

Reading: Exodus 20:1-5

Topic: Avoiding Idolatry

INTRODUCTION: The first commandment of the Ten Commandments was concerning _____ of which the Lord God devoted much space to _____ of its consequences.

I. NO OTHER GODS:

A. Idols:

1. In the time of Israel in the Old Testament, the worship of _____ was commonplace among most of the nations of the _____ except for God's people. Ex. 23:23,24
2. God's concern for His people was that they might be influenced by the other _____ around them into becoming _____ worshippers as well. Ex. 23:32,33
3. An idol is defined in Scripture from the original Hebrew as "a carved or graven _____" but also was translated in some passages as "things of no _____."

B. Nothing Before Me:

1. When the Children of Israel were in the wilderness on their _____ to the Promised Land, God gave them instructions a number of times, _____ them to never make any idols. Lev. 19:4; 26:1
2. While the gods of the other _____ around them were visible idols, the One True God of Israel was invisible but all powerful, and He commanded His people to never _____ any images to worship. Ex. 20:4,5

II. MODERN DAY IDOLATRY:

A. Not Graven Images:

1. In most civilized countries of the world today, people no longer bow down and _____ idols, however, idolatry is alive and well but often not _____ by the people who do it.
2. An idol may be an _____, but another definition of an idol is "something that is admired and revered very much by many" or in other words, "something that is put _____ of God."

B. The Gods of Today:

1. One could name a long list of things that have become _____ to people today but they can be put into a few general categories:
 - a. Entertainment – God is not against some forms of recreation and entertainment for relaxation purposes, but when it becomes more _____ to us than spiritual things, it becomes idolatry.
 - b. Sports – Playing sports for exercise and fun can be beneficial, but when it becomes organized and very competitive, it begins to _____ time energy and thinking that leads to idolatry. Also, a sports team can become an idol to fans who spend more time, energy and _____ following their team than they do worshipping God and praying.
 - c. Materialism – God has promised to supply all of our _____ (not wants) but when the desire to become rich and to get more and more material things and money consumes us, it becomes an _____ in our lives leading to spiritual decline in our lives.
 - d. People – it is possible to allow some person in your _____ to become more important to you than God, thus making an _____ out of that person.

III. AN IDOLATRY CHECK:

A. Is It An Idol?

1. Sometimes we are not aware of the possibility that we could have an _____ in our own lives until we stop and take stock of our actions.
2. Below is a self-examination test that may reveal whether or not you are dealing with an idolatry problem:
 1. I feel most comfortable and fulfilled when I am involved in being entertained by the internet, by movies or TV, or by video games or by playing or watching sports:
___ Strongly Agree ___ Somewhat Agree ___ Neutral ___ Somewhat Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
 2. I would be very upset if my entertainment by the internet, by movies or TV, or my gaming or my playing of or watching sports were taken away from me:
___ Strongly agree ___ Somewhat Agree ___ Neutral ___ Somewhat Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
 3. Even when I am not involved doing my entertainment via the internet, by movies or TV, or by video games or by playing or watching sports, it is constantly on my mind throughout the day:
___ Strongly Agree ___ Somewhat Agree ___ Neutral ___ Somewhat Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
 4. I think about my entertainment more than I think about God and my spirituality:
___ Strongly Agree ___ Somewhat Agree ___ Neutral ___ Somewhat Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
 5. I spend more time with my entertainment than I spend on my spiritual life - Bible reading, prayer, going to Church, ministry involvement, etc.:
___ Strongly Agree ___ Somewhat Agree ___ Neutral ___ Somewhat Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
 6. If an important sports event were taking place on a church night, I would miss church service to watch or listen to the game:
___ Strongly Agree ___ Somewhat Agree ___ Neutral ___ Somewhat Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
 7. If I were offered a second job and the opportunity to make more money but it would require me to miss Church services, I would take the job and the money over the church service:
___ strongly Agree ___ Somewhat Agree ___ Neutral ___ Somewhat Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
 8. If I have a close friend, I spend more time talking to and being with them than I give time to my spiritual life:
___ strongly agree ___ Somewhat Agree ___ Neutral ___ Somewhat Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

If you answered :

- a. Strongly agree – you definitely have an idol problem
- b. Somewhat agree – you may have an idol problem
- c. Neutral – you are in the realm of possible having an idol problem
- d. Somewhat disagree – not likely you have an idol problem
- e. Strongly disagree – you don't have an idol problem

CONCLUSION: If we recognize that we may have an idolatry situation in our lives, we _____ to take the necessary steps to correct the problem and put Jesus back as number one in our lives.