

PREPARE YOUR HEART TO SEEK GOD (3)

2 Chronicles 12:14

14 And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord.

We said to you that if we truly want to seek *the Lord*, we must *prepare our hearts*. Moreover, one way we prepare our hearts is by removing the idols from our heart.

1 Samuel 7:3

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroath from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

Notice, if the people truly wanted to “return to the Lord” (seek the Lord), then they would have to “put away the strange gods.”

Now, we’ve talked about what it means to put away the idols from our heart. However, my question is, What would happen if we chose not to put away the idols from our heart? What do you think God’s response would be? Well, I’ll tell you what it would be. If we choose not to judge our idols, God will do it for us!

Hosea 10:1–2

1 Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: According to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; According to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images. 2 Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: He shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

God is accusing Israel of having a “divided heart.” This is common whenever we are turning to idols!

James 4:2–4

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. 3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. 4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

James is not calling them *adulterers* because they were unfaithful to their wives. He’s calling them *adulterers* because they were unfaithful to God! And they were unfaithful to God BECAUSE they were *friends with the world*. We become a “friend” of the world whenever we adopt the world’s interests or lusts.

James 4:8

⁸ Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Again, the Bible associates idolatry (spiritual adultery) with double-mindedness! There are countless people who insist they do not have an idol. But, if you're double-minded, then you most likely have an idol!

What is **double-mindedness**? Being double-minded means that the part of your mind you use to think is not in agreement with the part of your mind you use to make decisions. When you do this you're being double-minded. We're supposed to make decisions based on what God said, NOT according to what someone else says.

Galatians 5:7–9

⁷ Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? ⁸ This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. ⁹ A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

A “persuasion” is **a line of reasoning intended to induce a decision or a belief**. When you allow someone other than God to govern what you do, then you have an idol and the Bible calls you *double-minded* and *sinner*!

Hosea 10:2

² Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: He shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

Notice, God vowed to “tear down” their idols (behead them)! We have an example of this in [1Samuel 5](#). In this chapter the ark of God fell into the hands of the Philistines. The Philistines were Israel's neighbors. They occupied the region along the Mediterranean coast (present day Gaza).

1 Samuel 5:1–3

¹ And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. ² When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. ³ And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

Notice, after the Philistines captured the ark of God, they brought it into the temple of their false god, Dagon. When they returned the next day, Dagon was lying on the ground!

1 Samuel 5:4

4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him.

Apparently, God wasn't finished judging their false god because He proceeded to cut off his head and hands. He did this because the Philistines put the ark in the same house as their idol! (Thus, this is a warning for our day. If we try to make God share the same house as your idols, we'll come home one day and find our idol lying on the ground.)

1 Samuel 5:5

5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

Notice how the Philistines were careful to reverence Dagon (not stepping on the place where he fell). In fact, it became a kind of superstition to them.

Zephaniah 1:9 New International Version

9 On that day I will punish all who avoid stepping on the threshold, who fill the temple of their gods with violence and deceit.

How many things do we avoid out of superstition? Why are we not careful to show God the same reverence?

1 Samuel 5:6, 7

6 But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof. 7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

After God turns His hand upon our idols, He will turn His hand upon us!

1 Samuel 5:11

11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

Rather than repent and put away their false gods, the Philistines decided that the best thing for them to do was banish the ark of God from their midst! Eventually, the ark would end up in Israel at the house of Abinadab.

1 Samuel 7:1–2

¹ And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. ² And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.

The reason the ark remained with Abinadab for so long was because Abinadab treated with the ark (God) with reverence! His house was sanctified (on a hill) and his son Eleazar (who was in charge of keeping the ark) was also sanctified!