

FILLING THE VOID

Idolatry

April 15, 2018

Introduction: Most of us would believe we have moved beyond the childish thought of worshipping an object of gold, silver or bronze. Who would, in our day and age, place something that has no lasting or eternal value before God? Most of us. As believers we often give 'objects of value' our full attention. And, that which is before us gets our worship. It's not that we have forgotten God; it's that he is dimly lit – lying just outside our line of sight.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:18-23

I. Idolatry

*Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, **his spirit was provoked within him** as he saw that the city was **full of idols** (Acts 17:16).*

*For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: '**To the unknown god.**' What therefore **you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you** (Acts 17:23).*

*Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, **an image formed by the art and imagination of man** (Acts 17:29).*

*"You shall have no other gods **before me**" (Exodus 20:3).*

"An idol is not an idol because of some property a particular object has;
it is an idol because we project an absolute value to it."

– Peter Rollins, The Idolatry of God

II. How is Idolatry Birthed in Our Hearts?

*for **we brought nothing into the world...** (1 Timothy 6:7a).*

A. Our first impulse is to fill the void.

They exchanged the glory of God for the image... (Psalm 106:20a).

and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images... (Romans 1:23).

Principle: In our lives we find ourselves pursuing various impotent things we falsely believe will make us whole.

¹⁹ *They made a calf in Horeb and worshiped a metal image.* ²¹ *They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt (Psalm 106:19, 21).*

- B. We often turn to certain formulas we presume will bring satisfaction and certainty. Now it is evident that **no one is justified before God by the law**, for “The righteous shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:11).

¹⁸ “And **the Lord sent you on a mission** and said, ‘Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’ ¹⁹ **Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord?** Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord?” ²⁰ And Saul said to Samuel, “**I have obeyed the voice of the Lord.** I have gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. ²¹ But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.” ²² And Samuel said, “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in **obeying the voice of the Lord?** Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.** ²³ For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and **presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.** Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king” (1 Samuel 15:18–23).

Principle: The excessive gratification we imagine obtaining from what we want most of all, is fleeting at best.

*Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; **all is vanity** (Ecclesiastes 12:8).*

III. Filling the Void

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, **he has put eternity into man’s heart...** (Ecclesiastes 3:11a).*

²⁰ Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of **God is not coming in ways that can be observed,** ²¹ nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, **the kingdom of God is in the midst of you**” (Luke 17:20–21).

⁷ Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! ⁸ You have said, “**Seek my face.**” My heart says to you, “**Your face, Lord, do I seek.**” ⁹ Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! (Psalm 27:7–9).

Principle: Fulfillment is based on a relationship of faith in a God who excites to be near. And **without faith it is impossible to please him**, for whoever would **draw near to God** must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him (Hebrews 11:6).

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you **double-minded** (James 4:8).

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II. How is Idolatry Birthed in Our Hearts? (*1 Timothy 6:7a*)

A. Our first impulse is to _____.
(*Psalm 106:20a*) (*Romans 1:23*)

Principle: In our lives we find ourselves pursuing various _____ things we
falsely believe will make us _____. (*Psalm 106:19, 21*)

B. We often turn to certain formulas we presume will bring _____ and
_____. (*Galatians 3:11*) (*1 Samuel 15:18–23*)

Principle: The excessive _____ we imagine obtaining from what we want
most of all, is _____ at best. (*Ecclesiastes 12:8*)

III. Filling the Void (*Ecclesiastes 3:11a*) (*Luke 17:20–21*) (*Psalm 27:7–9*)

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