

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7

GOSPEL TREASON



BETRAYING THE GOSPEL WITH HIDDEN IDOLS



Chapter 1 – Idolatry Starts with Gospel Drift

1. Gospel drift and idolatry are two sides of one problem.

When the gospel slips from first place, something else fills the vacancy, since we are worshipers by nature. This is why John's closing warning is no afterthought, and why idolatry is a New Testament issue as much as an Old Testament one.

2. Our functional theology can contradict our confessed theology.

We may say “Jesus is Lord” while approval, success, or a perfect family actually rules our thoughts and affections. Because this idolatry flies under the radar, it leaves people deceived and miserable without their knowing why.

3. Sin is traced to the heart, and the fight is lifelong and Word-driven.

Each outward sin is a spoke connected to an idol at the hub, so stopping a behavior is never enough. Since the heart is deceitful, only God's Word can expose and uproot what is there, and the battle lasts as long as we live.

Chapter 2 – Idolatry Is an Inside Job

1. Idolatry is our natural bent, and we come to love our idols.

No one has to teach us to do it, and the idols we protect often reach back to childhood. Because they feel like companions, we are tempted to tweak them rather than reject them.

2. We turn to idols because we want control more than trust.

Though creation and conscience show us God's glory, He is not “safe” or predictable, and He does not run on our timetable. Idols promise to ease the discomfort of waiting, but they are a lie that cannot deliver, as when marriage or children are asked to carry a weight they were never designed to bear.

3. The best idols hide behind good desires, so we must ask God to search us.

Wanting a faithful spouse is good, but demanding a guarantee against future hurt turns that desire into a ruler. Praying Psalm 139:23-24 and answering honest diagnostic questions help expose such idols, while keeping our eyes on Christ keeps us from despair.

Chapter 3 – Enough is Never Enough

1. Idolatry springs from the desires of our own hearts.

Outside pressures are not the main culprit, and even good pursuits such as ministry can become vehicles for self-glory. The struggle will not end until Christ returns, which is why we must stay alert to the lingering presence of sin.

2. Idols can never satisfy, because they feed a continual lust for more.

Solomon's experience in Ecclesiastes 2 shows that having everything still leaves a person empty. Only Christ gives water that becomes a spring within us, so everything else leaves us thirstier than before.

3. Real freedom requires specific repentance with eyes fixed on Christ.

God withholds peace from those who cling to their idols, and merely naming them changes nothing. We must plan how to think and live differently, while keeping the gospel in view as our only power for lasting change.

Chapter 4 – Idolatry Wreaks Havoc in Your Relationships

1. God uses relational conflict to expose and realign our hearts.

He never chooses the wrong moment, and the people who irritate us are often the means by which hidden idols surface. Rather than blaming the other person, we should ask what the conflict reveals about what we crave.

2. Idols turn legitimate desires into demands that destroy relationships.

A godly desire becomes a “need” clutched in a closed fist, which breeds expectation, disappointment, and punishment. Because no sinner can meet such needs, the cure is to take our desires to God rather than study our spouse’s shortcomings.

3. Idols can wear the disguise of godly virtue, so repentance must start with ourselves.

Bigney’s own craving to be well thought of looked like faithful ministry while it eroded his home. Breakthrough comes when someone stops pressing his own kingdom agenda, humbles himself before God, and repents, since idols multiply across generations if left unchecked.

Chapter 5 – Idolatry Changes Your Identity

1. Idolatry replaces our identity in Christ with something created.

When we define ourselves by a job or a child, any threat to that thing feels like the loss of self. Because the swap happens gradually and unconsciously, we may not notice it until a crisis exposes it.

2. Identity idols leave us threatened by others and craving their approval.

If our worth rests on success or on relationships, anyone who outperforms us or withholds approval becomes an enemy. Saul and Pilate show the cost of choosing the crowd over God, while Paul and John the Baptist show the freedom of being secure in Christ.

3. The remedy is to keep remembering who we are in Christ.

Scripture does not merely list commands but repeatedly tells believers who they are (Col. 3:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:2-15), because our chief problem is forgetting. Resting in what Christ has given us frees us to repent of every counterfeit identity.