



Little Children, Keep Yourselves from Idols!
1 Corinthians 10
#1682 January 24, 2010 AM
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I. Introduction

A. **Paul's Heart: Run in such a way as to win the prize of eternal life (9:24-27; cf. Col. 1:21-29).**

B. This is also the heart of the elders and staff at High Pointe – that you would run with endurance and finish the race.

1. Last week we saw the danger of thinking you are standing when you are not (10:12)!
2. Today, I want to warn us of the danger of craving sin instead of craving God, which is idolatry!

II. Proposition

A. Idolaters will not enter the kingdom of God; therefore, flee from idolatry in order that you may win the prize.

III. Exposition

A. **Those who crave sin (idolaters) will not enter the kingdom of God.**

1. This is a consistent warning from the apostle Paul: Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-5.
 - a. It is because of such persistent sin that the wrath of God is coming (Eph. 5:6).
2. This is the example (type) unbelieving Israel leaves for us (10:6-11).
 - a. Unbelieving Israel loved self and pleasure and craved sin more than God – this is idolatry!
3. This is the danger in which the Corinthians find themselves (1 Cor. 6:9-10).
 - a. If the Corinthians persist in idolatry, like Israel, they too will be disqualified (10:5).
 - 1). Paul's argument: you can't participate in Christ and demons (10:14-22).
4. We face the same danger today (Matthew 6:24). What shall we do?
 - a. We must first take heed or beware or wake up (10:12).
 - 1). This means trying to understand idolatry in order to identify and expose our idols.
 - 2). Evidence: the sacrifices we make to our idols: family, children (abortion), the gospel. . .

b. Secondly, having identified our idols, we must flee from them-that is, not crave evil/sin (10:7, 14).

1). This means that once we have identified and exposed our idols, we must replace them!

B. First, wake up and examine yourselves in order to identify and expose your idols.

1. If we are going to be aware that we have idols, we must first understand what an idol/idolatry is?

a. Open, outward idolatry – what we commonly think: Israel, Corinth.

b. Secret, soul idolatry – David Clarkson: “when the mind and heart is set upon anything more than God; when anything is more valued, more intended; anything more trusted, more loved, or our endeavors more for any other thing than God. Then is that soul worship, which is due only to God (and that which he most respects and calls for) given to other things besides him. And this is as true, as heinous idolatry, as the former (open, outward idolatry), though not so open, discernible, nor so much observed” (300).

2. Listen to what others have said:

a. Keys: “An idol is something within creation that is inflated to function as a substitute for God” (32).

b. Keller: “A counterfeit god is anything that is so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living” (xviii).

1). “If anything becomes more fundamental than God to your happiness, meaning in life, and identity, then its an idol” (xix).

c. Rosner: “A god is that which one loves, trusts, and serves above all else.”

3. As you can see, anything can become an idol!

a. Those who follow the cravings of their flesh and replace God with substitutes and do not repent will not inherit the kingdom of God.

4. What cravings of the flesh lead you away from God and to something else for joy and satisfaction.

a. Paul identified and exposed the idolatry of the Israelites (10:7-11) and the Corinthians (10:14-22).

5. **How can you identify and expose your idols?** Questions from Clarkson’s definition above:

a. **What occupies your mind and heart more than God?**

1). Clarkson: “When ye mind yourselves, mind your estates and interests, mind your profits or pleasures more than God, you set these up as idols in the place of God; when that time, which should be taken up with thoughts of God, is spent in thoughts of other things; when God is not in all your thoughts, or if he sometimes be there, yet if other things take place of him in your thoughts; if when ye are called to think of God, if ordinarily and willingly you make these thoughts of God give place to other things, it is idolatry” (301).

2). What occupies your mind and heart more than God?

a). Seeking relationship? Sports? \$\$\$? entertainment? Food? Academics? Career?

b). Where are you spending your money (Matthew 6:21)?

b. What do you value more than God?

1). Do you value what others think of you more than what God thinks?

2). Clarkson: “What we most value, we make our god; if other things are of higher esteem/value, ye are idolaters” (301).

3). You know you have an idol that you value more than God when you are enraged if you lost it.

a). What makes you lose control of your emotions? What would put you in a rage?

c. What is your aim, purpose in life?

1). Why do you wake up in the morning? Why do you live and work?

2). Clarkson: “When we make other things our chief aim, our main design, we set them up in the stead of God, and make them idols; when our chief design is to be rich, or great, or safe, or famous, or powerful; when our great aim is our own ease, or pleasure, or credit, or profit and advantage; when we aim at, or intend any thing more, or anything so much, as the glorifying and enjoying of God; this is soul idolatry” (301).

3). You know you have an idol that you intend more than God when if it were removed, you would have no purpose in life, no more reason to live.

a). Do you live for someone other than God? Children, spouse, lover?

b). Do you live for something other than God? Job, career, fame?

d. What do you trust more than God?

1). Clarkson: “That which we most trust we make our god; for confidence and dependence is an act of worship which the Lord calls for as due only to himself” (302).

2). We are tempted to trust in a variety of things.

a). Means and instruments – doctors (health); government (care); alarms (safety)

b). Wealth, riches

c). Friends, family

e. What do you love, desire, delight in more than God?

1). That which you most love, desire, delight in you worship; this is idolatry if it's not God!

2). What consumes our time, our money, our enjoyment?

C. Little children, flee from idolatry, for idolaters have no place in the kingdom of God (10:7, 14)!

1. Good news – We have a promise in our flight from idols: God is faithful (10:12-13)!

2. Our part – to trust in God, to love God, to hope in God, to delight in God more than anything or anyone else so that our thoughts and affections are consumed with God and our chief aim is His glory (10:31).
 - a. This is what it means to replace substitute gods with the one, true, living God.

IV. Conclusion: **But how do we replace the substitute gods with the real God, Jesus Christ, our Lord?**

A. You must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ!

1. You need a new nature that comes only through faith in Christ and regeneration (John 3).
2. Flee from idols and flee to Christ – if God has exposed your idolatry and you have never professed faith in Christ, run to Him!
 - a. Turn away from your sin and turn to Christ!
 - b. But, what next?

B. You must continue believing, trusting in Jesus Christ, our redeemer – the only one worthy of worship!

1. **Believe you are a new creature, raised to walk in new life (Col. 3:1a; cf. Rom. 6:1-11).**
 - a. In other words, we must remember who we are in Christ!
 - 1). You must speak the truth/gospel you yourself, instead of believing Satan’s lies!
 - b. If the Spirit has exposed your idols today, run to Christ.
 - 1). Turn away from your idols, flee from them and return to Christ.
 - 2). Receive His forgiveness by faith and rest in Christ!
2. **Let your mind and heart be consumed with heavenly things (Col. 3:1b-4).**
 - a. In other words, you must have a proper perspective, an eternal perspective.
 - 1). You must be so heavenly minded that you are of great earthly good.
 - b. Do not overvalue the things of this world!
 - 1). Clarkson: “An overvaluing of outward things in the birth and food of this soul idolatry” (332).
3. **Put to death (by faith) the earthly cravings for sin and evil that remain in you (Col. 3:5-11).**
 - a. We do this by remembering who we are in Christ and trusting the Spirit instead of the flesh (Rom. 8:12-14; Galatians 5:16-24).
4. **Put on (by faith) the heavenly characteristics God is working in us now (Col. 3:12-15; 1 Cor. 10:23-30).**
5. **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly and encourage one another (Col. 3:16).**
 - a. This is the source of the good news that reveals God’s faithfulness for us to believe!
6. **Do everything in the name of Christ and for His glory (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31).**
 - a. As you do something ask, “Can I do this in the name of Christ?”

b. Ask yourself: “Can I do this for His glory?”

C. Little children, keep yourselves from idols, for idolaters have no place in the kingdom of God!

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