

# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

"...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE..." ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

VOLUME 4

AUGUST 5, 2018

ISSUE 6



## IT'S NOT YOUR LIFE

By Andrew Dow

It seems to have become a trend to post footage of funny or inspiring graduation speeches on social media. A few months ago, near the end of the school year, I saw a fairly standard graduation speech that was being shared across Facebook. In conclusion the orator said, "It's your life you're living." The intention, I hope, was to get these young people to take ownership of their lives and actions. However, this and similar phrases are often used to cast off any sense of authority. In other words, it is as if to say, "This is my life and no one can tell me what to do with it."

Your life is not your own. You belong to the God who created you for His own glory. The 100th Psalm declares that **"It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture"** (v. 3b). The creator of a thing is the owner of that thing by default. As God's creation we belong to Him. Whether we acknowledge or live according to that ownership is inconsequential. All mankind belongs to God.

We might expect this kind of declaration of freedom from a world which wants nothing to with their creator. Sadly, however, Christians at times want to claim their life as their own and reject any kind of restrictions that may be imposed on them. All mankind belongs to God (their creator), but Christians belong to God in a special way.

Paul explains that in His conversion he was **“crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”** (Gal 2:20). When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth he informed them that their bodies belonged to God. **“Do you not know,”** Paul wrote, **“that your bodies are members of Christ? ... Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN?”** (1 Cor 6:15–19, emphasis mine). Your body belongs to God and should be used exclusively for God's glory. Paul concludes that discussion with this instruction: **“glorify God in your body”** (1 Cor 6:20).

The truth is it's not your life you're living. God gave you your life and it should be used for God. Christians especially should live with this as their motto: **“for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's”** (Rom 14:8).

## **HOW MANY IDOLS DO YOU SERVE?**

By Andrew Dow

The prophets frequently chided the Israelites for their disobedience to God. The most common and unpalatable sin was the idolatry of God's people. Not only was this in direct violation of the very first commandment (see Exo 20:2), but it was also the source of all their other atrocious sins. All sin can be traced back to a lack of devotion to God in favor of things that are more accepted by our culture, society, or peer-group. This is idolatry.

So great was Israel's idolatry that Jeremiah said that they had as many idols as they did cities. **“But where are your gods Which you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you In the time of your trouble; For according to the number of your cities Are your gods, O Judah”** (Jer 2:28). **“For your gods are as many as your cities, O Judah; and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to the shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal”** (Jer 11:13). Israel had filled their lives with idols to the point of overflowing. When their lives were consumed with lifeless columns of wood and metal they no longer had the time to devote to the living God.

How many idols do you have in your life? Idolatry, as you are probably aware, does not always come in the form of false gods and tiny statues. Paul tells us that covetousness can become a form of idolatry (Col 3:5). For some of us, the number of our idols are as many as the number of our possessions. For others of us, the number of our idols are as many as the number of our hobbies. For still others, the number of our idols is proportional to the size of our bank accounts. On and on we could go.

Our idolatry may not look like the idolatry of Israel. However, at their most fundamental level they are the same: being consumed with lifeless things to be accepted by our peers. Additionally, their end is the same: being rejected by God and being denied a relationship with Him.

These simple words of Jesus should suffice: **“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness”** (Matt 6:33). No hobby, or possession, or amount of money, or person, or anything should keep us from this pursuing God.

