

THE REAL THING

WEEK 1 LEADER GUIDE

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT, THE GREAT EXCHANGE, AND THE GLORY RESTORED

Leader Vision for the night: The goal is not merely to define idolatry, but to expose the heart gently and lead people to Christ as the faithful covenant Son. Keep Scripture central. Use Keller to illuminate, not replace, the biblical text. End in gospel hope.

1. Keller - What is an Idol? (Chapter 1)

Discussion Questions:

- How does Keller's definition of an idol expand your understanding of the Second Commandment?
- Why are idols usually good things rather than obviously sinful things?

Key Emphases:

- Idols are good gifts elevated to ultimate status.
- Idolatry is misplaced worship, not merely carved images.
- The Second Commandment addresses the heart.

Potential Answers to Listen For:

- Career, family, reputation, comfort, control, ministry success.
- Identity-level dependence: 'If I lost this, I wouldn't know who I am.'

2. Abraham & Isaac - Ultimate Allegiance (Genesis 22:1-14)

Discussion Questions:

- Why did God ask Abraham to surrender Isaac?
- What does this teach us about loving the Giver more than the gift?

Key Emphases:

- Isaac was a promise fulfilled — a good gift.
- God was exposing ultimate allegiance.
- The test revealed whether Abraham trusted God above the promise.

Teaching Direction:

Help the group see that God may press on areas we fear losing most. The goal is deeper trust, not deprivation.

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3. Romans 1:21-25 – The Great Exchange

Discussion Questions:

- According to this passage, where does idolatry begin?
- What does it mean to exchange the glory of God?
- How does failing to glorify and thank God lead to distorted worship?

Progression to Highlight:

- They knew God.
- They did not glorify Him or give thanks.
- Thinking became futile.
- Hearts were darkened.
- Glory was exchanged.
- Worship shifted to the creature.

Emphasize:

Ingratitude is the soil of idolatry. Idolatry begins internally before it manifests externally.

4. Exodus 32 – Idolatry in Real Time

Discussion Questions:

- What fears drove Israel to build the calf?
- How did they relocate redemption in this story?
- How can we keep Christian language while shifting ultimate trust?

Key Observations:

- Anxiety demanded visible certainty.
- Redeemed gold was used for distortion.
- They credited deliverance to a substitute.
- Religious vocabulary remained intact.

Emphasize:

Idolatry often keeps Christian language intact while shifting allegiance.

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5. Covenant Identity – Exodus 20:1–6

Discussion Questions:

- Why does God begin with redemption before giving the command?
- What does it mean that God is jealous in covenant terms?

Key Emphasis:

Redemption precedes command. Obedience flows from belonging. God's jealousy is covenantal — He protects what He redeemed.

6. Heart Application & Gospel Hope

Discussion Questions:

- What makes you disproportionately anxious or discouraged?
- What might that reveal about what carries ultimate weight in your heart?
- How does seeing Christ as the true Image reorder our loves?

Gospel Landing:

Re-center the group on Christ as the true Image and faithful covenant Son. He obeyed where Israel failed. He kept covenant where we broke it. Our hope is not idol management, but covenant grace.