

The Four Core Idols

-Comfort: a longing for pleasure and ease

God is good, so we don't have to look elsewhere.

His comfort is satisfying.

I must remember He is the greatest comfort and joy.

- What We Seek - Privacy, lack of stress, freedom
- Price Willing to Pay - Reduced productivity
- Greatest Nightmare - Stress, demands
- Others Often Feel - Hurt, Isolated
- Problem Emotions - Boredom

-Control: a longing to have everything go according to my plan

God is great, so we don't have to be in control.

His control is perfect.

I must surrender to His ultimate control.

- What We Seek - Self-discipline, certainty, standards
- Price Willing to Pay - Loneliness, spontaneity
- Greatest Nightmare - Uncertainty
- Others Often Feel - Condemned
- Problem Emotions - Worry, Fear

-Approval: a longing to be accepted or desired

God is gracious so we don't have to prove ourselves.

His approval is eternal. His steadfast love endures forever.

I must rejoice in His gracious approval.

- What We Seek - Affirmation, love, relationship
- Price Willing to Pay - Less independence
- Greatest Nightmare - Rejection
- Others Often Feel - Smothered
- Problem Emotions - Cowardice, Shame

-Power: a longing for influence or recognition

God is glorious so we don't have to fear others.

His Power is stronger than anything outside or inside me.

I must submit to His greater power within me.

- What We Seek - Success, winning, influence
- Price Willing to Pay - Personal responsibility; Trust
- Greatest Nightmare - Humiliation
- Others Often Feel - Used
- Problem Emotions - Anger, Worry

Active	Passive	
CONTROL	COMFORT	Self
POWER	APPROVAL	Others

What is an idol? - Romans 1:18-23

- “An idol is anything in our lives that occupies the place that should be occupied by God alone. Anything that...is central in my life, anything that seems to me...essential.” - Martin Lloyd-Jones
- “Every violation of the Ten Commandments is first a violation of the First Commandment.” - Martin Luther
- “Is there something too important to me? Something I am telling myself I must have?” - Tim Keller
- “At the root of all problems (personal or social), and of all non-Christian philosophies and ideologies is the elevation of some created thing to the place of ultimate worship and as the ultimate arbiter of truth and meaning.” - David Powlison

Why are idols so dangerous? - Romans 1:24-25; Psalm 115

- Detract from God’s Glory
- Dangerous to ourselves and others
- Ultimately Weak and Temporary - can’t satisfy and won’t last

1. Diagnosing and Identifying Idols

- Our emotions (anger, fear, guilt, boredom) often reveal idols.
- What provides stability/happiness in my life? What, if I lost it, would make my life crumble?
- “Life only has meaning / I only have worth if...”
- As soon as our loyalty to anything leads us to disobey God, we are in danger of making it an idol.

2. Dismantling and Removing Idols (“Keep Yourselves from Idols” – 1 John 5:21)

Beware short-cuts, or simply focusing on behaviors or feelings

*The Answer? Applying the Gospel

Repent and Rejoice

- *We must find what we worship as our functional savior, in rejection of the gospel of free grace and salvation through Christ. Then we must repent and replace the idol with love and joy in Christ at the same time we are trying to change our behavior.* - Keller

Replace the Idol and Renew Your Focus on Christ

- ~~Devil~~ Word
- ~~Flesh~~ Spirit
- ~~World~~ Church

Resources

- “Understanding Your Heart” article and *Counterfeit Gods* book by Tim Keller (and other similar books and articles by Keller, Powlison, and Keyes)
- “Live No Lies” by John Mark Comer
- “Four Root Idols” by Eric Geiger - <https://ericgeiger.com/2013/10/four-root-idols/>