

## “How To Recognize and Be Set Free From Modern Idolatry”

KNOW...GROW...GO

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This is something that is interwoven throughout the old and new testaments, it permeates the lives of all believers, and it's something that's deeply connected to the Kingdom of God. We'll talk about what the Bible says, hopefully identify our own habits, and look at ways to be freed from idolatry and ways we can participate in the Kingdom of God in ways that feed us and help prevent idolatrous behavior at the same time!

1. Three books (apart from the Bible) that contributed most to my spiritual formation:
  - C.S. Lewis' Screwtape Letters
  - Brennan Manning's Abba's Child
  - Dallas Willard's Divine Conspiracy
2. What is Idolatry?  
“(Idolatry is) When human beings give their heartfelt allegiance and worship to that which is not God” -NT Wright, *Surprised by Hope*
3. What is Idolatry according to the Bible?  
I am the Lord your God who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other god but me. (Exodus 20:2 – 3, NLT)
4. Seeing a nation accept false gods seems primitive.
5. Paul talks about idolatry.  
So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy .....anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language..... Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.” (Colossians 3:5-10, NLT)
6. Paul knows Behavior is language

allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:12-17, NLT)

18. Double bind: You're darned if you do, darned if you don't.
  - Option 1: I avoid conflict, become resentful, taken advantage of, not honest. Miserable.

7. FASTER scale

8. Behavior is language

9. Why are we drawn to idolatry?

- Seeking purpose, identity
- It's easy, predictable, and controllable.
- It's convenient
- It's indulgent
- It puts us at the center

10. Why are we drawn to idolatry?

- We fulfill our needs in ways God didn't design
- Sexual immorality --> Intimacy
- Lust --> Stress relief
- Greed --> Contentment
- Slander --> Conflict resolved within community
- Filthy language --> Blowing off steam or to be understood among peers
- Lying --> Trust

11. Peter's letter 1<sup>st</sup> Californians Modern examples of idolatry:

- Pursuing career and other personal pursuits that lead to personal glory, neglecting family
- Finding identity in our belongings
- Hobbies like technology or fashion that create financial strain
- Substance abuse (even when it's legal)
- Gambling
- Politics

12. Political Idolatry

13. What is the cure for idolatry? Become as children.

14. Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God more than any other topic

One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the

Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it. "Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16, NLT)

15. Following the example of Christ

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. (Philippians 2:3-4, NLT)

Don't be concerned for your own good but for the good of others. (1 Corinthians 10:24, NLT)

And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. (John 13:14-15, NLT)

- Greg Boyd, *The Myth of a Christian Nation*

16. If they truly cared for these children but really believed Jesus is too important for this, they may have seen to the parents' concerns.

17. For believers, what's the solution, the cure to idolatry?

- Fill your life with:
  - Mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience -- No need for slander
  - Teach one another --- No need for lying --- or determining self-worth on social media
  - Live in harmony --- No need for lust --- political party
  - Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart --- No need for sexual immorality ---
  - Sing songs of thankfulness to God --- No need for Greed --- or the latest gadget

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make