

may 8

all hand on deck

idols in our life or ties that bind

"God is the Lord, and He has given us light; bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar." psalms 118:27

yes, it's easy to scoff and say, "no way would i place an idol over God. those people must have been so easily influenced!" but the truth is, we have a long list of idols today.

idolatry, by its definition, is when someone or something becomes #1 in our life, surpassing God. idols are formed when we substitute "time with God" with "time with [insert idol here]." even good things can become idols if we aren't careful.

a few examples:

1. sex. a most precious gift from God to the bridal couple – not to be opened until after marriage – is the sexual union that not only leads to intimacy but also to the fulfillment of one of His first commandments to man and woman: be fruitful and multiply (gen 1:28). today the sexual union has left the closed-door bedroom and hit the political stage. it has been tainted and violated and abused and used to abuse.

2. technology and entertainment. we simply cannot live without our cell phones, our laptops, our smart tvs.

what if we unplug and miss something? like pavlov's dog, we hear the notification ding, and we immediately look. we cannot take a trip without our laptops or ipads or kindles, and heaven help us if our televisions don't come equipped with all the latest apps, which we will scroll through ad nauseum because the sheer volume has left us unable to make a simple decision. other forms of entertainment that can become idols are video games, music, musical instruments, or sports. how much time do we spend being entertained, all by things which will pass away, rather than being in the presence of God, who will always be?

3. money, which is not bad in and of itself. it's just metal and paper, really. but to pursue it above all else turns it from what we need to make purchases to what we cannot get enough of. paul said, "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils" (1 tim 6:10). and so it goes. many of us today are concerned about economics and justifiably so. but do we put our faith and hope in the provision of stocks and bonds, or in God?

4. careers/status. sometimes we cannot climb to the top fast enough or make the top high enough. we earn a degree, and we want another. then another and another. education is a good thing to have until it becomes all we seek after.

5. relationships. falling in love is wonderful but when the object of our affection becomes more important than God, we have made that person into an idol. spouses, parents, siblings, friends, even our children can become idols when time with them becomes of such

significance, we have no time for God.

6. creature comforts. when i read the acts of the apostles and dig into biblical history to understand the hardships the men and women who carried the good news of Christ to the world went through, i am saddened by what we think the world owes us as today's ambassadors. we are not to pursue comfort; we are to pursue God.

7. our bodies/ourselves. nearly everything in today's advertising world tells us to look younger, work out more, dress sexier. we have made our bodies into idols that must be looked after, pampered, cared for, and pushed to the limit. we have placed our identity in ourselves – who we are and what we look like – rather than in who we are in Christ. of course we esteem our bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit but not to the extent of glorifying them.

other idols can be fame, influence, “things,” hobbies, etc. we each could create our own list.

remember, none of these things are wrong in and of themselves. there is nothing wrong with enjoying a hobby or working out. there is nothing wrong with earning money or purchasing trinkets. there is nothing wrong with sitting in first class rather than coach - or owning a coach purse. but when these things come first in our lives, we've created an idol.

our uttermost devotion and desire must be towards Christ. the greatest commandment says to put God above all else. only then can we give love to our family and

friends like they really deserve. Jesus had some hard sayings. "follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead." matt 8:22 - or - "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." matt 10:37

remember lots wife; a warning we all should heed. she looked back at something with longing and missed out on her salvation. i came by today to encourage you to break out, lay aside the ties that bind, and seek the Lord with all of your heart and most definitely, love the Lord God with all your heart, soul and mind.