

1 JOHN 5:21 “IDOLS, TEAR THEM DOWN!”

In verses 13-15 John is trying to point out to us that assurance and confidence in our salvation leads to confidence that God answers prayer.

Remember prayer is not trying to get what you want, but what God wants for us. There is a world of difference between those two. True prayer is when we come to God and ask what he wants for our lives. C. H. Dodd said, “Prayer rightly considered is not a device of imploring the sources of God to fulfill our desires, but a means by which our desires may be redirected according to the mind of God and made into the channels for his will.”

We must not miss those 4 crucial words in verse 14: “according to his will.” God is not going to give you a blank check for your prayers any more than you would give your children a blank check for all the requests they have for you.

No doubt John and God wants us all to be sure of our salvation... **Your assurance of salvation is a very important thing to know.** Spurgeon is correct to point out that it is our duty to obtain full assurance. “We should not have been commanded to give diligence to make our calling and election sure if it were not right for us to be sure. I am sure it is right for a child of God to know that God is his Father, and never to have a question in his heart as to his sonship.”

Yes even the Ted Bundy’s and Jeffrey Dahmer’s of the world can be forgiven. SO WE DON’T KNOW THOSE WHO HAVE COMMITTED SIN LEADING TO DEATH... THAT’S WHY WE KEEP PRAYING. As shocking as that seems, the power of the Cross of Calvary, **the matchless mercy of the Master**, the unfathomable potency of the blood makes such miracles possible. And although at first it seems disquieting and troubling, in reality it gives me great hope because I know if the Lord can save Jeffrey Dahmer, **He can save me.**

I love the contrast between “we” and “the whole world”. We are now under the power of God and the world is under the power of Satan.

Remember only two camps... Jesus cuts our choices to **2** - **2** gates,
2 ways,
2 crowds, **2** DESTINATIONS... It's either **ETERNITY IN HEAVEN** or
ETERNITY IN HELL. When you enter eternity there's just **2** sections -
smoking or non-smoking. **PRAY**

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. **Amen. LAST WORDS STICK.**
“KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS.”

It may seem a bit strange to our 21st century ears that John would end his letter with this short, terse, puzzling command: “keep yourselves from idols.” Surely no one in any civilized country would worship an idol! After all, an idol is made of stone or wood or metal.

SLIDES of Idols...

Yet not all Idols are made of stone, wood or metal! “Keep yourselves from idols.” I don't think John was worried about their bowing down in front of a graven image.

So 2002 Television brought an “IDOL” to it's silver screen... **actually** an “American Idol”.


Kelly Clarkson instant stardom when she won the first year. Her debut single, “*A Moment Like This*,” became the fastest music chart-climber in history, reaching number one in less than a week.

Clay Aiken wins year 2. His song “This Is the Night,” reached number one on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart in its first week (**only the 12th song in history to do so!**)

COULD THIS BE THE KIND OF IDOLS JOHN IS TALKING ABOUT?


WHAT IS AN IDOL? Whatever you cling to for ultimate reality and security is your idol. **Whatever you give your heart to other than God is an idol. AN IDOL IS ANYTHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU WORSHIP OR PUT IN PLACE OF OR ABOVE GOD.**

The enemy to fellowship with God is *idolatry*: embracing a false god, or a false idea of the true God. John rightly closes with this warning, after having spent much of the book warning us against the dangers of the false Jesus many were teaching in his day (1 John 3:18-23; 4:1-3; 5:6-9).



Hughes in his commentary on 1 John points out, “The Docetic Gnostics whom John opposed were actually promoting idolatry in their false teachings. To claim that Jesus is not fully human or is not truly God is idolatry. The secessionists who left the orthodox doctrine of Christ and thus left the Church (1 John 2:19) were committing idolatry. The false prophets whose teaching originated with the spirit of antichrist were engaged in idolatry. *The failure to love others indicates we are making self an idol.* The failure to live righteous lives is motivated by many things, but the heart of it all is idolatry. Everything John addresses in this letter is in one way or another related to idolatry.”

Maybe the existentialist philosopher Nietzsche was right when he said, “*There are more idols in the world than there are realities.*”



For John, Jesus is the real thing, and anything and everything else, if substitute for Jesus, is an idol. The Biblical concept of idolatry consists in that which is not only cultural but intellectual, social, and spiritual.

People in Scripture are said to do 3 things with their idols:

1. They love them,
2. Trust them,
3. and obey them. God has 3 words for idols: **TEAR THEM DOWN,**

Idolatry destroys morality. Idolatry mocks God. **IDOLATRY DISOBEYS GOD'S WORD.** **Idolatry prostitutes God's worship.**

There are some interesting Hebrew words for idolatry in the Old Testament. One word in its noun form can mean **“pellets of dung”** or **“shapeless, loggy things.”**

As you see... AN IDOL IS A DETESTABLE THING.

Another word used for idols is **hebel** meaning **“emptiness, vanity.”**

Still another word for idol in Hebrew is **mipleset** meaning **“a thing of horror or shuddering.”**

Again **Not all Idols are made of stone, wood or metal!**

Colossians 3:5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **Here it is obvious that an idol can be something non-material.**

As one commentator wisely said, “This statement in verse 21 is in direct contrast to the reality of Jesus that John emphasized in verse 20. John is saying Jesus is the real thing. It’s a relationship with Christ that brings about reality and substance. Jesus is the true and real God as opposed to the false gods and idols that are out there. THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS LEADS TO ETERNAL DEATH, THE WORSHIP OF JESUS LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE.”

At the 2007 Emmy Awards, comedian Kathy Griffin won an Emmy for the show she produced and starred in called My Life on the D-List. Griffin walked on the stage, accepted the award, blasphemed the name of Jesus, and then concluded her little speech by holding up her Emmy statuette and saying, **“This award is my god now.”**

Luther was right when he said that the first of the Ten Commandments begins with idolatry because the fundamental motivation behind breaking God’s laws is idolatry.

The word **“KEEP”** means **“TO GUARD AGAINST.”** Idolatry is something we must guard against in our lives on daily basis.

WHAT IS AN IDOL? Whatever you cling to for ultimate reality and security is

your idol. Whatever you give your heart to other than God is an idol. AN IDOL IS ANYTHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU WORSHIP OR PUT IN PLACE OF OR ABOVE GOD.

* This speaks against worshipping yourself. We can do this by overindulgence in food or drink, by laziness, or by too much concern about how they look or what they wear

* This speaks against worshipping wealth

* This speaks against worshipping some hobby or pursuit

ME AND FANTASY FOOTBALL

* This speaks against worshipping dear friends or relatives

Colossians 1 18 "And He (Jesus) is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, (*Jesus is head of Creation and head of the Church!*), that in all things He may have the preeminence."

THAT IN ALL THINGS HE MAY HAVE THE PREEMINENCE.

FIRST PLACE IN CREATION, FIRST PLACE IN THE CHURCH and first place in our lives!

Jesus has earned the right to rule! To be first... preeminent in EVERYTHING!

Jesus is not a step on the long path to God. Jesus is the end of the search. **Jesus is none other than God. We don't add Jesus to our lives... He is first in all things and we add things to our "Jesus first" lives.**

Is Jesus first in your family?

First place in your marriage? First place in your work place?

First place in your ministry... First place in your mind

First place in time?... First place in love?

First place in your conversations?... First place in pleasures?

First place in eating?... First place in your play?

→ **First place in your sports? ...First place in what you watch and listen to? **First place in your Worship?****

Seeing Christ as He is will keep us from idols, for it will steel us against a scaled-down Christ which has captured so many lost hearts.

How could we ever look anywhere else for ANY satisfaction

DON'T GET HIGH ON ANYTHING BUT GOD.

ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES!

ARK OF THE COVENANT... Represented the Glory of God. His **Shekinah** the *Kabod...* (weight)

BECAUSE THE ARK WAS GOD'S THRONE AMONG HIS PEOPLE IT WAS A SYMBOL OF HIS PRESENCE AND POWER WITH THEM WHEREVER IT WENT.

Miracles involving the Ark...

1. With the presence of the ark, the waters of the River Jordan divided so the Israelites could cross on dry land. **Joshua 3:14-17**
2. The walls of Jericho fell so that the Israelites could capture it **Joshua 6:6-21.**

Yet the ark could not be treated with **irreverence** because it was also a symbol of God's **judgment and wrath**. When the Israelites fought their enemies the Philistines during the time of the prophet Samuel they lost a battle and **4,000 men died**. I know let's get the "ARK" and take it to battle. They disregarded the commands of the Lord and took the ark out to the battlefield with them, "**summoning**" God's presence. **LIKE THE ARK WAS A GLORIFIED RABBIT'S FOOT. 30,000 more men died from this act of disobedience.** God caused the Philistines to win the battle and as 1 Samuel 4:22 sadly states "the glory departed from Israel, for the ark of the Lord was taken" **Ichabod the glory departed!**

THE PHILISTINES TO THE ARK TO DAGONS TEMPLE IN ASHDOD. They then placed the Ark in the same room as their ½ Fish ½ man **FERTILITY GOD "DAGON"** In the morning the god had fallen over! Had to pick their god

off the floor. Next day back on the floor with it's hands and head cut off.
Also, several Philistine cities were plagued. (1 Samuel 5).

God's glory and holiness were with the ARK. The Shekinah and Kabod "The glory of God" His presence weight. The idol could not stand up to God's mighty presence!

Don't focus on removing the idols focus on the Glory of God and your precious relationship with Him. As His presence fills your life the idols will fall!

LAST WORDS STICK, "KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS"