



G:love 7 *Focused Living*

Outside the Louvre museum in Paris there are many souvenir shops. After touring the museum filled with priceless masterpieces you can purchase a cheap imitation of its most valuable painting, the Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci. When it comes to God,

some say that her famous smile is really a puzzling smirk as she wonders why so many folks settle for a cheap imitation rather than desiring Christ, the Divine original.

Our Creator must have the same smirk as He wonders why we fill our lives with cheap substitutes rather than be in right relationship with Him. God warns, “*guard yourselves from idols*” (I John 5:21). Jesus cautions, “*No one can serve two masters, for either will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other*” (Matt 6:24). Our Father is absolutely adamant that we not pursue idols because they will always let us down and He alone will always come through for us faithfully every time.

An idol is any **false god** (possession, person, position, pleasure, purpose, practice or performance) that...

- (1) **you** _____ **in place of the true God** (Rom 1:18-32)
- (2) **is more** _____ / _____ **than God** (Ps 73:25-28; Mt 6:33; 10:37-38)
- (3) **becomes that which you just can't live** _____ (Gen 30:1).

An idol is where I go for security, significance and satisfaction rather than from the Lord. Tim Keller teaches that “*a good thing becomes a bad thing when we make it the main/ultimate thing.*” In what ways do idols keep us as ‘Gloves’ from responding to God’s hand in our lives?

Idols come in 2 nasty flavors (**Ex 20:3-5**): _____ **-made** (intellect, bodies, emotions, nature, families, scriptures, pleasure) and _____ **-made** (OT word for idol= ‘to carve’. Material things, education, social status, reputation, recreation, nation, plans, goals, church). Worry, fear, anger, complaining and frustration are clear indications that there is an idol somewhere in your life heart. Simply watch your grip. What God-made idol is currently in your life? What man-made idol do you value above God? If I obeyed these first 2 commandments, how would my life look different?

IDOLS OF THE HEART (**Ex 5-12:12**) God’s people had been under brutal Egyptian slavery for 400 years and had started to worship many of their cheap substitutes for the Real Thing! God loved the Jewish slaves as well as the Egyptians, so he sent Moses to confront each of David Letterman’s top ten Egyptian gods/idols with a different plague (Blood=Nile. Frogs=spirits. Gnats=priests. Flies=all seeing god. Disease=sacred cattle. Boils=healing goddess. Locusts=crops. Darkness=sun. Firstborn/life). What was God trying to teach which the people could not grasp? How is the Lord trying to teach you the same thing? (**Ex 6:2; 6, 7, 8, 29; 7:5, 17; 10:2; 14:4, 18**)

Exodus 7:3, 13, 14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:12, 17, 34-35; 10:1, 20; 11:9-10; 14:8. Hint... “*God hardened Pharaoh’s heart*” means that He continued to harden a heart which was already increasingly resistant. What was Pharaoh’s response to the Lord Who was seeking to pry the idols from his heart so that he could pursue the Only One who would never let him down on either side of the grave? Like Pharaoh, where might your heart be hard as the Lord challenges an idol in your life?



VICTORY Idols are never defeated by being restrained, resisted, repulsed, reported, regulated, refused, reformed, rebuked or removed. All these merely manage our sin which never works! An idol of the heart can only be defeated by being _____. Why? Because “*there is always something besides Jesus Christ that we feel we must have to be happy; something that is more important to our heart than God; something that is enslaving our heart through inordinate desires. The key to change and growth is therefore to identify the idols of the heart and replace them with the Lord Himself.*” The Gospel in Life by Keller

CHOOSE WISELY **Joshua 24:14-24** records the last words of the last remaining survivor of Egyptian slavery and he warns the next generation to replace all idols/gods by worshipping the One True Living God. “**gods of our fathers**” Generational idols passed down in a _____. Borrowed beliefs have no power. “**gods of Egypt**” Idols we served in the _____ which keep coming back which we must fight the rest of your life. “**gods of the Amorites**” Idols we pick up from our _____ because of proximity and exposure over time. “**the Lord**” Only _____ has/will come through for you!