

When Christians Entertain Lies

Text: 1 John 5:18-21 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to close the letter with a summary of the key to the fulfilled Christian life, worship and communion with the one true God.

Proposition: God wants you to reject potential idols in your heart, and worship Him as He is.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Question 1: Definition: What is idolatry?

- Idolatry is the worship of a false god in the place of the true Creator of all things.
- Idolatry can worship an object, through an object, or simply be in the mind.

Question 2: Root: What is the root cause of idolatry?

- **Root cause 1: Willing or ignorantly believing a lie:** self-deception or ignorance
 - **5:18: We know: Nine Statements of Fact**
 - **About ourselves:** Whosoever is born of God sinneth not...
 - **About ourselves:** He that is begotten of God keepeth himself...
 - **About ourselves:** The wicked one toucheth him not...
 - **5:19: And we know:**
 - **About ourselves:** We are of God...
 - **About the lost world:** The whole world lieth in wickedness...
 - **5:20: And we know:**
 - **About God:** The Son of God is come...
 - **About ourselves and our relationship to God:** Hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is **true**...
 - **About ourselves and our relationship to God:** We are in are in him that is **true**...
 - **About God:** This is the **true** God and eternal life...

Romans 1:21-23 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man,

- **Root Cause 2: Self-centeredness: 1:21** They glorified him not as God...
- **Root Cause 2: Unthankfulness: 1:21** Neither were thankful...
- **Root Cause 3: Self-expression: 1:21** Became vain in their imaginations...
- **Root Cause 4: Satan deception: 1:21** Their foolish heart was darkened...
- **Root Cause 5: Pride: 1:22** Professing themselves to be wise
- **Root Cause 6: Replacement: 1:23** Changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man...

Question 3: Context: What specific aspect of idolatry is John probably directly addressing?

1 John 1:1-4 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

- **A false view of Christ's nature**
 - Jesus was not fully God.
 - Jesus was not fully man.
 - Jesus did not actually come in the flesh and die for my sins.
 - Jesus is not distinct from the Father in person, but of the same essence as God.
- **A false view of God's holiness**
 - Sin does not affect my fellowship to God.
 - God won't re-establish fellowship with me, simply because I confess my sin to Him.
- **A false view of the physical realm**
 - My body and this physical world are irrelevant or evil.
- **A false view of how God communicates**
 - I need something other than God's word to know what God says
 - The faith established by Christ, through the apostles is not enough.
 - I need a deeper mystical experience to know that something is true.
- **A false view of how God relates to people**
 - God can't save me.
 - God doesn't want to save me.
 - God doesn't care that I have sinned.
 - I have become irredeemable.

Question 4: Application: How could idolatry be affecting me?

- **God in our imagination:**
 - An unbiblical view of God's love...
 - An unbiblical view of God's mercy...
 - An unbiblical view of God's providence...
 - An unbiblical view of God's wrath, justice, and holiness...
 - An unbiblical view of ourselves...
 - An unbiblical view of God's ways in people's lives...
 - An unbiblical view of how we can identify what is true and what is not...
- **Rivals for our affections**
 - **Material possessions:** What I can hold or handle
 - **People:** Who I can or wish to relate to
 - **Dreams:** What I hope for my future
 - **Expectations:** What I deserve from God and others
- **Unorthodox Views of God and the angels:**

- Non-Trinitarian God
- Reduce Christ to a creature
- Have an biblical view of fallen angels

Question 5: Deliverance: How are people delivered from idols in the heart?

2 Timothy 2:24-26 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.
Compassionate, skillful instruction in dependence upon the Lord.

- **Compassion: Love them**
 - Must not strive...
 - Be gentle...
 - Patient
 - In meekness instructing those who oppose themselves...
- **Skillful Instruction: Know God's word**
 - Apt to teach...
 - Instructing those...
 - If God will give them repentance...
 - To the acknowledging of the truth...
 - Recover from the snare of the devil...
 - Taken captive by him...
- **Dependence upon the Lord: Prayerful dependence**
 - The servant of the Lord...
 - If God peradventure will give them...

Conclusion: God wants every person in this room to live the fulfilled Christian life. He wants you to have a settled joyful heart. He wants you to live life as He created it to be lived, in His presence, and for His glory. In order to do that, you and I must identify, root out, and reject potential idols in our hearts. May God grant us the grace to do that and to establish godly patterns of thinking about Him, ourselves, and those around us!