the LORD was upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites. ³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, 'If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, ³¹ then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.'"*

- 1. Jephthah treated God like an idol.**
- 2. Conditional relationship.**

GROWING DEEPER THIS WEEK

1. What did you think about the message this week? What stood out to you or challenged your thinking?
2. What are some idols that exist in our world today? How do people worship these idols today?
3. Examine the diagnostic questions for idolatry again.

Assess your imagination – What do you daydream about? Where does your mind wander to – material things (boats, cars, vacations) or immaterial things – fame and accolades?

Assess your attention – Consider the times you would rather be doing something else rather than practicing a spiritual discipline. What activity would you rather be doing instead? Are there one or more time-wasting activities you regularly turn to, to avoid engaging in more productive tasks?

Assess your finances – What does your disposable income go towards? How do you spend your disposable income? For what material goods or services are you most likely to go into debt to finance?

Assess your concerns – What are you most worried about or afraid will happen? What do you fear losing or have anxiety about?

4. Given these diagnostic questions...What are some idols that you wrestle with?
~ Take some time and pray for one another and their battle with their idols.
5. Why is it that idols appeal to us as much as they do? How do we combat against this as Christians?
6. What does God's hatred for idolatry tell us about Him?
7. Many religions today preach pluralism (adopting many different gods and our God can be just one of many). Why is it important that Christianity preaches God's exclusivity (He is not one of many)?
8. How could these idols we mentioned impact the next generation? (i.e. - Our children, grandchildren, young people)
9. How can we be guilty of transferring our idols, instead of a knowledge of God, to the next generation?
10. How can we be guilty of treating God like an idol?