

IDOLS

Isaiah 44:6-21

Recognizing and rejecting things that take God's place in your life

LET'S GET STARTED

The apostle Paul told believers, "Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry" (1 Corinthians 10:14). We would not hesitate to flee a burning building, or an active shooter, and recently we've all been fleeing the coronavirus. When it comes to dangerous things, we know not to take them lightly, but to run away and keep at a safe distance.

Isaiah had a lot to say about idolatry, and everything he wrote about it can be summed up in one word: "flee." However, idolatry in Isaiah's day looked very different from idolatry in modern America. Today, most of us do not bow down to little carved gods or burn incense in pagan shrines. But, in the New Testament, Paul greatly expanded our understanding of what idolatry is by revealing that the sin of greed is a form of idolatry (Colossians 3:5). From his observation we can deduce that anything we prioritize and crave more than God is our idol—even if its not a graven image!

LET'S HEAR THE WORD

Here is a summary of what Isaiah says about idols:

- **They can't compete with God.** "Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one" (Isaiah 44:8).
- **They have nothing to offer.** ⁹All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. . . . ¹⁰Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit him nothing? (Isaiah 44:9-10).
- **Worshipping them is foolish and leads to disaster.** But those who trust in idols, who say to images, 'You are our gods,' will be turned back in utter shame (Isaiah 42:17).

Quotable

Our society attempts to tell us what to chase: money, youth, beauty, status—malleable pursuits that try to take God's place in our lives. Believers must be alert against idolatry in our own lives and submit our resources to the generous God who gave us everything.

—Charles Swindoll

Nothing teaches us about the preciousness of the Creator as much as when we learn the emptiness of everything else.

—Charles Spurgeon

If you would like to know more

Gods at War: Defeating the Idols that Battle for Your Heart, by Kyle Idleman (Zondervan, 2013)

IDOLS (Isaiah 44:6-21)

- They aren't even real. They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand (Isaiah 44:18).

What Makes Idols So Bad?

- Idols becomes your source of _____ and security, but only God can provide those things.

Colossians 3:5—Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

- Idols become _____ to you than God.

Isaiah 48:11 (*New Living Testament*)—" . . . I will not let my reputation be tarnished, and I will not share my glory with idols!"

- Idols steal your _____ away from God.

Matthew 6:21—"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

LET'S LIVE IT

Here are some wise resolutions every one of us can make in response to what the Bible tells us about idols:

I won't be naïve about idols.

I'll test myself to discover if I've allowed idols into my life.

I won't infect others with idolatry by bowing down to idols myself.

A Prayer Worth Praying

Father, you've shown me that idols sneak into my life without me realizing they're there, so I will no longer assume I'm free of them. You've also shown me that idols are far more sinful than I realized, and so I commit to take them as seriously as You do. Please show me anything in my life that I've turned into an idol, and give me grace to reject it. I ask your forgiveness for putting people and things ahead of You, and I choose to treat you—and only You—as the Lord of my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.