

**SESSION 3 NOTES**  
**Idolatry: The Sin Beneath the Sin**

*Romans 1:18-25*

What is an idol?

- An idol is that thing that, if you lost it, would remove your will to live and make all meaning, significance and hope disappear from your life.
- An idol is anything more fundamental than God to your happiness, meaning in life, or identity.
- An idol is an inordinate desire for anything. When a good thing becomes an ultimate thing, it has become your idol.

To discover your idol, consider your worst nightmare.

Romans 1:18-25 demonstrates that all personal and societal breakdowns occur because we've worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator (cf. Jeremiah 2:25; cf. 2:13; Psalm 106:36; Ezekiel 6:9).

- Psychologically, an idol is the thing you get your identity from.
- Theologically, an idol is the thing you're turning to for your righteousness.

The First Commandment is the basis for all the other commandments. You break one of the other nine commandments, because something else is more important to you than God (a violation of the First Commandment).

- Under every behavioral sin is the sin of idolatry.
- Under every act of idolatry is a disbelief in the gospel (failing to take the gospel deep into the root issues of the heart) — a disbelief and unwillingness to rejoice in our righteousness in Christ.

Applying the gospel to our heart will weaken the roots of idolatry there. "The heart is so constituted that the only way to dispossess it of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one." Drive out an old passion with a new and greater one. We need an over-mastering, positive passion. Jacob illustrates this by working 7 years in order to receive Rachel in marriage; the Bible says that those years seemed no time at all to him because of his affection for Rachel.

Cultivating an over-mastering, positive passion looks like:

- Putting things to death — repentance
- Setting your mind on things above — rejoicing

Jesus needs to be our Rachel, and He will be to the degree that we see Him upon the cross and consider all that represents. That alone is the power to change those things (i.e., idols) that control us. Rejoice and rest in what Jesus Christ has done for you — that alone is power to overcome your idols.