

Big Idea: We get to choose what's important.

Primary Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:14-15

Supporting Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:12-13; Matthew 6:33

.....

CAPTURE (Why should students pay attention to and care about your message?)

- How often do we find ourselves on our phones for “just a quick look” only to still be scrolling two hours later?
- Let's check our **screen time** reports!
 - Yikes! Would anyone be brave enough to share their weekly screen time total?
- Studies have shown that the average teenager spends about **seven hours per day** on their phone.
- Have you ever stopped to think about what we might be missing out on during those seven hours? What relationships aren't we building? What conversations aren't we having? What parts of life are we scrolling past?
- In the Bible, there's a word for something that occupies an unbalanced portion of our attention... The word the Bible uses is “**idol**.”
- Most of us have a complicated relationship with money, too.
 - Whether it's wanting the latest iPhone, the coolest shoes, or just feeling like we never have quite enough, money and "stuff" also have a way of consuming our thoughts and attention.

SCRIPTURE (What does God's Word say?)

¹⁴ So, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. ¹⁵ You are reasonable people. Decide for yourselves if what I am saying is true. (1 Corinthians 10:14-15 – NLT)

- A little context about the City of Corinth:
 - Corinth wasn't just a busy city filled with markets and theatres. It was also a city filled with temples to different gods.
 - And because it was a major port on the Mediterranean Sea, the population of the city was incredibly diverse.

- Packed with temples to gods worshipped all around the known world.
- The Pantheon was kind of like an ancient religious food court where you could worship any god you wanted.
- Paul's readers would have passed these temples every day. They would have smelled the incense, heard the music, and seen their friends and neighbors worshipping there. The pull was constant and real.
- Notice how Paul doesn't just say, "Hey, maybe consider cutting back on the idol worship." Instead, he says, "**FLEE!**"
 - That's not a casual suggestion—that's a desperate warning.

¹² If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. ¹³ The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. (1 Corinthians 10:12-13 – NLT)

- He's saying that feeling drawn to idols is normal.
- Thankfully, Paul is also saying that God will **always** provide a way out when we are tempted.

INSIGHTS (What might this Scripture mean?)

1. Not all idols are obvious.

- The Corinthians had it easy in one way... their idols were obvious.
- But our idols? They're sneaky.
 - They don't announce themselves as idols.
 - They don't have massive temples where we go to worship them.
 - Instead, they disguise themselves as necessary parts of our lives.
- Both phones and money are actually helpful tools.
- But here's the tricky part... even good things can become idols when they start taking up more space in our lives than they should.
- Actually, let's do a little test... give yourself one point for each of the statements that apply to you:

- I regularly check my phone even when I'm having a face-to-face conversation with someone else.
- I tend to feel anxious when I leave my phone in another room.
- I regularly think I feel my phone buzz, even though there are no notifications when I check.
- I often start using my phone, even though I don't have a specific purpose in mind.
- I'm usually the first person to realize when the wi-fi goes down
- I'm usually surprised at how high my screen time is each day.

2. Idols make promises they can't keep.

- The temples in Corinth promised all sorts of things: success, happiness, and connection with the divine.
- Today's idols make similar promises.
 - Your phone promises to keep you connected, informed, and entertained.
 - Money promises security, happiness, and freedom.
- But just like the idols of ancient Corinth, our modern idols can't deliver on their promises.
- Idols aren't just harmless distractions.
 - They're competitors for the place in our lives that should belong to God alone.
 - And when we give them that place, in the long run, they will always disappoint us.

3. Freedom requires action.

- Personal story about an unhealthy relationship with money, especially when you were a teenager.
- Part of the reason the people of Corinth found it difficult to keep God as their first priority was because they weren't putting enough distance between themselves and their temptation.

ACTION (How could we live this out?)

1. Identify your potential idols.

- Similar to the little quiz we already did about our phones, here's one that you could do to help you identify if money has become an idol in your life... give yourself one point for each statement that is true for you:
 - I tend to judge the worth of others by how much money they have, the brands they wear, or the possessions they own.
 - I tend to judge my own worth based on how much money I have, the brands I wear, and the possessions I own.
 - When I receive a birthday or Christmas card, I'm disappointed when there isn't money inside.
 - I would never consider giving my own money to a charitable cause.
 - I find it difficult to share with others.
 - I find it difficult to be happy when I can't afford something I want.
 - I tend to be happiest when I am spending money.

2. Create intentional boundaries.

- Remember how Paul said to **"FLEE"** from idols?
 - That means putting some real distance between us and the things that tend to steal our attention from what matters most.
- Now, how you do that might be a little different for everyone, but here are a few ideas to get you started.
 - Deleting the apps that waste the most time.
 - Setting your own screen time limits (and take it even a step further and ask a trusted adult to set a passcode that you won't know)
 - Turning off non-essential notifications.
 - Keeping your phone in another room when you're studying, eating dinner, during your quiet time, or sleeping.
- And if you want to start creating intentional boundaries with your money, you might try:
 - Creating a simple budget to plan out how you want to spend your money ahead of time.
 - Setting a savings goal with a specific deadline (for example, "I want to save *this amount* by *this date*").
 - Setting a limit on how much money you'll carry with you at any given time.
 - Asking a parent about setting up a savings account at a bank.

- Establishing a regular rhythm of giving money to a charitable cause.

3. Put God first.

- Here's the thing about idols... they don't just magically disappear when we try to remove them from our lives.
- That space needs to be filled with something else. Otherwise, we'll just end up going right back to our old habits.

³³ *Seek the Kingdom of God **above all else**, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (Matthew 6:33 – NLT)*

- This week, I want to challenge you to take just 15 minutes of time that you would normally spend scrolling on your phone or thinking about how to spend money and instead spend that time with God.
 - Read a chapter from the Bible
 - Write in your journal about what God has done in your life
 - Take the time to pray for each of your friends and family by name
 - Go for a walk in nature and have a conversation with God
 - Listen to worship music (without scrolling Instagram at the same time!)

^{13b} *God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. (1 Corinthians 10:13b – NLT)*