**Idolatry Is Alive and Well**

**Introduction:**

So what is idolatry? It is service to and worship of anything or anyone which takes the place of Jehovah God. (Exodus 20:3-6) “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” NKJV Dividing your loyalty constitutes idolatry. Idolaters place their trusts in idols. (Psalm 115:4-8) “Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.” NKJV So idolatry is making something a higher priority than God, preferring it over God, allowing it to be in competition with God.

**Body:**

1. **Why Is Idolatry Wrong?**

* Because it rejects God’s truth and elevates man’s wisdom. (Romans 1:18-23) “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.” NKJV Idolatry glorifies the creation more than the Creator. (Isaiah 42:8) “I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.” NKJV God is not superior to other gods; He is the only true God!
* Because idolatry feeds on the lusts and passions of this world.

(Romans 1:24-32) “Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.” NKJV

* Because it tries to make Jehovah into something He’s not. (Deuteronomy 4:15-20) “Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth. And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage. But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance as you are this day.” NKJV God is Spirit. He is not a material, fleshly being. (Acts 17:24-25, 29) “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.” NKJV
* Because idolatry is spiritual adultery. As we read in Exodus 20, Jehovah is a jealous God. Listen to the words of Moses in

Deuteronomy 4:23-24. “Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the Lord your God has forbidden you. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.” NKJV When God’s people turn away from Him to serve idols, they commit spiritual adultery.

(Jeremiah 3:6) “The Lord said also to me in the days of Josiah the king; ‘Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot.” NKJV For Christians today we are “married to Christ” and He expects our exclusive devotion. (James 4:4) “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” NKJV

1. **What Constitutes Idolatry?**

* The obvious worship of statutes, figures, and crucifixes as done by many religious groups constitutes idolatry. This includes pagan idols such as elephants, birds, sun, moon, stars, etc.
* The worship of Mary and saints are also included in idolatry.
* Media idols in movies, sports, and music can become idolatry.
* Pleasure and fun can become idols. (Philippians 3:19) “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame – who set their mind on earthly things.” NKJV Beware of serving worldly lusts. (Titus 3:3) “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” NKJV
* Greed: The unholy desire to have more and more. (Colossians 3:5) “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” NKJV
  + To have what others have (Ephesians 5:5) “For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” NKJV
  + To worship one’s possessions (Luke 12:15) “And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’ ” NKJV
* Status and power can become idols. Some will do almost anything to become famous or have a position of power. (Proverbs 15: 33) “The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.” NKJV

1. **How Can I Know If I Am an Idolater?**

* Do I put my desires above God’s? (Luke 9:23) “Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. “ NKJV
* Do I try to please another person before pleasing God? (Matthew 10:37) “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” NKJV
* How much of my time and money does it consume? (Ephesians 5:15-16) “But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: ‘Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.’ ” NKJV (I Timothy 6:10) “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” NKJV
* Is it the center of my life? Is it what I talk about all the time? (Matthew 6:33) “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” NKJV

**Conclusion:**

Did you pass the idolatry test? Jesus did! (Matthew 4:8-10) “Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan!’ For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ” NKJV Never forget the words of I John 5:21 “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” NKJV

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