

CHOOSING A POOR SUBSTITUTE

"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God."

Exodus 20:4-5 (NIV)

❖ Understanding Idols (Idols in the Bible)

Those who make idols become like them, and so will those who put their trust in them.

Psalm 115:18 (GW)

1. Baal – the god of possessions... the idol of money.
 2. Ashteroth – the god of sensuality... the idol of sex.
 3. Molech – the god of wisdom... the idol of knowledge.
- Key Truth: Manmade gods have remained the same throughout history.

❖ The Danger of Following Idols

What's the use of an idol? It's only something a man has made. What good does it do... to trust it?

Habakkuk 2:18 (NIV)

1. Idols will DISAPPOINT me.

Those who make idols are disillusioned because the gods they make are false and lifeless.

Jeremiah 10:14 (TEV)

2. Idols will DOMINATE me.

You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.

1 Corinthians 12:2 (NIV)

3. Idols will DEFORM me.

They worshipped worthless idols and became worthless themselves.

Jeremiah 2:5 (GN)

- Key Truth: Idols offer great promise, but they never produce.

"For your own good...don't sin by making an idol in any form at all."

❖ Why Do People Create Idols?

Many exchange the truth about God for a lie; they worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself.

Romans 1:25 (TEV)

1. We attempt to limit GOD'S PRESENCE... create a God we can PUT on a SHELF.
2. We attempt to limit GOD'S POWER... create a God that JUSTIFIES our CHOICES.
3. We attempt to limit GOD'S POSITION... create a God that AGREES with US.

❖ The Benefits of Removing Idols and Worshipping God

O Israel, if you will truly return to me and absolutely discard your idols,² and if you will swear by me alone, the living God, and begin to live good, honest, clean lives, then you will be a testimony to the nations of the world, and they will come to me and glorify my name.

Jeremiah 4:1-2 (LB)

1. I will find DELIGHT... it will give me FULFILLMENT in my life.

Seek your happiness in the Lord and He will give you your hearts desire.

Psalm 37:4 (TEV)

Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.

Romans 10:11 (NIV)

2. I will have DELIVERANCE... it will give me FREEDOM in my life.

Jesus said, "If you obey my teaching...³² you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

John 8:31-32 (TEV)

"If the Son sets you free, you will be really free."

John 8:36 (NIV)

3. I will be DEVELOPED... it will give me a FOUNDATION for my life.

As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like Him.

2 Corinthians 3:18b (LB)

We arrive at maturity—that measure of development which is meant by the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:13 (NIV)

❖ Closing Challenge: What IDOLS have you allowed to get BETWEEN you and God?

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV)