

Gospel Treason
What Happens When We Give Our Hearts to Idols
How Do Idols Get into My Heart?
Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney /Sept. 30, 2012

Ezekiel 14:1-7

I. Your Idols are Rooted in Your Heart

Ezek. 14:3 "... in their hearts..."

"The heart is a factory of idols." - **John Calvin**

Your heart belches forth idols faster than you can stamp them out, because God designed us to be worshippers, but our sinful flesh continually twists this God-given drive to worship and siphons it off into all kinds of ungodly directions.

II. You're the One that Put Them There

Ezek. 14:3 "...these men have set up their idols in their hearts..."

We're not generally aware that we're setting up idols in our heart, but we ARE aware of the level of frustration that's been building in our lives and the snowball of emotions that keeps erupting, and the people around us that we feel like are in our way and not helping us get what we want.

An idol = Anything or Anyone that begins to Capture our Hearts and Minds and Affections more than God.
--

We have to own up to the fact that the reason we sin the way we do for as long as we do and stay as clueless about it as we do is because of the idols of our heart that BLIND and BIND us so that we don't see what's really driving us.

Satan doesn't just throw out general temptations in front of us - he's not that stupid. Instead, he watches us, figures out what the idols of our heart are and gets busy putting together the perfect temptation that's customized to elicit the strongest emotions, and grab hold of the deepest sense of what you're really about, to play on your greatest fears, disappointments, anger and insecurities.

James 1:14-15 "Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

Sin doesn't just happen in a vacuum! It happens when a desire that's been fed and stoked by an idol connects with the spark of a temptation and gives birth to sin.

Satan's strategies would never work if our hearts weren't already teeming with idols!

So if you don't know what the idols of your heart are yet, you better get on it because Satan and his spiritual forces of darkness certainly know what they are, and they're coming after you!

III. Your Idols Keep You Living Stupid and Stepping into Sin

Ezek. 14:3 "... causes them to stumble into iniquity."

Whenever you have an idol in your heart, it will distort and obscure everything else about your life.

Principle of Inescapable Influence: Whatever rules your heart will exercise inescapable influence over your actions and choices because idolatry distorts what we feel and how we see everything else around us.

The essence of idolatry is taking a good thing and turning it into a 'god' thing. When that happens, it becomes a bad thing that brings with it some horrible consequences.

For Example – Guilt

When idols take over there's a nagging, pervasive presence of guilt that you just can't seem to shake. Idolatry brings with it irremediable guilt because your idols curse you in your heart for failing to achieve what you've built your life around.

Idols function like gods in our lives, so if you make your career, your kids, some kind of dream, or someone else's approval your god and you fail it, that idol will curse you in your heart for the rest of your life and leave you with a crushing sense of guilt and failure that you just can't seem to shake!

Idolatry doesn't just mess up today; it messes up yesterday and tomorrow because it distorts your entire life – past, present, future.

- When idolatry is **mapped onto your past** – and becomes the lens through which you look at your past – noting what you've done and not done, achieved and not achieved, become and not become – it leads to irremediable guilt, a floating guilt that just hangs over your life even on your best days.
- When your idolatry is **mapped onto your future** – and you wake up every day looking at the future through the lens of your idolatry it leads to paralyzing fear and anxiety because there's so much you have live up to, and idols demand so much from you.
- When idolatry is **mapped onto your present** – if any of your functional 'gods' or idols are blocked or removed by people and circumstances you'll erupt with anger or shut down in despair, maybe even to the point of being suicidal. (Adapted from Timothy Keller's *Counterfeit Gods*, p. 149)

Ask God to bring you face to face with the dreams and aspirations that you've allowed to turn into 'god' things that unbeknownst to you have been serving as your functional Savior.

Jeremiah 2:12-13 "Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be very desolate," says the LORD. 'For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn for themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.'"

When you're feeling abandoned and crushed by grief, it distorts the way you see life and causes you to stumble into sin because your idolatry makes you stupid and blind to sin!

"Sin is what you do when you're not satisfied in God." - **John Piper**

IV. Your Idols Run in Herds

Ezekiel 14:4 "I, God, will step in and personally answer them as they come dragging along their mob of idols." - **The Message**

The good news is that God is coming after us. The bad news is that God is coming after us.

V. Your Idols Make You Feel Like a Stranger with God

Ezek. 14:5 "... they are all estranged from Me by their idols."

- Do you struggle feeling like you're not close to God?
- Did you ever consider that idolatry might be what's causing that?

In many cases when God seems distant, it's the idols of our heart that are putting space between us and God.

- What's causing you to stumble into iniquity?
- What's God putting His finger on today?
- Are you willing to give it up – for the glory of God and for the good of not living so stupid anymore?

Psalm 73:25–28 “²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ²⁷ For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry. ²⁸ But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all Your works.”

Ask God to show you your heart and to give you the grace to go under the scalpel and let Him do surgery. You'll never be the same!