

FROM IDOL WORSHIP TO CHRIST WORSHIP

Homework

Step 1: Recognize Your Idols

What is idolatry? Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator for our hope and happiness, significance, and security. Idols of the heart are often good desires (“I want...”) turned into demands (“I must have...”).

Reference: Psalm 115 / James 4:1-4 / Matthew 6:19-21 / Jeremiah 17:5-8

Diagnostic Questions:

- What am I willing to sin to get? What am I willing to sin in order to keep?
- What would absolutely crush me if I failed at it or lost it? What keeps me going?
- Where do I sacrifice my time, money, or energy?
- Where is there chaos in my life? And where am I discontent with my circumstances?
- What is my greatest nightmare? What do I worry about the most?
- What do I rely on or comfort myself with when things go bad or get difficult?
- What do I think about most easily? Where does my mind go when I’m free?

Diagnostic Exercise:

Circle each statement that rings true for you. Be honest.

“My life only has meaning (or, I only have worth if):

- I have power and influence over others.” // **Power**
- I am loved and respected by _____ (spouse, boss, mentor, etc.)” // **Approval**
- I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life.” // **Comfort**
- I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of _____ (my children, my subordinates, my family, etc.)” // **Control**
- people are dependent on me and need me.” // **Helping**
- someone is there to protect me and keep me safe.” // **Dependence**
- I am completely free from obligations to take care of someone.” // **Independence**
- I am highly productive and well-respected for my work ethic.” // **Work & Influence**
- I’m recognized for my accomplishments, or if I’m excelling in my career.” // **Achievement**
- I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, & quality possessions.” // **Materialism**
- I am adhering to my religion's moral codes and accomplished in its activities.” // **Religion**
- this one person is in my life and happy there and/or happy with me.” // **Individual Person**
- I feel I’m totally independent of organized religion & with a self-made morality.” // **Irreligion**
- my race and culture are ascendant and recognized as superior.” // **Ethnicity & Culture**
- I’m included in a particular social/professional group or other group of status.” // **Inclusion**
- my children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me.” // **Family**
- I am in a relationship with someone.” // **Relationship**
- I am hurting, in a problem, only then do I feel noble or worthy of love, or am able to deal with guilt.” // **Suffering**
- my political or social cause is making progress & ascending in influence.” // **Ideology**
- I have a particular kind of look, image, or body shape.” // **Image**

Now reflect on your answers to the diagnostic questions & exercise.

What patterns or common themes do you see? What idol(s) are you looking to as your functional savior? Be specific.

Step 2: Repent From Your Idols

Read Psalm 115:1-13 and consider the following.

Idols are weak (vv. 4-7) — Verses 4 through 7 depict idols as wooden carvings that can literally do nothing for you. They cannot speak words of exhortation or admonition. They cannot see you in your pain, nor hear your cries for help, nor run to your aid. They are poor saviors.

Idols are dangerous (v. 8a) — Verse 8 declares that even though idols are weak, they have the power to transform you into their own image. We become what we worship. The more you look to them for power, approval, comfort, and control, the more powerless, rejected, distressed, and helpless you will become. They are harsh taskmasters.

Idols steal worship reserved for God alone (v. 8b) — Verse 8 also shows that idols steal worship. By trusting in them, they become functional saviors. All idolatry is a worship disorder.

Therefore, turn from idols to worship our strong God of blessing (vv. 9-13) — Verses 9 through 13 declare three things three times. *One:* Idols are weak, but God is strong. He is your “help and shield” in times of trouble. *Two:* Therefore, trust in Him alone! Only He can save you from trouble! *Three:* As a result, He will bless you with more of Himself by transforming you into His image. The more you look to Christ, the more loving, generous, forgiving, and wise you will become.

Step 3: Rejoice in Christ

Rejoicing and repentance go hand-in-hand. *Where repentance is turning from idolatry to Christ, rejoicing is savoring and treasuring all that you have in Christ because of his redemptive work on the cross on your behalf.* Behind the idol of comfort is a heart seeking pleasure — but in the gospel, Jesus gives you himself, and only in his presence are “pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11). Behind the idol of control is a heart of anxiety — but in the gospel, Jesus comforts us with his care (Luke 8:22-25). Behind the idol of approval is a sense of rejection, but because of the gospel, “there is therefore now no condemnation” for me (Romans 8:1).

How to Rejoice in Christ

When you see your heart in some type of temptation, misery, anxiety, anger, etc, ask:

- How are these effects being caused by an inordinate hope for someone/something to give me what only Jesus can really give me?
- How does Jesus give me so much more fully and graciously the very things I’m looking for elsewhere?

Then, rejoice and think of what Christ has done and what He has given you.