

CHOOSE THIS DAY

PLEDGE TO PUT AWAY YOUR IDOLS



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INTRODUCTION

“He shall be our God and we shall be his people.” These words summarized the Sinai covenant that the Lord made with the people of Israel. It meant that God would care of them as his special people, and they would be devoted to serve him and no other god. Before the figurative ink was dry on the agreement, the people collected all their gold to be formed into an idol in the shape of a cow. Idolatry threatened their special relationship with God.

While many in America today are not tempted to bow down and worship a carved image of a cow, idols are everywhere. An idol is anything we put in the place of God, anything upon which we rest our identity, our significance, or our security. We are tempted to bow down at the altar of beauty, love, material comforts, and power. We are even tempted to make good things into god things when we place too much of our trust on our jobs, spouses, or children. Each of these can threaten your special relationship with God, too.

Joshua offered a challenge to the people at the end of his life. He declared, “Choose this day whom you will serve.” The choice was clear: they would either serve God or idols. He vowed, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:14-15). May we all like Joshua pledge to put away our idols and to faithfully serve the Lord.

Joshua Webber

Recommended Reads:

G. K. Beale. [We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry.](#)
Published 2008.

Timothy Keller. [Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power and the Only Hope That Matters.](#) Published 2009

Richard Lints. [Identity and Idolatry: The Image of God and Its Inversion. New Studies in Biblical Theology, 36.](#) Published 2015.

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DATE	TOPIC	TEXT
Oct 1, 2023	1. The Image of God	Genesis 1:27; Romans 1:18-32
Oct 8, 2023	2. The Sinai Experience	Exo 19:16-20; 20:18-21; Deut. 4:15-40
Oct 15, 2023	3. The Sinai Sin	Exodus 32:1-35
Oct 22, 2023	4. We Become What We Worship	Psalms 115
Oct 29, 2023	Guest Speaker: Jeremy Dehut presents "Bearing the Burden of Addictive Sin"	
Nov 5, 2023	5. A Modern Aphrodite	1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Nov 12, 2023	6. The Girl No One Wanted	Genesis 29:1-35
Nov 19, 2023	7. The God of Greed	Colossians 3:5; Luke 16:1-13
Nov 26, 2023	8. Plague and Power	2 Kings 5
Dec 3, 2023	9. Christian Idols	Jeremiah 7:15; Acts 7; 2 Kings 18:4
Dec 10, 2023	10. The Image of God, Part 2	Genesis 1:27; Colossians 1:15, 30:10
Dec 17, 2023	11. Choose This Day	Joshua 24:14-28
Dec 24, 2023	12. My Glory I Give to No Other	Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Rev. 5:1-14
BONUS	The Sinai Command	Exo 20:1-6; Hosea 1-3; 2 Corinthians 11:2

LESSON 1

THE IMAGE OF GOD

TEXT: GENESIS 1:27; ROMANS 1:18-32

Summary: We are either image bearers or image makers.

1. What is an image?

2. After God created everything else, he gave special attention to mankind, saying “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:27). In what specific ways do you think God hoped we would share his image?

What blessings or privileges come from being in God’s image?

3. Paul describes sinners saying, “[They] exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things” (Romans 1:23).
What has been exchanged or traded?

4. Summarize Romans 1:14-32 to describe the effect this exchange had on those who made that exchange.

LESSON 2

THE SINAI EXPERIENCE

TEXT: EXODUS 19:16-20; 20:18-21; DEUTERONOMY 4:15-40

Summary: The Word of God is central to the worship of God.

1. Draw a picture of God.
2. The events at Sinai are unique in the history of humanity because God came down to the mountain to be in the presence of the entire nation of Israel. Based on the records of their experience in Exodus 19:16-20 and 20:18-21, draw a more accurate picture of God.
3. What application does Moses draw from the Sinai experience (Deuteronomy 4:15-24)?

Special Note: God describes Egypt as an iron furnace from which he brought the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 4:20). Casting something in a furnace was an integral part of making an idol, but God uses the illustration to say that he was the one making Israel in his own image as it was at creation.

4. Rather than a visual representation for God, Moses focuses on the special experience in hearing the voice of God (Deuteronomy 4:32-36). This demands special attention be paid to the word of God (4:40). How should the Christian similarly prioritize God's word in his worship?

LESSON 3

THE SINAI SIN

TEXT: EXODUS 32:1-35

Summary: What is an idol and how can you identify yours?

1. The people petitioned Aaron, saying, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us” (Exodus 32:1). What does this phrase indicate about what they hoped to receive from the idol?

An idol is: _____

Where do people turn today to supply the same need?

2. What other sins are connected with the worship of this idol?

Exodus 32:3

Exodus 32:6 (1 Corinthians 10:7-8)

Exodus 32:17-19

Exodus 32:20

3. Use the following questions to identify the idols in your life:

What occupies your mind when you have nothing else to think about?

What do you spend your money on?

What hopes when frustrated cause you the greatest despair?

About what are you most emotional?

Credit: Timothy Keller. Counterfeit Gods. Pages 167-170.

LESSON 4

WE BECOME WHAT WE WORSHIP

TEXT: PSALM 115

Summary: Our idols will fail as will all who serve them.

1. Do you have a favorite statue? Describe it.
2. How does the Psalmist describe the statues worshipped as idols (Psalm 115:4-7)?
3. Idolatry has a terrible effect for the idol worshipper: “Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them” (Psalm 115:8).
In what sense is that true?
4. Consider the following idols. What effect do these idols have in the lives of those who identify with them?
 - Money
 - Sex
 - Beauty
 - Power
5. G.K. Beale identifies this “sensory organ malfunction” as a theme that connects many passages about idolatry, including Isaiah 6:9-10. The net effect is that the one who worships idols becomes insensitive to God’s word. How can we be those who have “ears to hear” the word of Jesus (Mark 4:9, 23)?

Credit: G.K. Beale. *We Become What We Worship*.

LESSON 5

A MODERN APHRODITE

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

Summary: Discuss the idols of sex and beauty.

1. Aphrodite was the mythical Greek goddess of two things: sex and beauty. Which of these two do you think holds a more dominant place in our society? Explain your answer.
2. There was a famous temple to Aphrodite in the city of Corinth; it was rumored to have had more than a thousand prostitutes performing sexual acts as a means of worship. Whether that temple was still standing during Paul's day is subject to debate. Regardless, cult prostitution remained. That Paul felt compelled to address the subject meant that the city's beliefs and practices were infiltrating the church (1 Corinthians 6:15). To what extent do you believe the church today is being influenced by the world's beliefs about sex and beauty?
3. Summarize Paul's argument concerning sexual immorality from each of the following verses:
 - 1 Corinthians 6:12
 - 1 Corinthians 6:13
 - 1 Corinthians 6:15-17
 - 1 Corinthians 6:18
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
4. Sexual sin may be one of the most difficult traps to escape. What practical advice would you give a Christian about destroying that idol?

LESSON 6

THE GIRL NO ONE WANTED

TEXT: GENESIS 29:1-35

Summary: Use the tragedy and triumph of Leah to show the idol of love and family.

1. Leah was the girl no one wanted. In contrast to her sister, who was gorgeous, Leah was described as having “weak eyes” (29:17; This either meant that she was ugly or that her eyes were deformed in some way). Laban’s actions show he just wanted to get rid of Leah, and Jacob didn’t want her.
If you were Leah, for what would you hope to give joy and meaning to your life?
2. What does the meaning of each of her sons’ names reveal about her hopes for her relationship with Jacob?
Reuben

Simeon

Levi

Judah
3. What are the signs that you have rested the heavy burden of your significance and security on your spouse or children?
4. Imagine that you are the spouse or child of one who has made an idol of you or a relationship with you. What effects do you think that will have on the relationship after fifteen years?

LESSON 7

THE GOD OF GREED

TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:5; LUKE 16:10-13

Summary: “You cannot serve God and money.”

1. What specific attitudes or actions show greed in our society?
2. Are you greedy? Explain your answer.
3. Paul specifically says covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). Why is greed especially tempting to become a like another god?
4. After a story about a corrupt money manager, Jesus gives several principles for handling money. What principles can you glean from each of the following verses:
 - Luke 16:9
 - Luke 16:10
 - Luke 16:11
 - Luke 16:12
 - Luke 16:13
5. If you were to instruct someone who struggled with covetousness and greed, what specific things would you encourage to destroy this idol?

LESSON 8

PLAGUE AND POWER

TEXT: 2 KINGS 5:1-14

Summary: Power cannot replace faith.

1. What makes a person powerful in society?
2. What is one instance in which you have seen someone use their position of power or celebrity to get special privileges or unique treatment?
3. What in your first impression of Naaman tells you that he is a powerful person (2 Kings 5:1)?

2 Kings 5:4-5

2 Kings 5:6

2 Kings 5:9

2 Kings 5:11
5. What ultimately cured Naaman of his leprosy (5:14)?

LESSON 9

CHRISTIAN IDOLS

TEXT: JEREMIAH 7:1-15

Summary: God is not an idol.

1. Fill in the blanks during class:
The logic of idols is, “If I _____ it, I can _____ it.”
2. Jeremiah indicts the people concerning their relationship with the temple (Jeremiah 7:1-15). What are the signs that they are treating the temple like an idol?
3. “Remember Shiloh,” Jeremiah warns (Jeremiah 7:12-14). How do the events of Shiloh (1 Samuel 4:3-12) serve as an appropriate warning for those of Jeremiah’s day?
4. A Christian today could be tempted to control God like an idol, reasoning, “Lord, answer my prayer because I _____.” With what good things might someone fill in the blank?

LESSON 10

THE IMAGE OF GOD, PART 2

TEXT: GENESIS 1:27; COLOSSIANS 1:15, 3:10

Summary: The gospel of Christ is the cure for idolaters.

1. We have learned a lot about idolatry, namely that those who exchange being image bearers for image makers become as futile as their idols. The phrase “God gave them up” (Romans 1:24) sounds like God gave up on them. Is there any hope for the idolater? How do you know?
2. Trace the theme of the image of God:
 - Genesis 1:27
 - Romans 1:22-25
 - Colossians 1:15
 - Colossians 3:10
3. In what sense is Christ “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15)?
4. Paul states affirmatively, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Then he says that our new self “is being renewed in the image of its creator” (Colossians 3:10). Through Christ, how can we be both already and yet still becoming renewed image bearers?

LESSON 11

CHOOSE THIS DAY

TEXT: JOSHUA 24:14-28

Summary: Pledge to put away your idols.

1. Imagine you are among the tribes of Israel hearing the words of Joshua (Joshua 24:14-15). What would you say in response? What would be the next thing you do?
2. Joshua declared, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). What are the practical steps for identifying and removing idols as a family?
3. Joshua challenged the people, highlighting the difficulties that come with making the decision to forsake idols for faithfulness to God (Joshua 24:19-20). For those who have put their significance and security in a idol, what difficulties do you anticipate in the process of removing them?
4. “Choose this day” reflects a decision that is both immediate and daily. When you wake up tomorrow morning, what decisions must you make to be faithful to God?

LESSON 12

MY GLORY I GIVE TO NO OTHER

TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 6:4; 1 CORINTHIANS 8:4-6; REVELATION 5:1-14

Summary: Jesus is not another god; rather he shares the glory of God.

1. God declares, "I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other" (Isaiah 42:8). How then can we give the same glory to God and Jesus?

Unless this question can be resolved, then any worship of Jesus is worthy of being called idolatry.

2. Summarize the claim in Deuteronomy 6:4. How is this claim unique among other world religions?
3. How does Paul in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 interpret the Deuteronomy 6:4 to include both the Father and Jesus?
4. Peek into heaven and hear the song of those around the throne (Revelation 5:1-14). For what do they praise and glorify Jesus, the Lamb?

BONUS

THE SINAI COMMAND

TEXT: EXODUS 20:1-6; HOSEA 1-3; 2 CORINTHIANS 11:2

Summary: Idolatry is infidelity to God.

1. Describe how you would feel if you saw your spouse in bed with someone else.
2. Summarize the following sections of the Ten Commandments:
 - Exodus 20:1-2
 - Exodus 20:3
 - Exodus 20:4
 - Exodus 20:5-6
3. After a long history of the nation violating the first two commandments, God commanded Hosea to become the living illustration of the effect the people's idolatry was having on their relationship with God (Hosea 1:2-3). Why is an unfaithful spouse a fitting comparison to idolatry?
4. According to Paul, our relationship with Jesus is also like a marriage (1 Corinthians 11:2). What things pose the biggest threat to your faithfulness to Christ?