

Dethroning the Idol of Self

April 15, 2018

The idol (or love) of self is deeper than behavior and actions. It resides in the motives of the heart.

1 Corinthians 10:1-8 ESV

1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were ALL under the cloud, and ALL passed through the sea,

2 and ALL were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

3 and ALL ate the same spiritual food,

4 and ALL drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

5 Nevertheless, WITH MOST OF THEM GOD WAS NOT PLEASED, for they were overthrown in the WILDERNESS.

6 Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

7 Do not be IDOLATERS as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."

8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. (See Numbers 25:1-9.)

"Much of our problem in continuing fellowship with a holy God is that many Christians repent only for what they do, rather than for what they are." —A.W. Tozer, "Whatever Happened to Worship?"

Matthew 22:37-38 ESV

37 And he [Jesus] said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

38 This is the great and first commandment.

Philippians 2:3 ESV

3 Do nothing from selfish ambition (*eritheia* - electioneering, a courting to put one's self forward) or conceit (*kenodoxia* - empty pride, groundless self esteem, vain glory), **but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.**

- *The idol and love of self can produce the most admirable behaviors as well as the most heinous sins.*

Matthew 23:27-28 ESV

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness."

28 So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

- *The idol and love of self can only be revealed:*
 - *By the Word and Spirit of God.*
 - *By the testing and proving of trials.*

Jeremiah 17:9-10 ESV

9 The heart is **deceitful** (*'aqob - sly, insidious, slippery*) **above all things, and desperately sick** (*'anash - desperately wicked, incurable*); **who can understand** (*yada - to know, perceive, discern, discriminate*) **it?**

10 "I the LORD **search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.**"

Hebrews 4:12 ESV

12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and **discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

13 And **no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.**

Deuteronomy 8:2 ESV

2 And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these **forty years in the wilderness**, that he might humble you, **testing you to know what was in your heart**, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

Self-idolatry is impossible to manage and control by self-will or self-discipline.

- *Self-preservation, self-gratification, self-promotion, self-exaltation are the defaults of human nature.*
- *We will always choose self first and above all whenever we are not walking by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Matthew 26:31-35 ESV

31 Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

32 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."

33 Peter answered him, "**Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.**"

34 Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."

35 Peter said to him, "**Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!**" And all the disciples said the same.

Romans 7:18-19 ESV

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For **I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.**

19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

We must make the choice that no one, not even God, can make for us.

- *We must make the choice whom we will serve, even though we have not the ability to carry it out.*
- *We never live independently under our own power. We live either in the kingdom of darkness or the kingdom of light. We live under Satan's control and or God's control.*
- *We choose which power we live by - the power of sin unto death or the power of righteousness unto life.*
- *When we choose to live for ourselves, we're choosing to live by the power of sin.*
- *When we choose to deny ourselves and live for God, we live by the grace and power of God.*
- *We and we alone, own the choice to live for God or for ourselves. We cannot blame our choice on the devil, the circumstances or other people.*

1 Kings 18:21 ESV

21 And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And the people did not answer him a word.

Joshua 24:15 ESV

15 "...choose this day whom you will serve..."

1 Corinthians 15:30-31 ESV

30 Why are we in danger every hour?

31 I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!

Ephesians 4:22-24 ESV

22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,

24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Romans 6:12,13,16 ESV

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Matthew 16:24 ESV

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Our choice to serve and please God instantly releases and engages God's enabling grace and power.

- *As the power of sin grows stronger and stronger with each subsequent choice, so does the power of righteousness.*

Romans 6:12-18 ESV

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!

16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,

18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.