

WHEN THINGS TAKE OVER

Exodus 20:4-5

Introduction: Road maps are good when one does not know exactly where he/she is going or how to get there and when one plans a long trip by car, there are plans made - where/when to stop and rest, when to get fuel, how many miles a day to drive, eating places along the way, and of course take a map. God has given guidelines for His people and they are called "commandments." The first commandment gives the final destination and the second commandment is like a map.

1. Mankind thinks he is wise, inventions, discoveries, science, medicine, surgery, artificial this and that, but if mankind is so wise, then why all the "gods?"
2. What is Idolatry? Is it stone images, Buddahs, etc?
 - Do physical objects have a place in true worship of God?
 - When man elevates objects to God's level or drags God down to the level of objects, that is idolatry.
 - Ever see images (stained glass windows, etc) of the disciples, Mary, Jesus?
 - The Bible, the Cross, the Dove, even the Fish are useful in witnessing, but they can become idols.
3. DO YOU HAVE IDOLS?
 - What about a loved one's picture - that grandchild - that big fish - that son/daughter in his/her ball or cheerleader's uniform - graduation pictures, family reunion pictures, etc.
 - Don't we love to show them to everybody, even to people we don't know?
 - A place of worship can become an idol. Remember God had to finally destroy the Temple because it had become so "holy" that it became an idol.
 - Some people worship the place of worship instead of God who is the center of worship.
 - Methods of worship can become an idol.
 - Ever feel out of place in some other place (house) of worship than your regular place?
 - Why?
 - Suppose two men were on a railroad track and a train came rushing upon them and they both barely got out of the way. One fell on his knees in quiet prayer and the other jumped up and down and shouted in happiness. Both were saved from the train - which was wrong in his way of expressing his thankfulness/happiness?
 - Leaders can become idols.
 - People often refuse to accept a new pastor or new teacher.
 - No one can replace or take their place.
 - Ever feel that way? Nobody can take Bro. so and so's place, I just don't like the new pastor.
 - Spiritual experiences can become idols.
 - Some who experienced the hand of God in their lives and they were saved years ago are still living that experience as if it were yesterday. Not that one should ever forget that moment of salvation, but to talk as if that was the ONLY experience with God that he/she ever had is making that time and idol. Nothing can be better than that experience and so that person still worships that experience.
 - It has become an idol - it has taken the place of God.

- Churches can become idols.
 - Many move to a new location but never move their membership or if they do they never become active.
 - This new Church just isn't like back home.
 - The former Church has become an idol.

4. What is idolatry?

- It is an effort to bring God down, to turn Him into what a person wants God to be like, to tell God to rearrange His life around us.
- God is jealous and doesn't want anything between Him and His people - US - Believers.

5. What do you worship?

- What about your car - truck - boat? How much time/attention do you give it? How many hours do you devote to it? Do you want your neighbors to compliment you on it?
- What about your house? Do you have it decorated beautifully, everything matching. Do you get upset if somebody tracks up the carpet or drops something on it? Do you like to hear your friends compliment you on how well it looks and how well you take care of it? Do you make your kids keep all their stuff picked up?
- What about your job? Your clothes? Your entertainment (fishing, golfing, hunting, etc)?
 - What about your own life style?
 - What about your own self?

6. Now, do YOU have an idol? What is there in your life that makes God secondary?

CONCLUSION:

1. For some reason most think that an "idol" is some sort of man-made image that people bow down to and make offerings to.
2. God says that an "idol" is anything that people allow to take His place in their lives.
3. So, what is your idol? You do have at least one, everybody does. What in your life causes God to not be number one in your love, thoughts, actions, attitude, plans, etc?