

Idolatry Issues

1 Corinthians 8:4-7

I. Intro

● Anecdote

- Idolatry
 - Idolatry - it's a sinful issue that the Lord explicitly addressed - in almost every book of the Bible.
 - For example - it's in the book of Leviticus - where the Lord warned the Israelites about idolatry - by declaring...
 - ...you shall not make idols for yourselves - neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves...
 - ...nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land - to bow down to it - for I am the LORD your God.
 - More simply put - there is One God - Who is clearly opposed to those who worship idols.
 - And it's for this reason that the Lord included this prohibition - in the Mosaic Law.
- Priority
 - As a matter of fact - it's in Exodus chapter 20 - where we find the Lord presenting the first of 10 commandments - by declaring...

Exo 20:2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Exo 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

Exo 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

Exo 20:5a you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.

- Here in these verses - we find the Lord - presenting this prohibition against idolatry - as the first of 10 commandments.
- And while it's true that all of the commandments help us to understand the holiness of God...
- ...it's also true that the Lord placed this law about idolatry at the top of the list...
- ...so that we might realize that our relationship with God has a direct affect on everything else.
- And what this means is that the sin of idolatry will have a negative impact on those who worship idols.

II. Outline

● Points

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- With this as our focus - we're going to spend our time today - considering the way that idolatry affects the idolater.
- Not only that - but - we'll also consider how those who spend time with idolaters will also be affected.
- And as we study these scriptures - we'll begin to see that...
 1. ...those who worship Idols are Deceivers
 2. ...those who worship Idols are Dividers
 3. ...those who worship Idols are Defilers
- With this as our outline - let's open our Bibles to 1st Corinthians chapter 8...

- ...where we find Paul - addressing the issues - caused by those who worship idols.

III. Deceive

● Set up

- Context
- As we make our way to the eighth chapter of 1st Corinthians - I wanna take a moment to put our text back into it's context.
- I should first remind you that it was back in the beginning of this chapter where Paul began to address the questions...
- ...concerning the cuts of meat - that came from the sacrificial animals - offered to pagan idols - at the heathen temples.
- And knowing that the disciples of Christ were dividing over this debatable disagreement...
- ...Paul encouraged the Christians in Corinth to learn how to disagree - agreeably.
- Now - here in our text today - we find Paul - reminding his readers - about the issues caused by idols.
- And with this as our focus - let's pick up our study of 1st Corinthians chapter 8 - beginning there at verse 4 - where Paul declared...

● Text

1Co 8:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.

1Co 8:5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

1Co 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

1Co 8:7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

- Offered

- Here in our text today - we find Paul - continuing to address the questions the Christians in Corinth posed - about the things offered to idols.
- Just to be clear - it'll help you to know that the phrase - offered to idols - found there in the middle of verse 4...
 - ...was translated from a Greek word - which was used in reference to the flesh of animals - sacrificed to a pagan idol.
 - And being that most of the meats sold in the market places of Corinth - had been offered as a sacrifice to a pagan idol...
 - ...the original recipients of this epistle wanted to know if Christians were free to eat those delicious meats...
 - ...OR - if they were expected to abstain from eating the meats that had been sacrificed at the heathen temples of Corinth.

- Temples

- With this question - you might be interested to know that - the city of Corinth was the location of several pagan temples.
- This included the temple - which was built in honor of the false god Aphrodite - who was the false god of beauty and fertility.
- Not only that - but - Corinth was also the home of a temple built for the false god - Poseidon - who was believed to rule the sea.
- There were also temples in Corinth - which were built for Apollo - Hermes - Isis and Venus-Fortuna.

- And then there was the Corinthian Pantheon - which was dedicated to a Pantheon of false gods.
- In light of these things - there should be no doubt that - Corinth was a city filled with pagan temples.
 - And it was there at those temples - where animals were sacrificed to the idols of their false gods.
- Idols
 - With all of this in mind - let's consider the way that Paul described those idols - here in our text today.
 - Look with me again - beginning there at verse 4 - where Paul declared...

1Co 8:4a Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world....
 - Now - I wanna stop right here - so that we can consider what Paul meant - when he referred to the idols of this word.
 - That word - idols - was translated from a Greek word - which was used of the images and the icons - created to represent pagan deities.
 - And it's sad to say that the idols that represented those false gods were not only found in the pagan temples of Corinth...
 - ...but - archaeological discoveries have also confirmed the fact that...
 - ...most homes included religious artifacts and shrines dedicated to a myriad deities.
- Nothing
 - With all of this in mind - we should take a moment to consider Paul's assessment of those idols.
 - Look with me again - there at verse 4 - where he declared...

1Co 8:4 ...concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.

- Now - it should be clear that - Paul wasn't suggesting that there were no such things as idols.
- No - instead - he was helping the Christians in Corinth to understand that...
- ...the images and icons that represented the false gods of the pagan religions - were nothing.
- In other words - those idols had no real power - and the reason why was due to the fact that...
- ...the deity they were designed to represent - didn't really exist.
- Polytheism
- Paul doubled down on this - by assuring his audience that - there is no other God but one.
- I like the way that the scholars who created the New Living Translation rendered verse 4 - they put it like this...

1Co 8:4 So, what about eating meat that has been offered to idols? Well, we all know that an idol is not really a god and that there is only one God.

- Idols aren't really gods - - no - instead - they're simply lifeless statues that depict a deceptive deity.
- There's only One God Who alone has infinite power - - the King of kings Who dwells in unapproachable light.
- And while there were many in Corinth - who had embraced polytheism - which is the belief in more than one God...

- ...Paul helped the Christians in Corinth to realize that polytheism fails to correspond to reality...
- ...and the reason why is because - there is only One God - Who is Omnipotent - Omniscient - Omnipresent and Omnibenevolent.

- Monotheism

- This was precisely the point that the Lord our God was making - in Isaiah chapter 45 - it's verse 18 - where he declared...

Isa 45:18 For thus says the LORD,
Who created the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,
Who did not create it in vain,
Who formed it to be inhabited:
"I am the LORD, and there is no other.

- According to the Lord - He alone is God - - and besides Him - there is no other.
- And as we consider this claim - I should take a moment to point out that Monotheism is more rational than polytheism.
- Case in point - how many supreme beings can there be - - and the answer is - ONE.
- By definition - there can only be One Supreme Being - Who is sovereign over all other beings.
- And it's here in our text today - where Paul assured us that the God of the Bible - is the true and living Lord.
- Anything
- What this also means is that - the idols that were found in public temples - and residential shrines - were powerless.

- The reason why was due to the fact that the images and icons were representing gods that didn't actually exist.
- And in order to make my case - we should consider the way that the Psalmist explained it - in the 115th Psalm.
- Hold your place here in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn in our Bibles to Psalm 115.
 - You see - it's here in the 115th Psalm - where we find the Psalmist - describing the idols of this world...
 - ...as nothing more than lifeless images - that can't hear our prayers.
 - And not only that - but - they can't provide us with the divine guidance we need - - because - they have no knowledge.

● Application

- Idols
- Let's consider how the Psalmist put it - here in the 115th Psalm - look with me beginning there at verse 4 - where he declared...

Psa 115:4 Their idols are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.

Psa 115:5 They have mouths, but they do not speak;
Eyes they have, but they do not see;

Psa 115:6 They have ears, but they do not hear;
Noses they have, but they do not smell;

Psa 115:7 They have hands, but they do not handle;
Feet they have, but they do not walk;
Nor do they mutter through their throat.

Psa 115:8 Those who make them are like them;
So is everyone who trusts in them.

- Here in these verses - we find the Psalmist - describing idols as lifeless statues - which are nothing more than the work of men's hands.

- That being the case - those lifeless statues can't hear our prayers - let alone answer them.
- Idols can't understand what we're going through - and they can't provide us with the guidance of divine counsel.
- No - instead - they are graven images - created by deceivers - who make merchandise of those who worship idols.
- And not only that - but those who are worshipping the idols - are also perpetuating the deception.
- Lies
- Let's consider how the prophet Habakuk explained it - in the second chapter of his book - it's beginning at verse 18 - he asked...

Hab 2:18 "What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it,
The molded image, a teacher of lies,
That the maker of its mold should trust in it,
To make mute idols?

Hab 2:19 Woe to him who says to wood, 'Awake!'
To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!'
Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver,
Yet in it there is no breath at all.

Hab 2:20 "But the LORD is in His holy temple.
Let all the earth keep silence before Him."

- According to the prophet Habakuk - the carved images that are called idols are actually teachers of lies.
- In other words - the images that represent the false gods of the pagan religions - are based on deception.
- And listen - those who worship those idols are not only deceived but - they are also deceiving others - with their acts of worship.
- And so - while the meats offered to idols really can't affect those who trust in the Lord Jesus...

- ...we must not forget that those who worship idols - are deceivers.

● Transition

• Points

1. And while it's true that those who worship Idols are Deceivers...
2. ...those who worship Idols are also Dividers.
 - With this as our focus - let's consider the way that Paul explained it - back in 1st Corinthians chapter 8.
 - Let's make our way back to the eighth chapter of 1st Corinthians...
 - ...and let's begin reading again - there at verse 4 - where Paul declared...

IV. Divide

● Text

1Co 8:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.

1Co 8:5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

- Contradiction?
- Wait - what!? - how can Paul tell us in verse 4 - that there is no other God but one...
- ...but then - in verse 5 - he tells us that there are many gods and many lords.
- Was Paul contradicting himself - - or - was he presenting a paradox - that sounds like a contradiction - - and yet - it's not?

- In order to answer this question - let's take some time to consider the long list of gods that were embraced by the ancient Greeks.

- This included the twelve gods of Olympus - which consists of...

1. Zeus - The King of the Gods
2. Poseidon - God of the Sea
3. Hera - Queen of the Gods
4. Athena - The Goddess of Wisdom
5. Ares - The God of War
6. Artemis - The Goddess of the Hunt
7. Apollo - The God of the Sun
8. Aphrodite - The Goddess of Love
9. Demeter - The Goddess of Fertility
10. Hermes - The Messenger
11. Hephaestus - Blacksmith God
12. Dionysus - The God of Wine

- More

- The Greeks also believed in the pre-Olympian gods - more commonly called the Titans.

- This also included six male - and six female gods - - who existed prior to the Olympians...

- ...but only after they were produced by their parents - Gaia - Mother Earth) - and Uranus -the god of heavens.

- It's also interesting to note that - Gaia and Uranus belonged to another group - known as the Primordial Gods.

- This included 20 gods - who were personifications of natural forces - and the most basic components of the cosmos.

- And while it's true that most Greeks were raised to believe in all of these different deities...

- ...it's also true that the Olympians - and the Titans - and the Primordial Gods - weren't really gods.

- So-called

- It's for this reason that Paul referred to these gods - as so-called gods.
- I like the way that the scholars who created the New Living Translation rendered verse 5 - they put it like this...

1Co 8:5 There may be so-called gods both in heaven and on earth, and some people actually worship many gods and many lords.

- From this - we can see that Paul wasn't suggesting that there were many gods - - in the sense that there was actually more than one God.
- No - instead - he was simply acknowledging the fact that - there are those who truly believe in the existence of many gods.
- And it's sad to say that there were many in the ancient world - who worshipped and served the creation - rather than the Creator.
- This was not only true of the Greeks - but - this was also true of the ancient Egyptians - and the Romans...
 - ...as well as Celts - the Germans - Asians - and various Native American tribes.
- Priority
 - Now - as we consider all of the polytheistic religious system - I should take a moment to point out that...
 - ...the adherents of these religious systems would often disagree - about which of their so-called gods - were supreme.
 - For example - the Greeks believed that Zeus was the king of the gods...

- ...and yet at the same time - they would prioritize their worship - according to the regional idol of their city...
- ...or according to the personal needs of each individual.
- There were also adherents of various cults - who divided themselves from other Greeks...
 - ...as they focused their worship on one specific idol - which they believed to be supreme - over all other gods.
- Examples
 - This not only included the various temples located there in Corinth which were dedicated to specific idols - like Aphrodite - and Poseidon...
 - ...but - there were similar temples throughout the entire Grecian empire - where religious cults would worship their preferred idols.
 - For example - there was the cult of Demeter - the Olympian goddess of agriculture, grain and bread.
 - She actually had numerous shrines - sanctuaries - and temples dedicated to her Mystery cult.
 - There was also the cult of Apollo - who was believed to be the Olympian god of music and prophecy.
 - As one of the most popular gods in ancient Greece - there were innumerable shrines and sanctuaries for his idols.
 - And then there was the cult of Artemis - or - Diana - which created the largest pagan temple in the city of Ephesus.
- Ephesus
 - With this as our focus - let's consider how the cult of Diana not only divided themselves from other Greeks...

- ...but - they also attacked the Christians who were sharing their faith in the city of Ephesus.
- Hold your place here in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn in our Bibles - to Acts chapter 19.
- And as we make our way to the 19th chapter of Acts - I should take a moment to point out that...
 - ...Ephesus was an ancient Greek city on the western coast of Asia Minor - which is modern day Turkey.
 - Ephesus was also the location where the temple of Diana welcomed worshippers from all over the world.
 - And in order to understand how magnificent this structure was - it is renowned as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.
- Diana
- With all of this in mind - let's consider how the worshippers of Diana reacted to the Christians who were preaching the gospel - in the city of Ephesus.
- Look with me there at Acts chapter 19 - beginning there at verse 23 - where Luke writes...

Act 19:23 And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.

Act 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen.

Act 19:25 He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade.

Act 19:26 "Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.

Act 19:27 "So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."

Act 19:28 Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Act 19:29 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.

- Here in these verses - we learn about the day - when the worshippers of Diana - - decided to attack the Christian companions of Paul.
- And the reason why was due to the fact that - they weren't willing to allow the servants of our Savior...
- ...to share the good news of Jesus Christ - with the people there in Ephesus.
- Now - think about that for a moment - these Greeks - who believed in a pantheon of gods - including the virgin goddess - Diana...
- ...were quick to reject the Christians - who were pointing people to the God of the Bible.
- Coexist
- From this - we can see that - those who worship idols - like Diana - were not only guilty of dividing from those who preferred another idol...
- ...but - they were also quick to divide themselves from those who were preaching the gospel message of Jesus Christ.
- And while there are many idolaters in the world today - who are calling Christians to COEXIST...
- ...we must not fail to realize that - those who would have us to COEXIST with idolaters...
- ...are the same people who want to silence the message of our Messiah...
- ...and the reason why is because - those who embrace the gospel message of grace - will soon turn away from their idols.

● Application

- Scatters

- At the same time - it's crucial for Christians to realize that - those who worship idols - are also causing division - by leading people astray.
- Let's consider how Jesus put it - in Matthew chapter 12 - it's verse 30 - where He declared...

Mat 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

- Christian - listen - we can't COEXIST with those who are worshipping idols.
- And the reason why is because - those who are worshipping idols - are causing division - as they lead people astray.
- And what this means is that - every person belongs to one of two camps.
- There are those who are gathering people to the Lord Jesus - as we preach the gospel of grace...
- ...or - we're allowing our idolatries to create division - as we lead people away from the Lord.
- And if the latter is true of you - it's time to repent of idolatry - and trust in Jesus Christ.

- Transition

- Points

- Now - this brings us to our third and final point - because listen...
 1. ...those who worship Idols are not only Deceivers...
 2. ...and those who worship Idols are not only Dividers...
 3. ...but - those who worship Idols are also Defilers.

- With this as our focus - let's consider the way that Paul explained it - back in 1st Corinthians chapter 8.
- Let's make our way back to the eighth chapter of 1st Corinthians...
- ...and let's begin reading again - there at verse 4 - where Paul declared...

V. Defile

● Text

1Co 8:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.

1Co 8:5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

1Co 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

1Co 8:7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

- One Father
- Here in these verses - we find Paul - elaborating on the identity of the One true God.
- And while he took the time to acknowledge the fact that - there are many so-called gods - represented by the idols embraced by the pagans...
- ...he also took the time to remind the Christians in Corinth - that the One true God Who actually exists - is none other than God the Father.
- And just to be clear - Paul elaborated on the title - Father - by informing us that God the Father is the Creator of all things...
- ...and therefore - we should make sure that we are living for him.

- And while it's true that God the Father is the Creator of all things...
 - ...it's also true that His only begotten Son - is also the Creator of all things.

- One Lord

- Let's consider again how Paul put it - here in our text today - look with me again - there at verse 6 - where he declared...

1Co 8:6 ...for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

- As we take another look at this verse - we must not fail to notice that...
 - ...Paul effectively described the Lord Jesus Christ - in the same way he described God the Father.
 - He described God the Father as the One Who created all things...
 - ...and then he described the Lord Jesus Christ as the One - THROUGH Whom are all things.
 - And what this means is that - both God the Father - and the Son - were involved in the creation of all things.

- Creator

- Let's consider how Paul explained it in Colossians chapter 1 - it's beginning at verse 15 - where he described the Lord Jesus - as....

Col 1:15 ...the image of the invisible God, the preeminent over all creation.

Col 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

- According to Paul - Jesus is the image - or icon - of the invisible God.

- Now - think about that for a moment - because - while it's true that the pagans would create lifeless idols of their phony gods...
- ...God the Father sent His only begotten Son - to serve as a living icon of our God.
- But before Jesus accomplished this calling - - He was the preeminent One - Who created everything in heaven and on the earth.
- And what this means is that - there is One Creator God - Who eternally exists as the Father - - and the Son.
- Holy Spirit
- Not only that - but - the Godhead also includes the third person - - Who is commonly called the Holy Spirit.
- Let's consider how Moses explained it in Genesis chapter 1 - it's beginning at verse 1 where he declared...

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Gen 1:2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

- According to Moses - the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters - - as God was creating the heavens and the earth.
- As we add it all up - what we discover is that - there is One - and only One God.
- And this One God has revealed Himself as a Triune being - Who eternally exists as the Father - the Son - and the Holy Spirit.
- Now - I realize that this might sound like an illogical absurdity - and yet - I can assure you that - it's not.

- You see - I'm not suggesting that there are three Gods in One God - No - instead - there are three persons - in one God.
- Or in other words - there are three Who's - in One What.
- No mention
- With all of this in mind - - we should take a moment to ask - why didn't Paul mention the Holy Spirit - here in our text today?
- With this question in mind - let's consider how Jesus described the ministry of the Holy Spirit - in John chapter 16 - where He declared...

Jhn 16:12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

Jhn 16:13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Jhn 16:14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

Jhn 16:15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

- Here in these verses - we find the Lord Jesus - helping His apostles to understand that...
- ...the Holy Spirit was sent to guide them into all truth - so that they could provide us with the New Testament.
- And seeing how Paul was writing this book - by the power of the Holy Spirit...
- ...it's possible that the Holy Spirit was leading him to focus in on the Father - and the Son.
- Not only that - but it's in chapters 12 - 13 - and 14 of this epistle - where Paul elaborates on the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- And so - as we consider the greater context of this book - Paul does include the Holy Spirit - in his description of our Triune God.
- Knowledge
 - As for the immediate context of this passage - Paul was helping his audience to understand that...
 - ...the Lord Jesus Christ is the physical image of our invisible God.
 - And while it's true that the pagans would create lifeless idols - to depict their false gods...
 - ...it's also true that God the Father sent His only begotten Son - to serve as a living icon.
 - What this means is that Jesus is the Lord - meaning - our Master - - and He is our Christ - meaning Messiah.
 - As such - the Lord Jesus Christ was sent to provide idolaters - with a way to be saved from the wrath of God.
 - And listen - those who have been saved from idolatry - could still be defiled - by the idols they once worshipped.
- Defiled
 - In order to explain my point - let's consider how Paul put it - here in our text today - look with me again - there at verse 7 - where he declared...

1Co 8:7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.
 - Now - that word - defiled - was translated from a Greek word - which was used of that which is contaminated with pollution.
 - In this context - Paul was referring to those who's conscience are conflicted - by the idolatrous sins of the past.

- Imagine with me for a moment - the struggles of a Christian - who once took part in the temple rituals - at the temple of Aphrodite.
- Then - after their conversion - they show up to potluck - only to discover that someone brought meat - that was offered to Aphrodite.
- Paul was concerned that this sort of scenario - could cause a new believer - to stumble back into sin - and be defiled.
- Concerns
 - Now - in order to more fully grasp Paul's concerns - we should take a moment to consider the connection...
 - ...between the idols of false religions - and the demons who masquerade as those deities.
 - With this as our focus - hold your place here in 1st Corinthians 8 - and let's flip forward two chapters - to 1st Corinthians chapter 10.
 - And as you make your way to 1st Corinthians chapter 10 - I wanna take a moment to remind you that - and idol is nothing.
 - At the same time - it's also important for us to realize that there are demons - who will manipulate people...
 - ...by leading them to believe that their idols actually have power.

- Demons

- Let's consider how Paul explained it - here in 1st Corinthians 10 - look with me beginning there at verse 19 - where Paul asked...

1Co 10:19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?

1Co 10:20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

1Co 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

- According to Paul - idols are nothing - - and the reason why is because - the gods they depict don't actually exist.
- At the same time - there are spiritual hosts of wickedness - who will manipulate the idolaters - who spend time serving their false gods.
- And you better believe that there were demons there in Corinth - who were leading people astray...
- ...as they duped people into believing that their idols has supernatural power.
- And it's for this reason that Paul warned the Christians in Corinth - about the dangers of this demonic defilement.
- Saints
- With all of this in mind - we should consider the warning that the apostle John presented - in his first epistle.
- Let's turn in our Bibles - to 1st john chapter 5 - and as we make our way to the fifth chapter of 1st John...
- ...I wanna take a moment to point out that - there are still people in the world today - who are seeking spiritual guidance from idols.
- This includes the Catholic Churches - where statues of Saints stand ready to receive the prayers of their parishioners.
- Several years ago - Brenda and I toured the Mission trail there in San Antonio.
- And it was in one of the Catholic missions - where we watched a woman approach a statue - - and pray before it's feet.
- After she was done - I asked her "who is that" - she responded - I don't know - and so I asked - why are you praying to this idol?

- Ai
- More recently - people are starting to look to Ai - for spiritual guidance.
- For example - there's Virtual Jesus - which is advertised as an innovative app that brings you closer to the teachings and guidance of Jesus.
- The creators used cutting-edge AI technology - in order to provide you with a personalized conversation with a virtual Jesus.
- Now - listen - if demons are able to manipulate a lifeless statue - in order to defile the idolater...
- ...then - I can assure you that the same demons can manipulate Ai chatbots....
- ...to defile those who are seeking spiritual guidance - from these idolatrous applications.

● Application

- Sway
- With that being the case - we will all do well to heed the counsel that the apostle John presented - in 1st John chapter 5.
- Look with me - beginning there at verse 19 - where he declared...

1Jo 5:19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

1Jo 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

1Jo 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

- According to the apostle John - the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

- And with that being the case - there should be no doubt that the devil and his demons...
- ...will use everything they can - including the idols we once worshipped - in order to defile the disciples of Christ.
- And it's for this reason that the apostle John not only encouraged us to maintain a relationship with the One True God...
 - ...but - he also encouraged us to keep ourselves from idols.
- Anything
 - Just to be clear - an idol is anything that we value - more than God.
 - That's right - we don't need to bow before a statue - in order to be guilty of idolatry.
 - An idol is ANYTHING that we value - more than God.
 - This includes worldly wealth - and this includes our kids - - this includes our hobbies - and this includes ourselves.
 - Yep - the most pervasive form of idolatry in the world today is based on the narcissistic love of self.
 - And you better believe that those who are engaged in the modern forms of idolatry - are defiling the people around them.
 - And it's for this reason that we should flee from every form of idolatry.

VI. Conclusion

● Wrap up

- Points

- Now - as we begin to wrap up this study - I want to remind you that - the Lord has commanded us to abstain from idolatry.
- Not only that - but we should also be careful with the time we spend around those who still serve their idols - and the reason why is because...
 1. ...those who worship Idols are Deceivers...
 - ...who are perpetuating the deception of their false deities.
 2. ...those who worship Idols are also Dividers...
 - ...who demand COEXISTENCE - while trying to silence Christians.
 3. ...and those who worship Idols are Defilers...
 - ...who are following the spiritual guidance of godless demons.
 - And with all of this being the case - we will all do well to avoid the issues of idolatry...
 - ...by making sure that we are worshipping our Triune God - in Spirit - and in Truth.