

Identifying Personal 'Idols'

Ask Yourself...

1. Am I willing to sin to get this?
2. Am I willing to sin if I think I'm going to lose this?
3. Do I turn to this as a 'Refuge' and comfort instead of going to God?

"Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs."
Jonah 2:8 (NIV)

"Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it flows the issues of life"
Prov. 4:23

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
Psa. 139:23-24

Questions to Ask Yourself

as you search your own heart

- What do you want, desire, seek, aim for, pursue, hope for?
- What are your goals, expectations, intentions?
- What do you feel like doing? Do you want what you want, or do you want Christ's lordship over your life?
- Where do you look for security, meaning, happiness, fulfillment, joy, or comfort? Where do you put your 'basic trust'?
- What would make you happy?
- What do you fear? What do you tend to worry about?
- What do you love and hate most of all?
- How do you define success or failure in a particular situation?
- What image do you have of who you are? Ought to be or want to be?
- At your deathbed what would you sum up your life as worthwhile?
- What do you see as your 'rights'?
- When you are pressured or tense, where do you turn? What do you think about?
- What do you pray for?

Place a next to the items / issues that you think might be current or potential 'idols' in your life

Place a next to the items/issues that you think might be current or potential idols in your life:

- Performance, especially for significant others: You try to please in order to get or to keep acceptance or approval. Example for parents or spouse: When you seek to please a person rather than God, this is idolatry. If this is the case, then you are worshiping that person rather than God. Being fearful of what others think rather than obeying God is a problem.
- Performance of self (perfectionism): You try to perform to standards that you have set. Becoming a Pharisee is a danger. When you meet the standard, you feel good; when you don't, you feel bad. You have made a personal list for yourself to follow that is higher than what God says.
- Performance of others: You make a list of what others should do. Example: "For my spouse to be a good husband/wife, he/she *must* _____." If your spouse doesn't do these things, you become judgmental and unloving.
- Good health: This shouldn't be your goal, except to glorify God. It's okay to pray for healing, but getting healed should not become an idol. God may want you to be sick in order to glorify himself (see John 9).
- Love of money: You take a promotion just to get more money.
- Success: What's a good day to you? What made it a good day in your mind? Usually it's along these lines: "I got a lot accomplished/done." Or "I pleased significant others." Or "I got my way. Others did for me what I wanted them to do."
- Fairness: Life has to be fair (Ps. 73)! "I've been trying to please God; others aren't even trying, yet they prosper." This can cause you to almost forsake the faith (Ps. 73:2).
- Hurt-free/pain-free life: "I don't want to deal with problems. There shouldn't be any difficulties. I shouldn't have to go through anything unsettling . . . because I just want peace."
- Christian marriage and home: "I want people to look at our marriage and think we have the best marriage in the world." Or "I cannot serve God and have joy until my spouse changes and starts doing _____." Or "I'll be successful if my children turn out right."
- Physical appearance.
- Being respected/admired.
- Being self-sufficient/independent.
- A material thing—for example, car, house, jewelry.
- Athletic abilities/achievements.
- Hobbies—sports, reading, whatever.
- An ideal—for example, pro-life movement, peace movement, political party.
- Success/position/power.
- Worldly pleasures—for example, drugs, alcohol, food, sex.
- Being in control.
- Meeting goals/achievements.
- A child or children.
- Getting married.
- Having your "needs" met.
- Other: _____.

Now write the top five current or potential idols from your checklist onto this heart:

