



# IDOLS

REPLACEMENTS FOR GOD

*RELIGIOUS IDOLS*

# JESUS IS LORD

Read Philippians 2:1-11

The phrase “Jesus is Lord” was directly contrary to the statement “Caesar is Lord” in the Roman world. The Greek word “kurios” is what we translate into “Lord” here and essentially can mean boss, master, leader. When we say Jesus is Lord, it is a statement of salvation but also a statement of loyalty and fealty.

The issue that comes up time and again for us in the world, however, is the question of our loyalties. Most idols call for some level of loyalty, although they may not call for exclusive loyalty. Where do you see idols calling for loyalty in our world?

## IDOL TESTS - REVIEW

We have 3 idol “litmus tests” that we are working with:

How we create an idol:

- We place our fear in something above God
- We place our love in something above God
- We place our trust in something above God

What we look to an idol for:

- Identity – Something that tells us who we are to a greater degree than or even to the exclusion of God
- Security – Something that tells us we are safe, loved, and secure to a greater degree than or to the exclusion of God
- Meaning – Something that gives our lives meaning to a greater degree than or to the exclusion of God.

What our “idol worship” may look like:

- We allow idols to tell us that we are enough (or not enough). We either spurn God’s Law (you are not enough), or God’s Gospel (you are enough).

- We allow idols to absolve us. We seek absolution (while not necessarily forgiveness) from idols, the transactions from incomplete to whole.
- We make idols the way through which we gain transcendence. We look to idols as a way to get beyond the mundane realities of life to some other plane.
- We form worshipful rituals around our idols. We find facsimiles of our religious worship life including congregations of the like-believing, offerings and sacrifices, calls to faith, and evangelism.

It is worth mentioning that our false idols are almost always reflections of ourselves, if not simply just disguised avatars for worshiping ourselves.

## **POLITICS**

The theologian Arthur C. McGill makes the point that one other test of our false gods is the test of the things that we are unwilling to speak about. Like the name of Lord Voldemort in the Harry Potter series, we refuse to speak the names of things that hold powerful sway over us. This may be why the advice that many of us were given was to never talk about religion or politics at the dinner table.

Political affiliation has become perhaps one of the clearest dividing lines in our culture, surpassing even religion (think of Christian evangelicals and Mitt Romney), income bracket (Duck Dynasty), race, and even sexuality. Our political party affiliations help tell us what is moral and ethical, and what we should feel guilt over. Whether we are wearing a MAGA hat or watching MSNBC, we see the effect of politics in our daily lives.

## **RELIGION**

It is a curious thing when something meant to serve in a ministerial role to God turns into something that seeks to become an idol. Like Satan's fall from grace, however, aspects of even the worship of the true God have sought to overrun Him in the hearts of man since as early as Cain and Abel (and before).

You only need to think about the nasty looks that you get when you use the word “religion” or “religious” to see the effects of this copycat idol.

Here we find quite often that the major issue is around performancism. More often than not, the question in religion-as-idol, is not which god has claimed you but what you are sacrificing. To this end, we see our religious idols begin to steal away the very things promised by God as a birthright of His people – peace and joy.

## **OTHER IDOLS**

We could continue an exploration of idols that would last until Jesus came back to earth. But now you are well versed in identifying idols. What idols do you see? And do you see any that we haven’t talked about?