

Identifying your Idols

Series: Counterfeit Gods

Week One: 2nd May 2010

THE BIG IDEA:

We have been created to put God at the centre of our lives, to worship Him, and find our security, meaning, purpose, value, and significance in Him, but we instead put counterfeit gods in His place.

OPENING ICE-BREAKER:

What do you think of when you hear the word 'idolatry'?

BIBLE READINGS

- **Key Verse: Romans 1:25**
- Exodus 20:1-2
- Ezekiel 14:3

THOUGHTS

- In ancient times people worshipped idols – different gods who they would devote themselves to, and sacrifice to. Those gods haven't disappeared, they've just got cleverer. Today we still devote ourselves to and sacrifice to things and by doing so push God to the margins of our lives.
- A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential in your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. An idol has such a controlling position in your heart that you can spend most of your passion and energy, your emotional and financial resources on it without a second thought. It can be family and children, career and making money, achievement and critical acclaim, or saving face and social standing. It can be a romantic relationship, peer approval, competence and skill, secure and comfortable circumstances, beauty, brains, political or social cause, morality and virtue.
- God calls us to love Him, trust Him and obey Him. But instead we devote ourselves, put our trust in, and sacrifice to other things.
- Idolatry is such a big deal for God because it robs Him of His glory, but also because idolatry wrecks lives.
- 1. It robs you of God's purposes for your lives. We allow other created things to set the agenda for our lives rather than God. E.g. Judas
- 2. Your idols will exhaust you: "I must have a perfect home with décor and color and feng shui that expresses my inner beauty. I must have perfect children, who play perfect football, and get into perfect schools and marry perfect spouses. I must have a perfect marriage celebrated for its casual elegance. I must have a perfect career kept in perfectly manageable boundaries, with a perfectly balanced schedule. I must have a perfect appearance, with a perfect wardrobe with a perfect haircut, with perfect volunteer involvement and perfect church participation. And if anybody, including God, thinks I'm not perfect, I cannot rest until I convince them that I really am".
- Idols will not give you what you really need: "there have been idols with swords, spears, tridents, hammers, and helmets. There have been idols on pedestals, idols on mountains, idols on horseback, idols on clouds, idols on shrines. There has never been an idol on a cross..." Idols take. God gives grace.

QUESTIONS

1. Idols in our hearts only come to the surface in a crisis. Do you agree? Have you had any crisis' or pains that have brought up things you've trusted in rather than God?

Small Group Notes: Pembury Baptist Church, 2nd May 2010

2. What do you love, trust, and obey?
3. Has your life ever been train-wrecked by an idol?
4. What is God's purpose for your life? Do your idols take you away from that? Who sets the agenda for your life?

VERSES TO LEARN

"Come to me all who are weary and I will give you rest for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" – Jesus

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Identify your idols:

Write down the following possible idols on a piece of paper:

Money, success, being clever, attractiveness, relationships, pleasure, church, work...and any others.

Now make a tick next to which one applies to you after each question:

1. Which of these do I find myself thinking about the most?
2. Which one of those do you most fear losing or feel like life might not be worth living if I did not have this, if I lost that?
3. Which one of these idols most gives me a sense of identity?
4. Which of these do I most look to, to make me feel secure?
5. Which of these eight do I most want to be known for?
6. Again, as you look at those eight, which one of those eight most causes my emotions to go up and down?
7. Which one of those would other people who know me well say is my most likely idol?
8. Which one do my efforts most tend to revolve around?