

Title: THE ABOMINABLE SIN OF IDOLATRY

Text: Exodus 20:4-6

Intro: God's contempt of idolatry among other sins is on top of His list. His hatred against the worship and service of false gods and idols is no secret. In the first two of Ten Commandments, we are given a direct command from God not to put anything before Him.

I. WHAT IDOLATRY DOES TO GOD (Exo. 20:4)

The word "*worship*" means "*to give the greatest devotion and love to a deity.*" It is amazing what people will worship today. Some environmentalists worship forests and oceans and the animals in them. The superstitious worship stars, crystals, and lucky charms. The more sophisticated of men worship science and philosophy. (**Rom. 1:25**). God demands exclusive worship from His people (**Deut. 10:20**). There are some reasons why God hates idolatry:

A. It Attempts to Counterfeit God. Idolatry mocks the Lord by providing a profane, finite and cheap substitute instead of a holy and infinite God. It deviates mankind from worshipping the true and living God; thus, robbing God of the glory due to Him (**Isa. 42:8**).

B. It Attempts to Constrain God. Idolatry shrinks the infinite and Almighty God into a convenient and manageable size. If God is reduced into a mere statue or even a vague idea, then He becomes less intimidating. Idolaters have reversed the proper order of things by making God in the very image of man! (cf. **Acts 14:11**)

C. It Attempts to Control God. In idolatry the worshiper has more control. People want a suitable god that they can manipulate. The idea being, if God can be confined in a stone or wooden image, or put in crystal, then He can be easily "lost or found." If someone does not want God to be around him, a person can just "hide Him!" That way, he can just feel so much better when he does something wrong! If God can just be fixed upon a shelf, an altar or inside a temple, then the idolater gets Him under control! Man can never control God. The Creator controls His creatures! (**Acts 17:24-25**)

II. WHAT IDOLATRY DOES TO MAN (Exo. 20:5)

An idol is anything that takes the main focus off God and sets it upon someone or something else. Where is your life centered on? What is your primary focus? In reality, an idol does not have to be a bad thing. It can be something neutral or even a good thing used in a bad way. Some people put their idols in their safe deposit box!

Archaeologists tell us that in every culture throughout history there have been idols of little gods or goddesses. For some reason,

man is obsessed in turning people or things into objects of worship. God hates that so much. As a matter of fact, He condemns it! Idol worship is a grave matter. God is a jealous God and desires our worship wholly (**Exo. 34:14; Deut. 4:15-19**). Idolatry not only scorns and attacks the Lord; it also does horrible damages to man –

A. It Will Dominate Man (I Cor. 12:2). The term we may use today for idols would be “*addiction*.” You can be addicted to work, sports, food, alcohol, drugs, sex, etc. – even while denying it! Do you have an addiction? If so, you will be deceived and enslaved. Some people seek after a job promotion so much that they neglect their families. Some men feed a habit so much that it destroys their health. Some folks are so afraid of losing the approval of people in their lives that worry and fear dominates them. When you have an addiction, you are not just obsessed but involved in idolatry really!

B. It Will Disappoint Man. Idolatry always promises more than it can deliver; but all idolaters will be disillusioned because the gods they made are powerless (**Jer. 10:14; Psa. 115:4-7**). Every time man puts his expectation in something other than God, he will ever be disappointed. Only God can fill the vacuum in man's heart!

C. It Will Deform Man (Psa. 115:8). Idols can change and distort a man. Men become like what they value most. Notice at first that man shapes his idol; then the idol shapes him! Ultimately, man is not only deformed but conformed to his chosen idol. Idols will dominate, disappoint, deform, and destroy you! (**Rev. 21:8**)

III. WHAT WORSHIP OF GOD DOES TO A MAN (Exo. 20:6)

A. It Will Delight Him (Psa. 37:4). Never settle for a cheap imitation. Be glad, worship and serve only the true God of the Bible.

B. It will Deliver Him (John 8:32). You can be free from the control of people or circumstances. You do not have to please many people – you cannot! Live for an audience of One – God alone! You can be free from your past – forgiven from sins and mistakes. You can be free from your present – empowered to break sinful habits. You can be free from your future – unafraid of death and Hell!

A. It Will Develop Him (II Cor 3:18). We are daily being changed into a new glorious image by the Spirit of the Lord. One day we shall be transformed into Christ's very image (**Rom. 8:29**).

Conclusion: God will judge all idols and idolaters. The true and living God wants all of us to worship and serve Him only (**I Cor. 10:14; I Thes. 1:9**). Unsaved friend, will you abandon your idols and repent of your sins? Will your trust and believe in Jesus today?