



TABOO

Taboo Series Part 4

October 22, 2023

Leviticus 26:1-33, “You shall not make idols for yourselves or erect an image or pillar, and you shall not set up a figured stone in your land to bow down to it, for I am the Lord your God. ²You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord. ³“If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, ⁴then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. ⁵Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And you shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land securely. ⁶I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none

shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land. ⁷You shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. ⁸Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. ⁹I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you and will confirm my covenant with you. ¹⁰You shall eat old store long kept, and you shall clear out the old to make way for the new. ¹¹I will make my dwelling^{el} among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. ¹²And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. ¹³I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves. And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect. ¹⁴“But if you will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments, ¹⁵if you spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my rules, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, ¹⁶then I will do this to you: I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. ¹⁷I will set my face against you, and you shall be struck down before your enemies. Those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when none pursues you. ¹⁸And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins, ¹⁹and I will break the

pride of your power, and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. ²⁰ And your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit. ²¹ “Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, sevenfold for your sins. ²² And I will let loose the wild beasts against you, which shall bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock and make you few in number, so that your roads shall be deserted. ²³ “And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me, ²⁴ then I also will walk contrary to you, and I myself will strike you sevenfold for your sins. ²⁵ And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall execute vengeance for the covenant. And if you gather within your cities, I will send pestilence among you, and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. ²⁶ When I break your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven and shall dole out your bread again by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied. ²⁷ “But if in spite of this you will not listen to me, but walk contrary to me, ²⁸ then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline you sevenfold for your sins. ²⁹ You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. ³⁰ And I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars and cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols, and my soul will abhor you. ³¹ And I will lay your cities waste and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not

smell your pleasing aromas. ³² And I myself will devastate the land, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled at it. ³³ And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.” May the Lord add His Blessing to the Reading and the Hearing of His Word, In Jesus Name! Amen!

American Idols:

Specific things that we idolize in America that are oftentimes overlooked!

1) As Worshippers of American Idols, We worship Money & Fame and disdain Suffering and Humility.

a) 1 Timothy 6:10-12, ¹⁰“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. ¹¹ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

b) In the American Church, if a preacher preaches on prosperity, money, wealth and abundance then crowds flock to hear!

- c) If a preacher preaches on suffering, humility, self-denial, and sacrifice then the crowds flee. Why?
- d) Because the American Church has to pacify the idolatry of an adulteress generation by pandering to its altars of pleasure rather than drawing them to an altar of repentance.
- e) Will God bless our obedience? Yes. Will God deal with us in our disobedience? Yes. Simply refer back to our opening text.
Disobedience is birthed in idolatry because we are torn between two gods. The god of self and the God of Heaven.
- f) Friends, money is not bad; no different than a hammer, influence, or title. None of these are bad until they are used for bad things. The love of money is the root of evil because it is this love for money that drives humanity to destroy one another, who are eternal beings, for the sake of obtaining a temporal matter that will never withstand the test of time.
- g) But not only does the American Church struggle between the two altars of selfishness and self-denial; Point #2...

2) As Worshippers of American Idols, We have developed a “Me” Mentality in a Selfie Generation!

- a) The Book of Philippians 2:3-5, “³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...”
- b) Friends, the bottom line is this; we have become so “me-centric” that we have lost any form of compassion or care for our fellowman. Whether our fellow man being those of the household of faith and even those without.
- c) The Scriptures instruct us to do nothing out of selfish ambition but to be sure that we look out for not just ourselves but others as well.
- d) Ultimately, we should be thinking of others as much as we are thinking of ourselves, but in a selfie generation; its self, self, self.
- e) What can I get out of it, how is it going to benefit me, what’s in it for me, how is this going to promote me, build my self-image, grow my brand, expand my network, add to my bank account.
- f) The American Church has developed a me-mentality in a selfie generation because instead of the church impacting the culture, the culture has directly impacted the church.

g) Thus now we, as the church, strive to be like the world to reach the world rather than provoking the world to change by showing them a better way.

h) But not only have we have developed a “Me” Mentality in a Selfie Generation! Point #3...

3) As Worshippers of American Idols, We Refuse to Minister to our Marriages but Rather Prefer to Serve at the Altar of Idolatry of our Children!

a) The Book of Ephesians 6:1-4, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

b) When we discipline our children, we are honoring unto God. When we allow our children to condition us by their temper tantrums and attitudes then we have allowed them to rule over us. Thus becoming an idol.

- c) Married families with children, please listen to me today. If you build your marriage on your children then you are dooming your marriage to fail. Your children should never be the center of your universe; your spouse should always be primary. Your children, secondary.
- d) If your children rule your marriage then your home is out of balance; your children should never be the counter balance of every decision made in the home. Why?
- e) Because what happens when they leave home and the system you've built has lost the counter balance; then your marriage hits the rocks because you built your marriage off of your children, which became a business partnership, rather than building your marriage upon your spouse and vice versa thus building a strong and stable home.
- f) This includes your children's extra-curricular activities and otherwise; if your children's schedule controls the schedule of your home then you are in error and need to fix that.
- g) Church, when We Refuse to Minister to our Marriages but Rather Prefer to Serve at the Altar of Idolatry of our Children, we are setting our homes up for failure in the future. Point #4...

4) As Worshippers of American Idols, We function based upon Favoritism and not upon Friendship!

- a) The Book of James 2:1-4, “My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. ² For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³ and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” ⁴ have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”
- b) Church, when we base every decision in life off of who we can connect with, partner with, expand our network with, etc. and refuse to genuinely see the value of friendship above partnership, then we are in error.
- c) We had developed this cultural norm in our society and we have cleverly called it “hustle” when its actually a hustle and not a hustle; it’s not true work (hustling yourself to be better) but rather learning to work others for your benefit (hustling others for you to be better)
- d) We must not fall into the trap of valuing those in higher authority over those who, per our perspective, can do nothing to directly or indirectly benefit us.

- e) Friends, when every person in our life is a rung in the ladder of advancement in life and not valued as a human and friend then we have missed the point of the human experience.
 - f) And just as in life so must we do so in the church, we must value one another for who we individually are and not as a means of accomplishing a goal or gaining some temporal means.
 - g) Friends, our lives must never fall into the rat race of functioning every arena of life based upon favoritism and not upon friendship!
- Point #5...

5) As Worshipers of American Idols, We have become Slaves to Social Media!

- a) The Book of 1 Timothy 2:8-10, ⁸“I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; ⁹likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, ¹⁰but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.”
- b) There are those who have different interpretations to this passage of text but allow me to provide principle; the principle is that our character must never be an avatar (outward appearance) but a person (inward work becoming an outward witness).

- c) Men should pray (spiritual activity) lift holy hands (spiritual activity) without anger or fighting (fleshly activity) = inside out, not outside in
- d) Women should not adorn themselves with a gilded view of who they truly are; presenting a form of themselves that is not true to their character.
- e) Friends, often times we present our Avatar and not the truth of who we are. We present the “best” version of ourselves and social media allows us to do that. We are able to show the “best” views, the best times, the best pics, the best of whatever we want but never the bad.
- f) We never want to show the bad: the social media posts about a fight with our spouse, a pic without makeup, a post of a dirty house or a sink full of dishes, or back-due bills or debt collection letters
- g) . We strive to build the persona or brand that is not true to who we are. And this all the more becomes a problem when we allow it to rule every arena of our lives.
- h) This becomes a problem when our screen time outweighs our bible time... So many of us spend more time on Facebook and Instagram than we do in bible study or spiritual development.
- i) This becomes a problem when our screen time outweighs our marriage time... So many of us spend more time on Facebook and Instagram than we do placing priority on the needs of our spouse in the arenas of intimacy or simple conversation.

j) This becomes a problem when our screen time outweighs our family time... So many of us spend more time on Facebook and Instagram than we do engaging our children.

k) Church, we have become slave to social media; we've become slave to an expression of life and society that is not real or tangible. Point #6

6) As Worshippers of American Idols, We Serve Primarily at the Altar of Self!

a) The Book of Galatians 2:17-21, ¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”

b) If we value our life here on earth above that of eternity it can become idolized and when we idolize ourselves then we refuse to die to ourselves; we refuse to be crucified with Christ because we refuse to die to ourselves, our passions, our sins, our lusts, our selfish ambitions, our wants, our opinions, our attitudes, our unforgiveness, our pride, our bitterness.

c) And today, it's time to destroy the idol known as "you".