

Idols

battle for our heart

Start Here

Can you share:

- Something you love to do or and wish you could do more of. Why do you enjoy it so much? What desire or need does it fulfill in you?
- Something you love to do that you know you should do less of? Why are you drawn to it still?

Discuss

Every human being has legitimate needs and desires. Can you list some that are common to all?

People have always sought to find ways to meet their needs and fulfil their desires. What do people do when they can't meet those needs?

In ancient times, idols were gods that people tried to please, prayed to, or trusted to provide a particular need – protection, peace, power, provision, fertility, joy.

Today, idols can be anything that we ultimately look to and trust to provide for us.

- What kinds of idols do we have in our world today?
- In what ways can even good things become idols for us?

Main Idea

Every human has real needs such as safety, security, provision, work, belonging, joy and meaning. Naturally, we try to meet these needs and it is right for us to do so.

The question is where or to whom are we looking to ultimately meet our real and legitimate needs?

Sometimes we seek to satisfy our hearts with things that are clearly destructive to us. Other times, we can look to good things. But even a good thing can become an idol if we ultimately turn to it for hope, joy and meaning instead of to God.

Idols can creep in and take God's place in our hearts, but they can never ultimately meet our needs. Instead they prevent us from looking to and trusting the only one who can meet all our needs.

Explore the Word

Read the following verses:

Psalm 135:15-18

- Why can't idols help us?
- How do idols shape our character and lifestyle?

Psalm 81:6-12

- Why do we sometimes look to other things even after God has rescued us?
- Why does God want us to worship no other god?
- What does he promise to do for us?

Discuss

- What are the needs you are currently focused on?
- What are some healthy ways and some unhealthy ways to meet these needs?

Read 1 John 5:21

- This verse was written to Christians. Why did John need to tell them this?

Practice Together Now

One way to know if you have an idol in your life is to consider this question: If this thing is taken away from me, would I feel hopeless and unable to face tomorrow?

When we lose something important in life, it is not a sin to be sad. But if not having that thing makes us lose hope and meaning in life, then we know that we have an idol in our heart.

Have you said or heard people say things like “Without this, I cannot be happy or fulfilled”?

When things like this are said, what does it reveal about where the person finds hope and meaning in life?

Look at this list carefully.

- Family
- Children
- Marriage
- Sex
- Physical beauty
- Achievement
- Safety
- Pleasure
- Money
- Adventure
- Work and career
- Education and abilities
- Moral record
- Respect, honor, and status
- Ministry
- Something else?

Thank God for the good things in your life that you love.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if something is becoming an idol in your life.

Share with each other what the Lord has revealed to you.

Confess and ask the Lord to forgive you.

Declare that you will now trust the Lord only to ultimately meet your desires or needs.

Review your Practice Daily

- Any time you sense a longing or need is not being met, declare that you ultimately trust God to satisfy you.
- Thank God for the things you enjoy throughout this week, recognizing that he is the one who meets your needs.
- In your daily walk with God, ask him to show you if any part of your heart is not completely his.