

Appendix B

Power

Idolatry Defined: (Reminder)

Dictionary.com has two different definitions:

1. An image or other material object representing a deity to which religious worship is addressed.
 - a. These can be things like:
 - i. A Buddah statue, Hindus' worship of cows, or even lucky charms like a rabbit's foot or horseshoes.
 - ii. The Old Testament had things like Asherim poles (Deuteronomy 7:5)
 1. Female fertility symbols
 2. Carved images or golden statues
2. Any person or thing regarded with blind admiration, adoration, or devotion.
 - a. Movie Stars
 - b. Sports Stars
 - c. Sports Teams
 - d. Bands

In other words, idols are the object of our worship. So what is worship? Worship is any person or thing that we seek, serve, sacrifice for, spend our time and money on, speak about most, and trust in most. We tend to worship idols as a means to serve ourselves.

The Truth About Idols

- **Idols have something that we want.**
 - Fame
 - Popularity
 - Security
 - Happiness
 - Love
 - Character
- **Idols promise to give us the hope and security that we are looking for.**
 - If I can just get married, then all my dreams will have come true.
 - If I could make a lot of money, all of my problems would go away.

- If I could just know what is going to happen tomorrow, then I could prepare for it and not be so afraid.
- **Idols lie to us.**

“Idols promise everything and they take away everything”

How Idolatry Functions

Since our hearts are worshipping hearts, we are idol making machines. We can turn anything into an idol. This makes the idols of our hearts very complex. So, in order to find freedom from our idols we must first understand how they function.

There are two levels of idols according to Tim Keller in his book “Counterfeit Gods”:

- 1. “Deep Idols”**
 - a. Deep idols are the result of sin corrupting our deep motivational drives.
 - b. Power, approval, comfort or control
- 2. “Surface Idols”**
 - a. These are the things that we seek and serve in order to satisfy our deep idols.
 - i. These are things like money, a relationship (a spouse, kids), success, fame, etc.

Power

The idol of power is focused on having control over others, whereas the idol of control is focused on having control over ourselves.

Definition: the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events.

The Emotion of Power

What does it feel like when you trust in the idol of power, but find yourself losing it?

Fear of Humiliation:

- Being humiliated is your greatest nightmare.
 - People who struggle with the idol of power can never be wrong. You might even talk in circles until you make whatever you are saying seem right.
 - If you are a verbal processor, it might be due to the idol of power.
 - (Not always, though.)

- People who have been abused, bullied, or raped tend to gravitate to the idol of power.
 - You know what it feels like to have all of your power taken away, so you vow never to let that happen again.
 - Understand that what you went through was the result of someone else's sin, something we call "suffering".
 - We have to deal with suffering through forgiveness and through resting in the comfort of God. However, we still have to recognize and repent of the idol of power in our lives.

Anger:

- You hate being challenged.
 - When someone questions your authority, you may want to push back.
- When things don't go your way, you may get mad.
- Power is a direct result of pride. In your world, you are god and no one questions god.

The Action of Power

Success:

- Success is a way to prove to everyone that you are superior.
 - Being a workaholic can be a result of having the idol of power.
- While you are successful, it is easier for you to put on a façade of grace and humility, but, when you fail, it all falls apart.

Competition:

- You *have to* win. Notice "have to." Healthy competition and winning are ok on their own, but become an issue when this becomes a need.
 - The goal becomes to prove your dominance.

Influence:

- As a leader, influence is a healthy thing to have, but becomes dangerous when motivated by the idol of power:
 - You use others for your own gain.

- People feel used by you.
- You keep others at arm's length.
- You manipulate others.
 - You bully people.
 - You control others through fear.

Crushing the Idol of Power

We Must Be Honest with Ourselves:

- The idol of power is predicated on our ability to lord over others. If you find yourself doing this you need to repent to the Lord and repent to the people you have tried to control.

Repent of our Pride:

- James 4:1-7

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

*‘God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.’*

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.”

God opposes the proud, but He promises to draw near to those who humble themselves under His authority.

God Wants to Restore You Through His Power:

1 John 1:9

- God is the one who has the power to forgive.
- We need to embrace His power in our lives.
 - **Philippians 2:13**
- We have the opportunity to use our influence for God's glory and also for the good of other people, not for our own selfish gain.