

No Idols

Exodus 20:4-6

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

I. What Did This Mean to Them?

A. What is idolatry?

1. Animism.

- a. The worship of inanimate objects such as stones, trees & rivers.
- b. The worship of animals.
- c. The worship of the higher powers of nature: the sun, the moon, the stars, air & fire.

2. The worship of people (hero syndrome) & dead ancestors.

3. The worship of ideas such as justice & freedom.

B. What's an idol?

1. In the Bible it was a statue, an image or even a pole or tree.
2. Worshippers had at least three understandings of what they did.
 - a. Some worshipped the image itself as if it were a god.
 - b. The most popular understanding was to worship a god represented by an image.
 - c. Some worshipped God Himself but represented Him by an image.

C. Other things the New Testament considered to be like idolatry.

1. Greed.

- a. Eph 5:5 - For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- b. Col 3:5 - Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

2. Gluttony. Phil 3:18-19 - For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.

D. What does God think of idolatry?

1. v5 - He considers those who are idolaters to hate Him & He will punish them.
2. v6 - He considers those who reframe from idols to love Him & He will love them back.

II. What Should This Mean to You?

A. What's a modern definition of idolatry?

1. "Whatever takes the place of God in your life".
2. "Whatever you have as the primary focus of your life".
3. "Whatever you long for more than a relationship with God".
4. "Whatever it is you bow down & worship"!

B. What might your idol be?

Old Testament Idols

1. Inanimate objects.
2. Great people (hero syndrome): ancestors.
3. Higher powers: sun, moon, stars.
4. Ideals: justice & freedom.

Modern Day Idols

1. Your house or car.
2. Family, spouse, or children.
3. Overwhelming habits: drinking, drugs, pornography.
4. Goals: retirement, investments, employment.

C. What do you do when you discover idols in your life?

1. **Turn away:** get rid of the idols - get rid of the temptations.
2. **Return to God.**
 - a. Worship Him with your Christian brothers & sisters every week.
 - b. Establish a personal daily quiet time for prayer & scriptural meditation.
 - c. Share what you learn with others.
 - d. Get involved with serving God either through the church or in other ways.
3. **The Goal:** make God the central focus of your life!
 - a. He deserves to be obeyed & to be adored.
 - b. He deserves your companionship through your prayers & Bible study.