

The Seriousness of Idolatry...

Ecclesiastes 9:3 – “...*the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.*”

I John 5:21 – *My little children, guard yourself from idols.*

I Corinthians 10:14 – *Therefore my beloved, flee from idolatry.*

Three steps to avoid the worship of idols in your heart and life.

I. Establish the Goal of Wholehearted and Singular Devotion to God and His Word.

A. The way “geared up” people relate to God – verses 3-4

1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
2. Follow the Lord your God and fear Him.
3. Keep His commandments.
4. Listen to His voice.
5. Serve Him.
6. Cling to Him.

B. The reason for this level of devotion – verse 5

“the Lord your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery.”

C. The alternative – divided loyalties.

1 Samuel 15:23 – *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...*

The progression... goes something like this:

- a desire [I want]
- a demand [I must]
- a need [I will]
- an expectation [You should]
- a disappointment [You didn't]
- a punishment [Because you didn't now I won't, or because you didn't now I will...]

Idol – Anything or anyone that begins to capture our hearts and minds and affections more than God.

Ezekiel 14:3-7 – Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak to them, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols.” ’ Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations. For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, then comes to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I the LORD will answer him by Myself.’ ”

D. The effect of singular devotion.

1. It honors the Lord.
2. It blesses you.

Isaiah 26:3 – You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

Ephesians 4:19 – Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

II. Be Prepared for the Temptation to Idolatry.

A. From inside the group – verses 1-5.

1. Those who might want to take away from God’s Word.
2. Those who might want to add to God’s Word.

B. From your family – verses 6-11.

Matthew 10:37 – Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;

C. From the culture – verses 12-18.

III. Enjoy the Blessing of Spiritual Influence.

David Powlison – It’s a serious mistake to engage in introspective “idol hunts”, attempting to dig out and weigh every kink in the human soul. The Bible calls for a more straightforward form of self-examination: an outburst of anger invites reflection on what craving ruled the heart so that our repentance can be intelligent. The Bible’s purposes are “extrospective”, not introspective: to move toward God in repentant faith.