

Sunday Celebration (January 24, 2010)
"Don't Be Idle about Your Idols"

Personal Idols (Pt. 3)

INTRO ... Seeing & Understanding Idolatry and Its Affect

[Christianity Today] *How do we get rid of idols? ... [Tim Keller] "I confess that I don't say much about that. ...I do say that analyzing and recognizing an idol is a step away from its power over you. You also have to have a heck of a prayer life. That prayer life can't just be petitioning. There has to be encounter, experience, and genuine joy. You have to have Jesus Christ increasingly capture your affections."* Christianity Today, November, 2009

... There's a hidden subtleness to how an idol operates in us that can make it hard to discern and frequently left untouched.

"The evil in our desire typically does not lie in what we want, but that we want it too much."
John Calvin

From the outset... we need to be prepared to "DEAL ROUNDLY WITH OUR SOUL" ...

"Perhaps you are familiar with the idols that are described in books like Exodus and Isaiah. These were false gods, represented by statues... they had names like Baal, Marduk, Asherah ... People put these idols in the center of their life... they became people's ultimate concerns. Men and women offered them material goods and labor and time with the hope that the gods would make their lives better. But you don't have to bow down before a statue in order to participate in perverse worship. ...the pursuit of money or power or any object of desire is the same as bowing before Baal. ... No matter your age, we offer this book to you as an invitation to rediscover the abundant life that comes with putting Jesus in the center of life.

How can this happen? It starts with being brutally honest... it starts with a deep dissatisfaction with the way things are and a hungry willingness to try something completely different." Dan Allender & Tremper Longman III, "Breaking the Idols of Your Heart", p. 15

"Brutal honesty Deep dissatisfaction Hungry willingness"

... Don't Be Idle about Your Idols

Harm

Jer 7:6

"...nor walk after other gods to your own ruin" NASU

- Harm is not the "ADVERTISED BENEFIT" ... it's the Nasty Side-Effect.

Israel was drawn to idols to Obtain Some Desired Benefit

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The Quest to find Life for the Soul apart from God has DEADLY Side-effects

● *Separation from God*

Man's Deadliest Day in History ... The day Adam & Eve chose a "God-Alternative"—The Tree of the Knowledge of Good & Evil

Death – separation from God produced

- CONFUSION ... Everything felt different (Nakedness, an uncooperative creation)
- INORDINATE FEAR (Shame)...Adam & Eve Hid From God rather than running to Him
- VIOLENT Emptiness Cain killing Abel was connected to his quest for Acceptance! (**Gen 4:1-7**)

*"...humans have breached the Creator-creature distinction. Not that humans have now become gods but that they have chosen to act as though they were—defining and deciding for themselves what they will regard as good and evil. ...At the root, then, all idolatry is human rejection of the Godness of God and the finality of God's moral authority."
Christopher Wright (quoted in "We Become What We Worship", p. 135)*

● ***Spiritual Insensitivity***

Ps 115:1-9 "eyes but do not see... ears but do not hear" "those who make them become like them"

Jer 5:21 "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not.

"Why are the idolaters depicted as people whose sensory organs malfunction like that? ...The Bible is telling us that Israel revered idols and became like them, spiritually insensitive. They had eyes but they could not see the harm happening to them, and they had ears but they could not hear the destruction occurring within themselves. Thus they could not repent and be healed, and this headlong progression deeper into idolatrous sin and anesthetized hurt led to their ruin." G.K. Beale, "We Become What We Worship", p. 44, 309

"As idols have eyes but cannot see and ears but cannot hear, so idolaters lose their sensory faculties as they conform to created, inanimate objects." Edward Meadors, "Idolatry and the Hardening of the Heart"

Rom 1:21 "For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

IDOLATRY => DULLNESS in Spiritual Things (God's voice is Foreign)
"The Heavens are Brass"

● ***Drawing the Opposition & Discipline of God***

Deut 8:19-20

James 4:4-6

"Stubbornness"

Jer 13:10 This evil people, who refuse to hear my words, who stubbornly follow their own heart and have gone after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be like this loincloth, which is good for nothing.

Ps 81:11-12 "But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. 12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.

"In the context, 'the stubbornness of their heart; and 'walking in their own devices' is respectively their intractable commitment to worship idols and continuing to commit the sin of idolatry. In fact, whenever the word stubbornness (serirut – Heb) occurs in the Hebrew Bible, it refers without exception to Israel's idolatry." G.K. Beale, "We Become What We Worship", p. 124

Josh 24:1-3, 14

"the gods your fathers served beyond the River" ... these were from over 700 yrs ago!!!

"in Egypt" ... these were from about 50 yrs ago; the gods that were HUMILIATED in the Exodus Plagues!!

"How astonishing is this, that, after all God had done for them, and all the miracles they had seen, there should still be found among them both idols and idolaters!" (from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database.)

You Might Want to Think Carefully before you Open the Door to DAY 1 of an Idol!!
(For our own sake and the sake of GENERATIONS after us!)