

# **IDOLS**

## **A. Introduction**

1. “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” (Exod. 20:4,5).
2. “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of man’s hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak, they have eyes, but they cannot see ... ears ... noses ... hands ... feet; those who make them will become like them” (Psa. 115:4-8).
3. “We are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, guard yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).
4. “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts” (Ezek. 14:2-8).

## **B. What Is an Idol?**

1. Anything that takes the place of God as being the most important thing in your life.
2. People (boy/girl friend, husband/wife, entertainment star, athlete).
3. Things (food, electronic toys, porn, car/truck, “house beautiful”; Phil. 3:19; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5; 2 Ki. 20:12-17).
4. Concepts/philosophies or “idols of the heart” (becoming wealthy, famous, and/or popular, being witty, wanting to marry a certain person, desiring a certain promotion at work, becoming healed or well again, being released from prison, winning, being “numero uno”).
5. Self (Prov. 3:5,6; 28:26; Ezek. 16:14,15; Luke 18:9-13; Rom. 12:3; Phil. 3:3).

## **C. How Do We Know If We Have an Idol? We sin if we don’t get what we want:**

1. Anger (Moses, Num. 20:7-12; Saul, 1 Sam. 18:6-11).
2. Depression (Elijah, 1 Ki. 19:1-4).
3. Conflict (Disciples, Luke 22:24).
4. Envy and strife (Evangelists, Phil. 1:12-17).

## **D. Discerning Idolatry in Our Desires (by John Piper)\***

1. When our enjoyment of something tends to make us not think of God, it is moving toward idolatry.
2. If the gift is not awakening a sense that God, the Giver, is better than the gift, it is becoming an idol.
3. Enjoyment is becoming idolatrous when it is starting to feel like a right, and our delight is becoming an angry demand.

4. When we find ourselves spending time pursuing an enjoyment, knowing that other things, or people, should be getting our attention, we are moving into idolatry.
5. Private prayer may be becoming idolatrous if we are unwilling to leave it to be the answer to someone else's prayer.
6. When a loss or sorrow threatens our confidence and trust in God, it signals that the thing lost was becoming an idol.

\*(Selected from <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/discerning-idolatry-in-desire>.)

#### E. How Are We Delivered from Idols?

1. Replace with that which is honoring to God (2 Chron. 33:15,16).
2. "Put on the new self ... according to the image of the One who created Him" (Col. 3:5,10-17).
3. Transformed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29).
4. "Turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9).

#### F. Idolatrous Advice from the Internet



(The upside down cross is a symbol of atheism, Satanism, etc.)

#### G. What the Bible Says

1. "Trust in the Lord ... in all your ways acknowledge Him" (Prov. 3:5,6).
2. Jesus said, "I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30).
3. King Hezekiah "trusted in the Lord ... clung to the Lord" (2 Ki. 18:5,6).
4. "He was entreated for them, because they trusted in Him" (1 Chron. 5:20).
5. "Those who know Thy name will put their trust in Thee, for Thou, O Lord, hast not forsaken those who seek Thee" (Psa. 9,10).
6. "The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace" (Isa. 26:3).
7. "We ... put no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3)