

IDOLATRY DEVOTION

We were created by God to be worshippers. Our hearts are always being ruled by something or someone. We must ask, what is ruling our heart at this moment? What is ruling our heart in this situation? Am I worshipping God in this moment or myself? God changes us by recapturing our hearts to serve him alone.

What is the source of all our actions, according to James 1:14 and Proverbs 4:23.

Proverbs 4:23 • *Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.*

James 1:14 • *But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.*

Look up and read 2 Corinthians 5:9, Galatians 1:10, and I Corinthians 10:31.
Write a prayer and ask God to make your heart align with these verses.

Read Jeremiah 17:9-10 and Psalms 139:23-24.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 • *The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.”*

Psalms 139:23-24 • *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any ^lhurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.*

Rewrite Psalms 139:23-24 as a prayer.

Read the following questions and write down the first words that come to your mind.

- What do you want out of life?

- What do you want from the people around you?

- What are some recent conflicts in your life?

- When your mind wanders, what do you think about?

- What irritates you?

- Why do you get angry?

- What do you see as your rights?

- What do you worry about or fear?

- What sin in your life do you struggle most with? What do you want when you are tempted to sin?

- What do you do when you don't get what you want?

- What do you do when you others don't do what you want or think they should?

- What defines success for you? What defines failure for you?

- Complete this statement: I would be happy if...

- Complete this statement: I would consider it a good day if...

- Describe times when life doesn't seem worth living. If you have never felt this way, what do you believe could make you feel this way?

Ultimately, idolatry is about pride. Pride is thinking that I know what is best for me and that I know what is best for others. Common manifestations of pride include complaining, judgment, controlling, and self-centeredness. It is the opposite of humility, believing God knows what is best. The question isn't, "Do I have pride?" The question is, "Where do I have pride?" Pride is the root of all idolatry.

Habakkuk 2:4 • *Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith.*

Read Ezekiel 14:1-6 • *Then some elders of Israel came to me and sat down before me. ² And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ³ "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all? ⁴ Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord ^[a] GOD, "Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will be brought to give him an answer in ^[b] the matter in view of the multitude of his idols, ⁵ in order to lay hold of ^[c] the hearts of the house of Israel who are ^[d] estranged from Me through all their idols. Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations."*

Idols are stumbling blocks. They are right before us, but we often don't recognize them. To repent of our idols, we must recognize what our idols are. This is a difficult task, but God will reveal them to you if you seek him with all your heart.

Prayerfully review the list of idols below in the idol assessment and ask God to help you identify idols. Between what you check off in this list and in your answers to the previous questions, some idols should be coming to the surface. We are idol factories!

Proverbs 16:2 • *All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the LORD weighs the motives.*

Idolatry assessment - mark every ☐ that you relate to below.

Comfort/Ease of Life

- ☐ I am frustrated when inconvenienced.
- ☐ I don't like things that make me uncomfortable.
- ☐ I will look for ways to avoid work or will find something to distract myself from it.
- ☐ I make decisions based on what it will require of me.
- ☐ I like others to serve me more than I want to serve them.
- ☐ I procrastinate when things are hard, or I don't like them.

Peace

- ☐ Lack of conflict is important to me.
- ☐ I will avoid hard conversations to avoid conflict.
- ☐ I will ignore my sharing my thoughts just to keep the peace.
- ☐ I am more likely to ruminate (think/dwell) over issues rather than address them.
- ☐ I will go out of my way to keep others happy.
- ☐ I don't talk about or address what troubles me.

Control

- ☐ I worry or think a lot about things I can't fix or control.
- ☐ I find myself seeking to accomplish things without prayer.
- ☐ I don't like it if I don't get my way.
- ☐ I make sure others won't hurt me.
- ☐ I get involved, pass judgment, or evaluate how others do things that are not my responsibility.
- ☐ I give my opinion when it is not asked for.

Christian Marriage

- ☐ I don't reveal the truth about my marriage. It is important that people see my marriage as happy and/or godly.
- ☐ I am envious of other marriages.
- ☐ I can't be happy until my spouse changes.
- ☐ I get mad because I can't change my spouse.
- ☐ I wish my spouse were a Christian because life would be better.

Christian Children

- ☐ I worry my children will not turn out right or experience what I hope for them.
- ☐ I won't be okay or happy/successful if my children do not turn out right or Christian.
- ☐ I try to manipulate my children to "godly" behavior.
- ☐ I must make sure my children are saved.
- ☐ I can't be happy until my kids are saved.

Freedom/Autonomy

- ☐ I bristle under others' authority.
- ☐ I am frustrated by rules.
- ☐ I don't like to consult with others.
- ☐ I would rather do things on my own.
- ☐ I have a right to be who I am.
- ☐ I get angry when I am told "no."

Friends

- ☐ Having friends is essential to my happiness.
- ☐ I am envious of others who are in a different group.
- ☐ I get down about not being friends with a particular person.
- ☐ I spend a lot of time focusing on trying to be with the popular people.
- ☐ I need to spend time with my friends to be happy.
- ☐ I will do things to please my friends even if they aren't good for me.

Boyfriend or Girlfriend

- ☐ Having a boyfriend or girlfriend is essential to my happiness.
- ☐ I am envious of others who have a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- ☐ I am bitter about not having a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- ☐ I spend a lot of time focusing on having a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- ☐ I don't think I should feel lonely.

Laziness

- ☐ I check out when I am tired.
- ☐ I neglect my responsibilities when I don't feel like doing them.
- ☐ I avoid responsibilities when I am overwhelmed.
- ☐ I avoid what I know is best if I don't feel like it.
- ☐ If something isn't enjoyable then I would rather not do it.

To Be Understood

- ☐ It is important for me to be understood.
- ☐ I will interrupt others to share what I am thinking.
- ☐ I feel frustration and/or anger when others don't take the time to see my perspective.
- ☐ I will criticize others in my heart if they don't agree with me.
- ☐ I give my advice when it is not asked for.
- ☐ I think about what I am going to say more than truly listening to understand another.

Marriage

- ☐ Being married is essential to my happiness.
- ☐ I am envious of others who are married.
- ☐ I am bitter about not being married.
- ☐ I spend a lot of time focusing on getting married.
- ☐ I don't think I should feel lonely.

Children

- ☐ Having a child is essential to my happiness.
- ☐ I am envious of others who have children.
- ☐ I am bitter about not having a child.
- ☐ I will spend resources unwisely to pursue having a child.
- ☐ I think a lot about having children.

Health

- ☐ I focus on and worry about my health or fear aches and pains could be a serious issue.
- ☐ I spend a lot of time thinking about what to eat.
- ☐ I work out or spend more time on my health than I seek God.
- ☐ I spend more than I should of my resources/finances on my health.
- ☐ I neglect giving back to others because my extra time is spent on my upkeep/health.
- ☐ I often talk about how I feel.

Love of Others

- ☐ I want to be well-liked.
- ☐ I want the approval of others.
- ☐ I want others to appreciate me.
- ☐ I get distressed emotions if I think someone disapproves of me.
- ☐ I want others to see me in a good light.
- ☐ I will do things that are inappropriate to get others to laugh or like me.

Performance of Others

- ☐ It is important that others do what I think they should do.
- ☐ When others don't do what I think they should do I can be judgmental and/or unloving.
- ☐ I feel frustrated when others don't do what I think they should do.
- ☐ I find a way to let others know when I don't think they are doing what I think they should be doing.
- ☐ I will talk about others and how I think they should do things differently.
- ☐ I try to get others to do what I want (this could be shaming them, manipulating, emotionally bothering, or physically making them)

Physical Appearance

- ☐ I want to look good regardless of the circumstances and can feel embarrassed if I don't.
- ☐ I spend a good amount of time to look good when getting ready for something, exercising to achieve a better-looking body, shopping to get the right outfit, etc.
- ☐ I hate looking older or looking my age.
- ☐ I think about my weight and/or looks a lot.
- ☐ When I am out, I spend more time thinking about how I look than on serving others.
- ☐ I will spend extra money on brands that others like or value.

Pleasure

- ☐ I get frustrated and grumble if I can't participate in my hobbies or things I want to do.
- ☐ I am angry if my spouse will not be intimate with me.
- ☐ I turn to drugs, alcohol, food, or illicit sex for pleasure.
- ☐ I will do things I enjoy over what I am responsible for.
- ☐ I get sad when life seems boring.

Fairness

- ☐ It is important to me that people and circumstances are fair.
- ☐ I will go out of my way to make sure I am being treated fairly.
- ☐ If I am treated unfairly, I make sure to tell others about it.
- ☐ I feel angry or can get rude when I am not treated fairly.
- ☐ I can lose sight of God's purposes when I am treated unfairly.

Respect/Admiration

- ☐ It is important to me that others see me in a good light.
- ☐ I want to be seen as good at what I do.
- ☐ I should be respected especially by certain people.
- ☐ When someone shows disrespect, I get frustrated and angry.
- ☐ It is important to me to be seen as competent.

Significance/Reputation

- ☐ I want to be seen as important.
- ☐ I would not say it, but I want to be needed.
- ☐ I get upset or feel insecure if others take my place at work or ministry.
- ☐ I talk about my accomplishments and may exaggerate or embellish them.
- ☐ I am critical of those who I see as similar or better than me.

Happiness

- ☐ My happiness is important to me.
- ☐ I make decisions based on if they will make me happy or not.
- ☐ I judge my relationships based on if they make me happy or not.
- ☐ I dread doing things that won't make me happy.
- ☐ I spend a lot of time and/or money on what might make me happy.
- ☐ I think others should make me happy or I blame others for my unhappiness.

Entertainment

- ☐ I spend more time on entertainment than I do on family relationships.
- ☐ I am angry if others get in the way of me doing what I want to do.
- ☐ I sometimes do things that are wrong because they feel good or they are fun.
- ☐ I sometimes neglect chores/work/homework to watch tv, play video games, be on my phone, or pursue fun activities.
- ☐ I get bored and/or depressed if I am not doing something entertaining.
- ☐ I spend a lot of money on entertainment.

Material Things

- ☐ When I want something, I tend to think about it all the time.
- ☐ I get mad if I can't get what I want.
- ☐ I will spend a lot of time or money finding just the right item.
- ☐ I can always justify buying the latest item.
- ☐ I get frustrated when I buy something and then something better comes out.
- ☐ I get sad or frustrated when others have what I want.

Based on the questions previously answered questions and the idolatry check-off assessment, what idols do you see God revealing to you?

Read Matthew 6:19-21. What is this saying to you?

Romans 12:2 • *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

According to Romans 12:2(a), how does transformation happen?

John 15:5 • *I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*

According to John 15:5, how do we bear the kind of fruit that God wants us to bear?

We do what we do because we want what we want. Many of the motives we have are not bad in and of themselves, but they are idolatrous when we are willing to step into sin for them. We must ask in all that we do, “Am I doing this to please self or please God?”

According to Ezekiel 14:6, what does God tell the people to do in regard to their idols?

Ezekiel 14:6 • *Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations.”*

Take some time and write a prayer of repentance to God. Be specific about personal motives and behaviors in regards to your idolatry.

Read Ephesians 4:22-24. Circle what we are to put off and what we are to put on.
...that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old ^{la}self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

There is a clear command to put off our old way of life (thought patterns, motives, and behavior). There is also a clear command to be made new in the attitude of your minds - renew our minds - (with the truth of God's word). Finally, there is a command to put on our new self that is created in Christ Jesus (you must replace our thought patterns, motives, and behavior).

Start with one idol (if you have time, you can do more, but complete one at a time).

List one of your most prevailing idols (for example - control).

What do you need to put off?

Motives/What You Want/Desire: _____

Behavior: _____

Where do you need to change your thinking – to renew your mind?

Old thinking: _____

New biblical thinking: _____

What do you need to put on?

Motives/What You Want/Desire: _____

Behavior: _____

Which attributes of God (from the Attribute of God sheet) could you reflect on when you struggle in the area of this particular idol. For example, with control, I could focus on the fact that God is sovereign and omnipresent. I could focus on the fact that He is in control and always present in my circumstances, so I don't need to try to control people or events. I could focus on the fact that God is faithful and good. I can trust He is working for my good, so I don't have to control things to work out for what I think is my best.

Write down the attributes you need to focus on.

Read the verses that go along with those attributes. How will focusing on these attributes help you turn from your idol?

Write a few phrases you can use to help you worship God instead of yourself with regard to your idol. For example, when I want to control things, I can think: “God, you are the ruler of all things, I do not need to try to control this situation. I can trust you.” “God, you are present on this earth and in this situation. I can rest in that.”

Write out your phrases.

Read and think about the following:

Exodus 20:3 • *You shall have no other gods before Me.*

Romans 1:25 • *For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

I Corinthians 10:13-14 • *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

Look up Matthew 22:37-38. Make it your closing prayer. You may write out your prayer.

Sources and Resources

- Bigney, B. (2012). Gospel Treason: Betraying the gospel with hidden idols. P & R Publishing.
- Keller, T. (2011). Counterfeit Gods: The empty promises of money, sex, and power, and the only hope that matters. Riverhead Books.
- Priolo, L. (2015). The Heart of Anger. Grace & Truth Books.
- The Hope Center: A Ministry of Christian Family Chapel. Biblical Counseling and Discipleship Training Manual. Jacksonville, FL: 2014.
- Tripp, P. D. (2002). Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in need of change helping people in need of change. P & R Pub.
- Welch, E. T. (2003). Motives: "Why do I do the things I do?". P & R.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

I will remember that my God is...

<u>Immutable</u>	1 Samuel 15:29; Psalm 119:89; Ecclesiastes 3:14; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 1:10-12; James 1:17
<u>Perfect</u>	Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Samuel 22:31; Job 37:15-16; Psalm 19:7; Matthew 5:48; 1 Corinthians 13:9-10; Hebrews 7:28; James 1:17
<u>Good</u>	Psalm 69:16; Psalm 86:5; Lamentations 3:25; Luke 6:35, 18:18; Romans 2:4
<u>Accessible</u>	2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 27:4; Isaiah 55:3; John 14:6; Ephesians 2:13; James 4:8; 1 John 5:14
<u>Eternal</u>	Genesis 21:33; Psalm 90:1-2, 102:25-27; Isaiah 40:28; John 1:1-4; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 4:8-9
<u>Holy</u>	Psalm 111:9; Proverbs 9:10; Isaiah 57:15; Hosea 11:9; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Revelation 4:8
<u>Righteous</u>	Job 37:23; Psalm 103:6; Isaiah 41:10, 51:5-6; Matthew 6:33; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 John 2:1
<u>Omniscient</u>	Psalm 44:20-21; 1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 16:2; Jeremiah 1:5; Daniel 2:22; 1 Corinthians 3:20; Hebrews 4:13; Revelation 2:23
<u>Omnipotent</u>	Exodus 15:6-8; 2 Chronicles 14:11; Job 9:10; Jeremiah 27:5; Matthew 22:29; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 3:20-21
<u>Omnipresent</u>	1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 66:1; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Acts 17:27; Hebrews 4:13
<u>Jealous</u>	Exodus 20:7, 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:24; Nahum 1:2; 1 Corinthians 10:22; James 4:4-5
<u>Sovereign</u>	1 Chronicles 29:12; Psalm 75:6-7; Isaiah 45:7; Amos 3:7; Romans 14:11-12; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; James 4:12
<u>Merciful</u>	2 Samuel 14:14, 24:14; Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13; Luke 6:36; Ephesians 2:4-5; 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Peter 3:9
<u>Wise</u>	Job 12:13; Proverbs 3:19-20; Isaiah 28:29; Daniel 2:20-22; Romans 11:33; 1 Corinthians 1:24-25
<u>Guide</u>	Numbers 10:33; Psalm 25:9, 31:3, 139:24; Isaiah 42:16; Luke 1:79; John 16:13
<u>Faithful</u>	Genesis 28:15; 1 Kings 8:23-24; Psalm 92:1-2; Isaiah 25:1; 2 Timothy 2:13; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 1:9;

God is Holy

Spiritually perfect or pure; sinless; deserving awe, reverence, adoration

Exodus 15:11	Psalms 99	Isaiah 57:15-16	I Peter 1:15-16
I Samuel 2:2	Psalms 111:9	Luke 1:49	Revelation 4:8
Psalms 77:13	Isaiah 5:16	Acts 3:13-15	Revelation 15:4

God is Just

Right or fair; impartial, upright, lawful, correct, true; righteous

Deuteronomy 32:4	Psalms 89:14-16	Isaiah 30:18	Romans 3:25-26
II Chronicles 19:7	Psalms 119:137-138	Zephaniah 3:5	II Thessalonians 1:5-7
Psalms 9:7-10	Psalms 145:17	John 5:30	Revelation 15:3-4

God is Wise

From the root word to know or to see, but wisdom goes past knowledge to understanding and action; having keen perception, discernment; power of judging rightly; always making right choices

I Chronicles 28:9	Proverbs 2:6	Isaiah 55:8-9	Romans 16:27
Psalms 92:5	Proverbs 3:19-20	Daniel 2:20-22	Colossians 2:2-3
Psalms 147:5	Isaiah 28:29	Romans 11:33-34	James 3:17

God is Eternal

Without beginning or end; existing through all time; everlasting

Exodus 3:14-15	Nehemiah 9:5b	Psalms 93:2	Romans 1:20
Exodus 15:18	Psalms 45:6	Isaiah 26:4	I Timothy 1:17
Deuteronomy 33:27	Psalms 90:1-2	Jeremiah 31:3	Revelation 1:8,18

God is the Creator

The one who brought into existence the universe and all matter and life in it

Genesis 1:1	Psalms 104	Jeremiah 10:12	Colossians 1:16
Psalms 95:3-7	Psalms 148:1-6	John 1:3	Hebrews 1:2
Psalms 100:3	Isaiah 42:5	Acts 17:24-28	Revelation 10:6

God is Good

Virtuous, excellent; upright; God is essentially, absolutely and consummately good

Psalms 25:8	Psalms 119:68	Jeremiah 33:11	John 10:11
Psalms 34:8	Psalms 136:1	Nahum 1:7	I Timothy 4:4
Psalms 86:5	Psalms 145:9	Mark 10:18	II Peter 1:3-4

God is Supreme

Highest in rank, power, authority; superior; highest in degree; utmost

Genesis 14:19	Job 11:7-9	Isaiah 44:6-8	Hebrews 1:4, 6
Deuteronomy 10:14-17	Psalms 95:3-7	Acts 17:24-28	Jude 24-25
Nehemiah 9:6	Psalms 135:5	Colossians 1:15-18	Revelation 4:8

God is Sovereign

Holding the position of ruler, royal, reigning; independent of all others; above or superior to all others; controls everything, can do anything

I Samuel 2:6-8	Job 42:2	Psalms 93	Isaiah 46:9-10
I Chronicles 29:10-13	Psalms 33:10-11	Psalms 135:6-7	Matthew 10:29-30
II Chronicles 20:6	Psalms 47:2-3, 7-8	Isaiah 40:10	Romans 8:28

God is Omnipotent

All powerful; having unlimited power or authority; almighty

II Chronicles 32:7-8	Psalms 147:5	Habakkuk 3:4	Ephesians 3:20
Psalms 62:11	Isaiah 40:28-31	Matthew 19:26	Colossians 1:10-12
Psalms 89:8-13	Jeremiah 32:17	Ephesians 1:19-20	Hebrews 1:3

God is Omniscient

Having infinite knowledge; knowing all things

Psalms 44:21	Psalms 147:5	Matthew 6:8	Romans 11:33-34
Psalms 139:1-6	Isaiah 65:24	Matthew 10:30	Colossians 2:3
Psalms 142:3	Daniel 2:22	John 6:64	Hebrews 4:13

God is Omnipresent

Present at all places at all times

I Kings 8:27	Psalms 139:5-12	Matthew 28:20	Colossians 1:17
Psalms 31:20	Isaiah 66:1	Acts 17:27-28	II Timothy 4:16-18
Psalms 46:1-7	Jeremiah 23:24	Romans 8:35, 38-39	Hebrews 13:5

God is Immutable

Never changing or varying; unchangeable

Numbers 23:19	Psalms 100:5	Isaiah 40:6-8	Hebrews 6:17-19a
I Samuel 15:29	Psalms 102:25-27	Isaiah 51:6	Hebrews 13:8
Psalms 33:11	Psalms 119:89, 152	Malachi 3:6a	James 1:17

God is Faithful

Constant, loyal, reliable, steadfast, unwavering, devoted, true, dependable

Deuteronomy 7:9	Psalms 119:90	Lamentations 3:21-24	II Timothy 2:13
Psalms 33:4	Psalms 145:13	I Corinthians 10:13	I John 1:9
Psalms 89:8	Psalms 146:5-8	II Timothy 1:12	Revelation 19:11