

Idolatry

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Isaiah 44:8-20 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

I. Idolatry is something that is understood in much too shallow a way.

A. The first three commandments are about this issue, therefore it is at the top of the list of what displeases and alienates us from God:

Exodus 20:3-7 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

B. It is more than the worship or adoration of statues and images.

C. It is much more than just money, or a hobby, or a pleasure that people indulge themselves in.

D. Most people think they are clear of this greatest abomination before God simply because they do not worship images or statues like pagans or Catholics, or because they say with their mouths that God is the Lord.

E. There is only one God, and He reveals himself in the Bible – therefore entertaining any other idea or concept of God is the road to idolatry.

F. The Word of God is truth - idols are lies, imaginations, and vanity.

II. Idolatry is falling in love with our imagination.

Hosea 13:2 And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.

- A. Making images is something we do with our minds and not just with our hands.
- B. The image must be created in our mind before we can create it with our hands.
- C. So a person can be an idolater in his mind while outwardly appearing to serve God.
 - 1. This is taking the name of the Lord in vain.

III. Idolatry is embracing fantasy.

- A. It is pretending – just like all the world before us is doing about everything right now.
- B. It is creating, first in our mind, a concept or idea of God, and then living our life according to that imaginary standard. (bowing down to it)
- C. Any distortion of what God says about himself is fantasy and not truth.
- D. Any contradiction of what God says about himself is a lie and therefore not true or real.
- E. When we embrace what we imagine about God, instead of what the Bible says about God, we have turned to idols.

IV. Idolatry is turning to anything or anyone but God.- “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

- A. It is anything, or anyone, that takes the place of God in your life, mind, or heart.
- B. Idolatry is living for anything or anyone else but God.

V. Covetousness is idolatry – because it is vanity.

Ephesians 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

1 Corinthians 8:4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

- A. To covet is to desire and lust after things of this world which are all temporal and vain.
- B. Idolatry is embracing vanity.
 - 1. Esteeming of great value that which is of no value.
- C. Idolatry is to place the highest value on what we have carved out, fabricated, or made with our own mind, imagination, and/or hands.
- D. Idolatry is also to place the highest value on what someone else has fabricated, or made with their own wicked imagination.

Judges 17:5-6 And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

- 1. His mother had them made for him.
- E. From the temptation of Christ we can see that this is the devil's goal:

Matthew 4:8-10 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

- 1. Satan actually tried to get Jesus to put a greater value on the things of this world than on God himself.
- F. What do you truly place the highest value on, above everything else?
 - 1. This identifies us as a true worshipper of God or as an idolater.