



Teaching Notes: Ray Davis

September 25, 2011

How It Changes Everything!

desert breeze community church

Acts 17 “World of Idols”

Idolatry is always the reason we ever do anything wrong. Idolatry isn't one sin among many but the root of all of our sins. It is the sin below our sins. 1John 5:21; 1 Cor. 10:14

Acts 17:16-31

What Is An Idol? V22 in every way you are very religious V23 objects of worship (Ex. 20:3; Rom. 1:25)

- Anything I love, value, trust or enjoy more than God.
- Anything I add to God as a requirement for my happiness.
- Any good thing elevated to the status of an ultimate thing.
- Any desires beyond the essentials of life that becomes a demand.
- Anything I build my deepest identity on instead of my relationship with God.

How Can I Identify My Idols?

V17 so he reasoned... It means that he did not simply “declare” but entered into a give and take dialogue with people. (Pro. 4:23; Col. 3:1-5; James 4:3-4; Luke 6:43-45)

Actions -> What do I effortlessly spend my time & money for?

Feelings -> What stirs my deepest emotions?

Thoughts -> What dominates my thoughts?

Treasure (Matthew 6:21)

How Can I Be Free From My Idols?

- ☑ Repent – anger toward sin & sorrow for the pain it causes God. V16 his spirit was “provoked”= Heb. A deep mixture of both anger and sorrow. (Isa.65:2-3) V30 He (God) commands all to repent...

- ☑ Rejoice – idols cannot be removed only replaced with something more attractive & beautiful. Jesus Christ is infinitely & eternally satisfying! Creator (v24), Sustainer (v25), Ruler (v26), Father (v27-29), Judge (v31). (Phil1:21, 4:4; Ps. 16:11; 63:3)

Counterfeit gods are unforgiving & unfulfilling. Jesus is the only God that if you fail Him will forgive you completely and if you give Him your heart will fulfill you eternally.



Growing

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- 1) If you don't know what it is that competes for your heart from God than you don't know yourself. Why is there nothing more fundamental to self understanding & spiritual growth than this? We are all worshipers by nature & will give our heart to either God or a counterfeit god. Explain.

- 2) Read Acts 17:16-31. What stands out to you from this text? What did Paul see, feel & say (vv16-17)? How is Paul a good model for how we should respond to our idol filled American culture? Review & discuss the five statements answering the question "What is an Idol?" from the sermon notes. Give some illustrations.

- 3) Why It is not only important to be able to discern your personal idols but also cultural idols? In Boston, they ask "what does he know?" in New York, they ask "how much does he make?" in Philadelphia, they ask, "what family is he from?" in Phoenix, what do they ask?

- 4) How can you identify your personal idols through your thoughts, feelings and actions (Pro. 4:23; Col. 3:1-5; James 4:3-4; Luke 6:43-45)? What is it that controls your thoughts, feelings & actions according to Matt. 6:21?

- 5) How would you help a friend find freedom from their idols? How is Paul's description of God in vv24-31 meant to stir up His listener's appetite for God? What does it mean to repent & rejoice & why are both equally important? Do that now in Prayer for your idols.

Personal Idols

- Religion – earning and achieving right standing with God
 - a) through rules and rituals, moral conformity
 - b) rightness of doctrine (confusing non-essential with essential doctrine)
 - c) elitism in gifts and ministry (focus on form)
- Leisure – life is about having this kind of pleasure experience
 - a) Hunting, fishing, golfing, four wheeling, season ticket holders
 - b) Back yard BBQ, swimming pools, vacations, camping
 - c) Sports teams both children and adult
- Workaholism – Work becomes the thing you live for--to be productive and useful, or to feel successful and powerful.
- Codependence – Because you “need to feel needed” you stay in unhealthy relationships with perennially needy individuals.
- Beauty and image – This can have various forms including:
 - a) eating disorders and excessive time, effort, and concern about appearance
 - b) pornography
- Romance – This is not the same as pure sexual gratification. You live for crushes or for someone to love you.
- Family – This idolatry has many variations:
 - a) your children’s prospects and happiness become the most important thing (athletics over spiritual well being)
 - b) meeting your parents’ expectations become the most important thing
 - c) getting married or having a “perfect” marriage becomes the most important thing

- Money – This idolatry has many variations:
 - a) having (and saving) lots of money may be your security, the main way you feel safe in the world,
 - b) having (and spending) lots of money may be the main way of feeling significant and important (nice possessions, car, home, clothes, etc.)
- Perfectionism in general - You live to keep complete control of your life.

Social/Cultural Idols

- Fascism makes an idol of one's race or nationality.
 - a) "I am acceptable because I am a _____" rather than getting identity as a child of God.
 - b) Leads of course to racism.
- Communism makes an idol of the state.
 - a) Government will solve all problems rather than God.
 - b) Marx said everything is political, and all problems are political/economic ones, rather than spiritual ones.
- Populism makes an idol out of public opinion or majority rule, rather than what God says is right.
- Capitalism makes an idol out of the free market.
 - a) Like communism, it sees all our problems as economic ones, all issues in cost-benefit terms and all things, even people, as commodities.
- Multiculturalism makes one's ethnic group or culture an absolute value.
 - a) There are no absolute standards by which to judge.
- Enlightenment "humanism" makes an idol of reason and scientific investigation.
 - a) Science has an answer for everything and reason will open all doors.
- Individualism makes an idol out of individual freedom.
 - a) Nothing must curb the individual's freedom to choose whatever he or she wants to be happy.

- Traditionalism makes the family and tradition an idol.
 - a) Traditional cultures see the rights of individuals as unimportant compared to the name and interests of the family and tribe.