

The Heart Wants What It Wants

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Most people think of “idol worship” as primitive people bowing down before statues, poles, or animals. But the ancient ritual still exists today, in modern forms that are just as destructive.

Anything or anyone can become an idol.

In our modern world an idol can be a physical object, a property, a person, an activity, a role, an institution, a hope, an image, an idea, a pleasure, a hero, or much more. Said simply, an idol can be anyone or anything that takes the place of God.

Exodus 20:3-5 *You must not have any other god but me. You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods...*

[\[Related: Idolatry in Israel\]](#)

The heart wants what it wants.

Most people think idols are something outside of us, something foreign, something we take pictures of, or hold in our hands or pray to. But the truth is that idols are first formed in the heart. Idol worship is an inside job that works its way outside. It spreads quickly and can end up destroying our lives.

Ezekiel 14:3 *...These men have taken their idols into their hearts.*

The story of Rachel's theft in [Genesis 31](#) is the first time idols are mentioned in the Bible. Rachel's desire to have children like her sister, Leah, was the most important thing in her life – more important than God. So she stole idols from her father as her backup plan in case God didn't come through. Her idol worship blinded her from the true God and from reality. She forgot that God was her only hope.

Genesis 35:2-3 *So Jacob told everyone in his household, “Get rid of all your pagan idols, purify yourselves, and put on clean clothing. We are now going to Bethel, where I will build an altar to the God who answered my prayers when I was in distress. He has been with me wherever I have gone.”*

Deal with your idols before they deal with you.

Every person ever born on the earth was created to worship. So the question isn't whether you'll worship, but what you'll worship. Will you worship the idol of science, nature, money, sex, and power? Or how about the most prevalent and dangerous idol of all – the idol of YOU? The reality is that you will worship something or someone. Something or someone will take first place in your life.

Psalm 97:7 *Those who worship idols are disgraced – all who brag about their worthless gods – for every god must bow to him.*

In the end, idol worship will bring great damage and disgrace to our lives. If we are not careful, we will end up replacing God with a poor substitute, and that great mistake will bring a lifetime of sorrow and regret.

[\[Related: Idolatry \(Topic\)\]](#)

Discussion Questions:

1. *Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.*
2. *Have you ever thought that an idol could be something other than a man made object? Explain.*
3. *What are some idols that you have in your life?*
4. *What do you try to gain by “worshipping” an idol?*
5. *Why do you think it is easier to worship an idol than it is to worship God?*
6. *Read [1 Kings 18:21-39](#). What was the first question Elijah asked the people? How would you answer that same question?*
7. *Look at [1 Kings 18:37](#). What were the two things that Elijah was hoping would happen by this display of God’s power? How does worshipping the idols in our lives keep these things from happening?*
8. *Write a personal action step based on this conversation.*