

... whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave ... **Matthew 20:26-27**

Store In My Heart Galatians 5:22-24

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Paul continues his instruction regarding the evidence of our inward desires with a reminder of the deeds and attitudes that ought to be present in those who belong to Christ. We are to live above the world in all areas of life. God expects us to focus on the things of the Spirit and turn from the things of this world. This will cause our lives to show the character shown by Jesus.

If we are still holding on to the evil and immorality of the world around us, we have failed to crucify the flesh. To be pleasing to God we must change our inner desires. To draw near to God, I must use His pattern to guide my life.

Idolatry Through Time

Ben Smith

Mark Twain once said: "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes." This sentiment was demonstrated throughout both Old and New Testament history through idolatry. Although idolatry today sometimes looks like the rituals and worship of images like in Biblical times, usually it looks quite different in modern practice.

Old Testament idolatry was focused primarily on the worship of deities other than Jehovah, and it almost always involved rituals that would be sinful even if they were not done as part of worship for an idol god. This was documented in numerous places by Old Testament writers, whether that be in the worship of the Baals and Asherahs in Canaan, the gods of the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians, or even the golden calf in **Exodus 32**, which was an artificial representation of a completely unknown god that the Israelites claimed in verse 4 was the very god that led them out of Egypt! While this form of worship still exists in many religions and cultures around the world, it is not the primary worship system in the United States, and even to some extent, it was not the primary system of worship by the Greek-speaking sphere of influence during New Testament times.

The idolatry demonstrated in the New Testament was partially a continuation of the idolatry seen in the Old Testament, with various pantheons of gods being worshipped by a wide variety of cultures throughout the Roman Empire and surrounding territories. However, this was not always what was confronted by the early church in their evangelism efforts. On one notable occasion, the Apostle Paul was confronted by an idol not previously seen in Scripture – the idol of philosophy.

Acts 17:16-21 (NKJV): *"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, 'What does this babbling want to say?' Others said, 'He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,' because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, 'May we know what this new*



doctrine is of which you speak? For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.” For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.”

Paul would go on to preach the Word of God to these people, but the context clearly reveals that idolatry is not always focused on a deity. In Athens, philosophers dedicated their lives to coming up with new ideas for how to live and think. These ideas often supplanted or rejected the existence of God (or even other gods), and through this another idol was unintentionally created. This idol can still be seen today, although its emphasis is less on philosophy and more on scientific processes to bring meaning to human life and action, rejecting a need for God.

Another idol that existed in the New Testament, but is even more dangerous now, is the idol of consumerism (not to be confused with materialism). Consumerism is the covetous idol of accumulating goods and wealth. Especially in modern developed societies such as America and Western Europe, people have placed the desire to accumulate stuff over a need for God. In their worldview, this earthly life is all that matters, so it is of utmost importance to make your life as easy and as “secure” as possible. This worldview is incompatible with Scripture because it places the created above the Creator. It also neglects the teaching of **James 4:13-15** about a false sense of “security” through accumulation.

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’”

Many more idols could be discussed in greater detail, but the ultimate issue with idols is that they take away our focus on God and bring it to earthly things. This is condemned in **Colossians 3:2**, where the apostle Paul writes: *“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

Idolatry takes our focus off God, regardless of its initial source, and causes us to lose our ultimate prize. Are you losing your focus on the ultimate goal because of idols? Do you spend all your time making money and all your money making time without acknowledging that God is the source of both time and money, and that He will someday bring an end to both?

Hebrews 3:13 – *“but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”*

Contact Us

We like opportunities to speak with others about the Lord.

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For Our Information

Sue Soliday is doing some rehab at home with help from Shannon. **Jim Soliday** is still down with the flu.

JoBeth Henderson had rough week with itchiness and tiredness. Her next chemo should be on March 24.

Deberah Brooks has knee surgery scheduled in April.

Tommy Robinson had a throat/lung endoscopy Friday.

Leta Rivera has a leg brace after a MS Dr visit. MRIs are also scheduled in the next few weeks.

Sunday Evening - **Isaiah 49** Wednesday - **Revelation 13:11**

Spring Meeting - Terry Summerlin - April 26-30

The
CHURCH OF CHRIST
MEETS HERE



10:20 AM • Sunday Worship Service
5:00 PM • Sunday Night Bible Study
7:00 PM • Wednesday Bible Study