

DEALING WITH MY DAILY IDOLATRY

Dr. Jim Cecy

Introduction:

"If God does not exist, everything is permissible." (Fyodor Dostoevsky)

Psalm 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds..."

- The virtual atheist believes there is no God — and lives accordingly.
- The practical atheist believes God exists — but lives as if He doesn't.

Colossians 3:5-7 "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them."

- 1 Peter 4:17 "For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God..."
- Romans 2:22 "You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?" (Romans 2:22)
- 2 Corinthians 6:16 "Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'"
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9 "...turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God."
- 1 John 5:21 "Little children, guard yourselves from idols."
- 1 Corinthians 10:14 "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."

I. THE REMINDER

Reviewing My Position in Christ

Colossians 3:5 "Therefore..." cf. "Keeping Our Heavenly Focus" (Colossians 3:14)

II. THE RESPONSE

Dealing with the Idolatry in My Life

Colossians 3:5 "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry."

- Whereas as unbelievers we used to be slaves to sin, it no longer has FULL reign over us as believers. (cf. Rom. 6) "consider....as dead..." = Greek: nekrosate
Delayed obedience is a very dangerous form of disobedience!

"I am a born-again child of God. I am dead to this sin." "I am a heaven-bound son of God, I will not do this."

"I am no longer a slave to this sin. By God's power mightily working within me, I will cut this out now."

- I am not just going to suppress it. I am going to kill it." ("mortify it." KJV)

1. The Idolatry of Immorality

immorality = Greek: porneia = all forms of sexual immorality/illicit sexual activity/fornication

- Galatians 5:19 "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality..."
- Ephesians 5:3 "...do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints..."

"The evangelical landscape is littered with the carcasses of lives and ministries that have been decimated by sexual sin." (Randy Alcorn)

"An unholy world will never be won to Christ by an unholy Church." (Randy Alcorn)

cf. "The Purity War: A Biblical Guide to Living in an Immoral World" by James M. Cecy

2. The Idolatry of Impurity

impurity = Greek: akatharsia = uncleanness/impure thoughts

- Matthew 15:19 "...out of the heart (i.e. the mind) come evil thoughts...adulteries...fornications..."
- Matthew 5:28 "Everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery already in his heart."
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7 "God has not called us for the purpose of impurity (Greek: akatharsia), but in sanctification (i.e. personal holiness)."

"I am called to a life of purity — in thought as well as deed."

3. The Idolatry of Passion

passion = Greek: pathos = lust, evil passion, inordinate and misplaced affection, uncontrolled desires, degrading and lustful passion (cf. Rom. 1:26; 1 Thess. 4:5)

- 2 Corinthians 10:5 "...we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

4. The Idolatry of Evil Desire

evil desire = epithumian kaken = evil lust, wicked cravings, evil concupiscence (KJV)

- Romans 6:12 "...do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts (i.e. its evil desires)..."
- Romans 13:14 "...make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts (i.e. its evil desires)."
- Galatians 5:16 "...walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire (i.e. the evil desire) of the flesh."
- 2 Timothy 2:22 "Now flee from youthful lusts (i.e. evil desires)..."
- 1 Peter 1:14 "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts (i.e. the evil desires) which were yours in your ignorance..."
- 1 Peter 2:11 "Beloved...abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul."

5. The Idolatry of Greed

greed = Greek: pleonexia = plen + echo = want to have more/covetousness/never being satisfied/sexual coveting/taking advantage of another

Regarding the relationship of idolatry, coveting and sexual greed

e.g. The Ten Commandments (recorded in Ex. 20:16; Deut. 5:21)

Thou shalt not have any other Gods before Me • Thou shalt not commit adultery

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife • Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods

- Ephesians 4:19 "...given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."
- Ephesians 5:3,5 "...do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you....no immoral or impure person or covetous (i.e. greedy) man, who is an idolater...."
- 2 Peter 2:14 "...having eyes full of adultery...a heart trained in greed..."

III. THE REASONS

Motivations for Living a Holy Life

Colossians 3:6-7 "For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them."

Reason #1. Because of the Wrath of God in the Future

- Colossians 3:6 "For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience..."
- Romans 1:18 "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness."
- God hates sin enough to send His Son a SECOND time. Although we will be delivered from the wrath of God (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9) we should nonetheless hate the idolatry that will usher in the Second Coming of Christ. (cf. Rev. 19)

Reason #2. Because of the Grace of God in the Past

- Colossians 3:7 "...in them you also once walked, when you were living in them."
- By God's grace, folks, we are no longer what we used to be (cf. 1 Cor. 6:11)
- Romans 6:19 "...just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification."
- Romans 6:1-2 "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"
- 2 Peter 1:3 "...His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."

This is a winnable war!

CONCLUDING CHALLENGE:

- "All sin is founded in secret atheism..." (Stephen Charnock, The Existence and Attributes of God)
- "The essence of idolatry is the entertaining of any thought about God that is unworthy of Him." (A.W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy)

Colossians 3:8 ff regarding putting aside anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive speech.

Exposing the daily idolatry in our lives and toppling the idols. cf. Colossians 3:1-7

"Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry." 1 Corinthians 10:14

Prayer Requests:



Growth Group Homework

For the week of October 14, 2012

SERMON SERIES: COLOSSIANS

Message Title: "Dealing With My Daily Idolatry"

Dr. Jim Cecy

October 14, 2012

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. In his book *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate*, Jerry Bridges argued that certain sins like pride, anxiety and selfishness are more "socially acceptable" among Christians than other sins like sexual immorality.
 - Do you feel the church is a safe place for people to talk about their issues with sexual sin? Why or why not?
 - What do you think we as the church could do better to encourage people to admit their struggles and get help in that area of their life?
2. Have you had any positive or negative experiences with accountability partners in the past? How did that impact you?

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DIGGING DEEPER

3. In the beginning of the sermon, Pastor Jim drew a distinction between *virtual atheism* and *practical atheism*. How would you explain the difference? Do you think one is worse than the other? Why or why not?

4. Martin Luther believed that all sin is rooted in idolatry. Explain how sexual sin (Eph 5:5) and greed (Col 3:5) can be considered forms of idolatry.

5. In Colossians 3:6-7, Paul provides two motivations for living a sexually pure life: because of the wrath of God in the future (1Pet 4:17), and because of the grace of God in the past (1Cor 6:11). What motivates you personally to “flee from sexual immorality”? (1Cor 6:18)

6. What do the following verses tell us about the importance of having genuine accountability in our lives?
 - Proverbs 12:1
 - Proverbs 12:15
 - Proverbs 27:5-6
 - Proverbs 27:17
 - Proverbs 28:13

TAKING IT HOME

7. Other than a spouse, is there anyone who holds you accountable on a regular basis? What measures can you put in place to keep yourself accountable in the area of sexual purity?

8. What are some of the things that you would consider to be idols in your life? Please explain.

9. Reflect on the five areas of sexual sin that we learned about this week and honestly evaluate how you're doing:
 - *Porneia*: is there any illicit sexual activity in your life that you have not repented of?
 - *Akatharsia*: are you allowing your mind to dwell on impure thoughts rather than taking them captive in obedience to Christ? (2Cor 10:4-5)
 - *Pathos*: is there any lust, uncontrolled desire or misplaced affection that you need to put to death?
 - *Epithumian kaken*: are there any evil desires or cravings that you're feeding rather than starving?
 - *Pleonexia*: do you find yourself feeling unsatisfied, wanting more than have or sexually coveting things that are not yours?

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