

Modern day *idols?*

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“Alright children,” the well-buttoned, stern lady with the graying hair claps her hands to grab the attention of the last few children straggling into the Sunday school class. *“Today, we are going to learn about the Ten Commandments”*. The naughty boys sitting at the back of the class roll their eyes. They’ve heard this one before! *“What are the first two commandments?”* the teacher asks, with a disapproving glance at the so-called delinquents. A bright-eyed little girl sits up taller and raises her hand, *“You shall have no other gods before me and you shall not make yourself an idol and bow down to worship it.”* *“Correct!”* the teacher nods her approval at this model student.

The Sunday school lesson continues successfully, albeit tediously at times, and the impressionable children return to their fast-paced, technologically littered worlds. The relevance of the lesson is seemingly lost on most of them. Carving idols? Bowing down to worship? It seems a ridiculous thought. We are far too post-modern and politically correct to do such primitive things... Or are we?

Perhaps this is where the true danger of modern day idolatry comes into play. Before we explore this issue, it may be best to define the word **“idol”**. The Concise Oxford Dictionary says that an idol is **“an image or representation of a god used as an object of worship”**. So, lest we think of a golden statue laden with intricate etchings, we should be aware that an idol is any object or person that takes the place of God in our minds and (more importantly) our hearts.

Seen any red carpet events on the entertainment channel lately? Viewed any pop icon’s funeral processions? Or reality shows that elevate talented and attractive people to bizarre heights? Hmm...could it be that idolatry is still well and alive in our ‘cultured’, Western world? I dare say that it is.

The danger lies in its obscurity. We may not physically bow down and chant mantras, but our hearts are turned to another god; a fickle, materialistic god who changes with the weather and spits us out when we cannot keep up with its whims. Perhaps a gorgeous actor walking down the red carpet is not your idol, but perhaps it’s that fancy sports car you would do almost anything to own. Or perhaps it’s that sport that you sacrifice time with your loved ones for, week after week. It’s likely to be something different for each of us. Now, I’m not suggesting we all sell our TV sets and live with our heads buried in the sand. We cannot point fingers at entertainment moguls. What we can do, however, is examine our own hearts closely.

Let’s rewind to those ancient folk who worshipped chunks of wood covered in gold. What was their motive? Why worship wood and stone? As best I can tell, they did it for two reasons, they were looking for protection and provision; essentially they were saying to their idols **“I will give you whatever you want if you will make my life work and make my life last.”** I believe that little has changed with regard to our motives for idolatry; we pursue things that will make our lives ‘work’ and that will protect us from death (or postpone it).

But these are mini-desires that are bound to keep us running around in circles, perpetually engaged in an ever deepening quest to find that ‘thing’ that will make everything else fall into place.



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The good news is that there is grace for us all at the feet of Jesus and He alone can help us to see what our heart's true desires are. In a world that keeps throwing new fads, entertainment and technology at us, our hearts are often inundated with options and the battle for the affection of our hearts can be relentless.

The truth of the matter is that we were created for God's pleasure and that our hearts are seeking His beauty, grace and love. That is why, in the search for this amazing God, our hearts are often stolen by other idols that seem to promise fulfillment but produce disappointment every time. With each successive disappointment, our hearts seek out something or someone else that promises to fill the ever growing void. Only God can fill that place in our hearts. Only He is worthy of our worship and adoration. I once heard that, as human beings, we were made to worship. As a result we all, voluntarily or involuntarily, worship something. The question is, what or who do you worship?

Whatever your answer may be, I do not want you to feel like those boys at the back of the Sunday school class, earning disapproving glances from a stern teacher. Instead, lay your idols at Jesus' feet and allow Him to fill the void that they never could. He wants to sooth your fears, heal your wounds and love you with His incredible love. He is a God who offers inconceivable grace and unending love.

We are all in danger of allowing subtle, yet dangerous, idolatry into our lives but if we will lay our idols down and spend time in His presence, we will recognize the fake idols that attempt to distract us, and we can ignore their hollow, deceitful voices and follow the voice of the one true God -who shows love to a thousand generations of those who love and worship Him.