

## Devotion 4: Seek God Over Idols

*Acts 17:22–27 (ESV) So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: “To the unknown god.” What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything... that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.”*

In Paul’s day, Athens was overflowing with idolatry—ancient sources describe the city as having around 30,000 idols and altars, almost as many gods as people. Paul, stirred in spirit, points them to the “unknown god” they acknowledged in ignorance: the one true God, the Creator and Sustainer of all things. He doesn’t live in man-made temples or need our service—He gives life, breath, and everything. God’s purpose in creation? That we seek Him and find Him, for He is not far from any of us.

When we truly know God through the gospel—who He is and what He’s done—we desire Him above all else. He is infinitely better. The things we tend to worship (often good things turned into ultimate things) are powerless to save, give lasting peace, joy, or hope. Only the Creator satisfies our souls.

### PRAY

During this Seek Week, let’s turn from idols to the One who is worthy. Pray using the pattern: “He is Worthy” (praise for His creative and sovereign nature) and “We are Needy” (confession and repentance).

HE IS WORTHY:

- God, I praise You for \_\_\_\_\_

(Examples to fill in: being the Maker of the world and everything in it; giving life and breath to all mankind; sustaining every moment of creation; determining the times and boundaries of nations; being Lord of heaven and earth; not needing anything from us yet providing everything; being near to every seeker who reaches out to You.)

WE ARE NEEDY:

Reminder: One of our greatest needs is to confess and repent from sin and idols. God has graciously provided away, through Jesus and the power of the Spirit, to do that. Simply confess and turn from substitute saviors.

- Lord, give me grace to turn from worshipping \_\_\_\_\_ to worshipping You!

Here is a list of things we commonly turn into idols:

### **Relationships and People**

- **Family or loved ones:** When we derive our ultimate worth, security, or purpose from spouses, children, parents, or romantic partners, expecting them to meet needs only God can fulfill.
- **Friends or social circles:** Seeking constant validation, belonging, or identity from peer groups, fearing exclusion more than displeasing God.
- **Approval of others:** Chasing praise, likes, or acceptance from people (e.g., on social media or at work), making human opinion our guiding "authority."

### **Achievements and Status**

- **Work or career:** Viewing job success, promotions, or professional identity as the key to happiness and self-worth, working excessively at the expense of spiritual life.
- **Money or financial security:** Trusting in wealth, savings, or material possessions for protection and provision more than relying on God's faithfulness.
- **Success or accomplishments:** Pursuing awards, goals, or personal milestones (e.g., education, fitness achievements) as the ultimate measure of a meaningful life.
- **Power or influence:** Craving control, authority, or leadership roles to feel significant, using them to manipulate outcomes instead of submitting to God's sovereignty.

### **Comforts and Pleasures**

- **Comfort or convenience:** Prioritizing ease, routines, or luxuries (e.g., technology, home comforts) as non-negotiable, avoiding any discomfort that God might use for growth.
- **Pleasures outside God's will:** Indulging in addictions or habits like excessive entertainment, food, alcohol, or illicit relationships for escape and satisfaction.
- **Health or physical appearance:** Obsessing over body image, fitness, or wellness as the foundation of identity and value, fearing decline more than spiritual decay.
- **Leisure or hobbies:** Elevating sports, gaming, travel, or recreational pursuits to the point where they consume time and energy meant for worship and service.

### **Self and Inner Desires**

- **Self-reliance or independence:** Trusting in personal strength, intelligence, or abilities ("I can handle this on my own") as the ultimate source of stability.
- **Control or security:** Clinging to plans, routines, or safety measures (e.g., insurance, preparations) as if they guarantee outcomes, rather than trusting God's providence.
- **Emotions or feelings:** Making happiness, peace, or mood the highest pursuit, chasing fleeting highs through experiences instead of finding joy in God.
- **Ministry or religious activities:** Even "spiritual" things like church involvement, volunteering, or Bible study can become idols if done for self-glory or to earn God's favor.

### **Cultural or Technology**

- **Technology or devices:** Depending on phones, social media, or AI for constant connection, information, and distraction, treating them as omnipresent "saviors."
- **Nation or politics:** Placing ultimate hope in governments, leaders, or ideologies for justice and security, rather than in God's kingdom.
- **Knowledge or education:** Idolizing intellect, degrees, or expertise as the path to enlightenment and control, diminishing faith in divine wisdom.
- **Entertainment or media:** Binge-watching, music, or pop culture as primary sources of comfort and identity, shaping worldview more than Scripture.

### Closing Prayer

- Heavenly Father, thank You that You are the true God, not far from us, and worthy of our full worship. Help me seek You alone. Reveal any idols in my heart, grant repentance, and draw me into deeper intimacy with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Go forward today seeking Him first: **Seek God over idols**—because He alone satisfies, and He is near. You can find Him.